



# Newsblast

VIRGINIA  
Beginning Farmer & Rancher  
COALITION PROGRAM

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March 11, 2020

## *A Message from VBFRC*

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Wishing you good health as the trees begin to blossom in Virginia. Check out some of these amazing events and opportunities. Please note some of these events may be postponed or cancelled because of COVID-19. We will try to keep our website updated and send out announcements when we hear of changing plans.

If you are interested in an event listed below, you can find more details by clicking the 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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For Black History Month, the VSU College of Agriculture has created 4 one-minute videos to highlight some of the many contributions African Americans have made to agriculture and the modern-day food chain. Please enjoy!

[George Washington Carver](#)

[Frederick McKinley Jones](#)

[Booker T. Whatley](#)

[Henry Blair](#)

Note: Blue underlined text is a link

## Opportunities and Announcements

### **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.

### **Plenty! Accepting Applicants for Civic Agriculture Internship**

This position is ideal for someone who is interested, but not yet experienced in farming and food security. The focus of this internship will be learning through participating in the daily workings of high density regenerative vegetable growing. This includes the basics of growing, tending, harvesting, seed saving, and distributing vegetables and fruits. Although the focus of this internship is developing basic healthy farming practices, we will also cover forest and watershed management, developing land based community, and many other topics that tie into our practices as people on the land. Sessions available: Late March - May , June - August, Sept - Mid November (Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30 - 1:00). Minimum commitment is one session. In person Interview and references are required. Please Contact: plentyfarmer@swva.net and visit <https://plentylocal.org>

### **Farmer grant opportunity from Little Sesame**

[Little Seedlings](#) is our initiative to fund support of our next generation of local farmers. We are excited to share that award monies this year have increased to \$10,000, which will be given as two \$5,000 grants, and awarded via our nonprofit partner organization, the [National Young Farmers Coalition](#). The Little Seedlings [application](#) is open to those who are *currently farming in DC, Maryland or Virginia*, and will remain open until Tuesday, March 31st.

### **VDACS Specialty Crop Grant Program Funding Opportunity**

Guidelines and Instructions for applying can be found here <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/sales-specialty-crop-competitive-grant-program.shtml>. Groups seeking to improve the competitiveness of specialty crops in Virginia are eligible to submit proposals for grants up to \$60,000 per project. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) anticipates administering nearly \$540,000 in funds for the development of specialty crops. The deadline for submitting applications is March 23, 2019. Individual producers are not eligible for grants. Agricultural associations, industry and producer groups, community-based organizations, educational institutions and non-profits may submit applications to VDACS for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service Specialty Crop Block Grants.

### **Millstone Kitchen is Hiring! (Blacksburg, VA)**

Check out the job description here: <https://oldschoolpricesfork.org/we-are-hiring/>

### **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.

### **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."

## 2020 Series

### [Second Saturday Beekeeping Classes at the Carver Center Apr 11-Sept 12 \(Rapidan, VA\)](#)

Intended for current beekeepers with at least one year of experience who are wanting in-depth knowledge and methods. Each class will consist of classroom discussion on a specific topic followed by hands-on experience and application. Classes will cover a full year of beekeeping.

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

The Fauquier Education Farm is offering a series of workshops in 2020 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.

## March 2020 Events

### **\*Postponed\*** [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 22: First Gathering of the Central Appalachian Young Farmers Coalition \(Christiansburg, VA\)](#)

The first gathering of the Central Appalachian Young Farmers Coalition will be **Sunday, March 22 from 12:00-3:00** held in Christiansburg, VA. Further information will be shared over the listserv (see above). For more details contact Liza Dobson at [erdobson7@gmail.com](mailto:erdobson7@gmail.com).

### [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](#)).

### [Mar 26: Forest Farming in Virginia \[webinar\]](#)

In this webinar, Dr. John Munsell will briefly cover the basics of forest farming and share contemporary opportunities for farming in Virginia's forestlands. He will also describe the remarkable rise of forest farming in the state and beyond, and discuss the development of an American Forest Farming Council to support forest farmers. Attendees will gain a better appreciation for the latest and greatest in forest farming and be able to weigh in with questions and perspectives about next steps and needs.

### [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 to 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 Events

### **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.

### **Apr 16: Farm Financing Options for Historically Underserved and Beginning Farmers through the USDA Farm Service Agency [webinar]**

Are you curious about loans to beginning and historically underserved farmers? Learn what financing options are available through the Farm Service Agency Farm Loan Programs. Discussion will include types of loans, rates and terms, eligibility and feasibility requirements, and an opportunity for questions. Presented by: Brandon Waldron, Acting Farm Loan Manager in Fredericksburg FSA Office and Laura Fisher, Farm Loan Specialist in Virginia State FSA Office

### **Apr 20: Stress and Safety: Decrease one, Increase the other [webinar]**

Presented by Deborah B. Reed, PhD, FAAOHN, FAAN, RN, Agricultural Health Nurse and Farm Family Member, this seminar will illustrate the relationships between stress, injury and overall health among farmers.

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.