



# Newsblast

VIRGINIA  
Beginning Farmer & Rancher  
COALITION PROGRAM

May 8, 2020

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## A Message from VBFRC

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We hope this message finds you doing okay as we continue to navigate uncharted waters. We are grateful for the organizations continuing to pivot and bring us important resources and information. Below you will find a number of webinar offerings in May and June along with recent webinar recordings of potential interest and a list of COVID-19 Resources.

If you are interested in an event listed below, you can find more details by clicking the hotlink titles, 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)

Wishing you peace and health.

## Partner Highlights

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Virginia Cooperative Extension just launched a Virtual Farm to Table Program!

In this new series, participants will take virtual tours of Virginia farms to *learn how*:

- Virginia grown food is produced and prepared
- To prepare new recipes from the foods that are produced on local farms
- VCE professionals, farmers, and food businesses are cultivating healthy food, farms, & communities

Each session will focus on a new food and farm and will be 40 minutes long. All sessions will take place on Fridays at 2 PM. You can see the full list of offerings at [this link](#).

Note: Green underlined text is a link

## Announcements

### Deadline May 29: FARM Intern Recruitment (Abingdon, VA)

The Farmer and Rancher Mentoring Program (FARM) is a 200 hour (minimum) internship offered by Appalachian Sustainable Development. Beginning farmer interns will work closely with their mentors on-farm during the growing season. Together, mentors and interns will work towards reaching individualized learning goals to help put beginning farmers on the path to a successful career in farming. Interns who successfully complete the program will be awarded a \$500 participation stipend.

### Virginia Tech Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics Report on the "Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on U.S. and Virginia Farms and Agribusinesses: May 2020"

The report covers topics ranging from an overarching economic outlook to disruptions in the food supply chain, aquaculture, U.S.-China trade, grain markets, and agricultural policy. Along with other COVID-19 related resources published so far by the department's members.

### Physiological First Aid: Supporting Yourself and Others During COVID-19 Online Course

The American Red Cross is offering a free Psychological First Aid: Supporting Yourself and Others During COVID-19 Online course during the pandemic. The course content is based on guidance from the American Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). This online course is designed for anyone interested in learning techniques for supporting mental health during the COVID-19 crisis.

## May Events

### May 8: Ask a Sista Farmer

Are you ready to grow your own food and medicine for self-reliance and community resilience? Every Friday, experienced Black womxn\* farmers answer your call-in questions about gardening, livestock, agroforestry, plant medicine, and food preservation. Hosted by Soul Fire Farm.

### May 8: Livestock Update Webinar Series

This webinar series offered 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of the month from 12-1 pm contains timely information for Livestock Producers. Topics for this session to be announced.

### May 11: Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

This webinar will provide a high-level general overview of the SBA's Economic Resources-Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Eligible Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) recipients may qualify for a loan up to \$10 million determined by 8 weeks of prior average payroll plus an additional 25% of that amount. We will cover the qualifications, terms, and features of each program and briefly cover the application process.

### May 13: Hemp Panel Webinar

Join us for a panel webinar on hemp farming in Virginia where Kelli Scott, Adam Taylor, and Dr. John Fike, share the ins and outs, dos and don'ts, whys and why nots so you can understand the opportunities alongside the concerns and issues in order to make informed decisions around farming hemp. Each

speaker will have a chance to share their experience and knowledge and we will then open the floor to field participant questions.

#### **May 15: VCE Virtual Farm to Table on Strawberries**

4-H Agent Kari Sponaule in Highland County runs a fresh produce operation with her husband Michael called Church Hill Produce that includes strawberries. Kari will show you around her strawberry 'patch' and explain how to grow and manage strawberry plants and what it takes to get them ready for harvest. Then Becky Gartner, Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agent from Culpeper County, will show how to make an easy recipe for Strawberry Spinach Salad. This recipe is so delicious that you will want to make it often for your family.

#### **May 15: VCE Forest Fridays on Bottomland Hardwoods**

A weekly series of 15-minute webinars by Virginia Cooperative Extension foresters on various topics. This week's topic is Bottomland Hardwoods.

#### **May 16: Biodynamic Pest Management for Beekeepers**

This online class provides guidance from the Spikenard biodynamic perspective for forming a healthy relationship to parasites, pests, viruses, and diseases affecting the honeybees. The experience of biodynamic beekeeping shows us that a deeper understanding of the pest-host relationship can contribute to supporting a healthy and vibrant immune system in our honeybee colonies. We will discuss threshold levels for action and what can be done for brood diseases, viruses, varroa mites, tracheal mites, hive beetles, wax moths, and more! Cost \$50.

#### **May 19: Business Planning for Agriculture**

Tune in to this webinar run by the Farm Service Agency Knowledge Center team to learn about Business Planning for Ag. Many topics will be covered including why a plan is important and parts of a good business plan. An in depth look into each section will also be discussed. The webinar will be interactive, so bring your questions! There is no need to register.

#### **May 21: Virginia Small Grains Virtual Field Day**

This year's Virginia Small Grains Field Day will be virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the related health and safety concerns. The presentations will be prerecorded over the next several weeks. The program will air on Zoom on May 21st at 9:00 a.m. with a Q&A session with the speakers after the video <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/93793199234>

#### **May 21: Spotted Lanternfly Update with Mark Sutfin**

Join us for this webinar covering spotted lanternfly (SLF) in Virginia: updates, how to identify SLF, and what is being done to help slow its spread. Register in advance: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUdOyrqD8vNGshA2Pb35BSE8trZ9G4tg>

#### **May 22: VCE Virtual Farm to Table on Hydroponic Salad Greens**

From large scale greenhouses supplying salad greens to the East Coast to smaller operations serving local farmers' markets, Virginia's hydroponic production of salad greens and microgreens is diversified, safe and local. In addition, you can grow your own salad greens and microgreens at home in small scale systems designed for small producers, schools, restaurants, and home use. Join us for all the details and resources. Then Caitlin Verdu, 4-H Agent for Arlington County, will show you how to prepare a simple and tasty Mediterranean Salad.

### **May 22: Livestock Update Webinar Series**

This webinar series offered 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of the month from 12-1 pm contains timely information for Livestock Producers. Topics for this session to be announced.

### **May 22: VCE Forest Fridays on Common Invasive Plants**

A weekly series of 15-minute webinars by Virginia Cooperative Extension foresters on various topics. This week is on common invasive plants.

### **May 25: Losing a Hive - Understanding & Troubleshooting**

All beekeepers must be prepared for the loss of a colony, but it's not always easy to get support that goes beyond the conventional judgements. This online webinar will help you dig deeper. Cost \$50.

### **May 29: VCE Forest Fridays Topic Pending**

A weekly series of 15-minute webinars by Virginia Cooperative Extension foresters on various topics. This week's topic is yet to be determined.

### **May 29: VCE Virtual Farm to Table on Honey**

What is the Buzz About Bees? Join us as we explore the world of bees and learn more about the buzz that they create in our world! You will learn about the importance of bees as pollinators; how bees are an important to Virginia's Agriculture; where to purchase honey, the health benefits of honey; and how your family can get involved in beekeeping in your own backyard. We will hear from Jeff Brown, a beekeeper from Franklin County, VA who will demonstrate tools and techniques for successfully starting and maintaining bee hives. We will also spotlight Campbell County 4-H members who are enrolled in a beekeeping project. Becky Gartner, an Extension agent and beekeeper from Culpeper, VA; will provide some expertise on best management practices for beekeeping and also highlight how the beekeeping industry supports agriculture in Virginia. Then, Alani Adkins, Family and Consumer Sciences SNAP-Ed Extension Agent in Danville, VA will share a recipe and demonstrate how to make delicious honey pumpkin bars for your family.

## June Events

### **June 5: VCE Virtual Farm to Table on Shiitake Mushrooms**

Shiitake Mushrooms... loved for their flavor and nutrition but not for the sticker price at the grocery store. You can grow them yourself with a little investment of time and money if you have the right kind of shade (a small patch of woods is ideal) and patience. Join Adam Downing, Forestry Agent, to learn how and then Jeanell Smith, from the Family Nutrition Program to learn some ways of cooking this delicacy.

### **June 12: VCE Virtual Farm to Table on Turkey**

Virginia ranks 6th in the nation in turkey production. Of the top 20 commodities in the state, turkeys rank 5th. Most turkeys in VA are grown in the Shenandoah Valley. We will explore a turkey farm in Highland County and learn about raising turkeys from poult to processor. We will then learn how to quickly harvest breast meat from a wild turkey killed during hunting season. Most of the time when we think turkey we think thanksgiving or a deli sandwich. Turkey can provide so much more – it doesn't have to be a holiday meal. Learn about a recipe that can be an anytime quick easy fix using turkey for everyday cooking.

### **June 19: VCE Virtual Farm to Table on Dairy**

In this session, we will learn all about dairy production as we tour dairy farms from different parts of Virginia. First, Jeremy Daubert, ANR/Dairy Extension Agent from Rockingham County, will offer a general introduction into dairy production. Claudia Lefevre, 4-H Extension Agent from Clarke County, will take us to Harvue Farms, to learn about cheese production. Then Cathy Howland, 4-H Extension Agent from Powhatan County, will show you how to make Chocolate Chia Pudding – a tasty source of dairy!

### **June 26: VCE Virtual Farm to Table on Beef**

After learning a little bit about the beef industry in Virginia, we will zoom in on Fresh Branch Farm, a small but growing farm located in Southern Chesterfield County. We are excited for you to take a trip to this farm and learn to forage for plants without using a till, seed, or drill for Fresh Branch Farm's grass fed/finished cow operation. This farm focuses on growing Piedmontese cattle which produces lean and tender beef thanks to their double muscling gene. Danielle Wilson, the Foods and Nutrition Program Educator in Chesterfield County can't wait to get into the kitchen and teach you how to make a scrumptious meatball with lean grass-fed ground beef that includes items from a variety of food groups and puts your leftovers to good use.

## **Recent Webinar Recordings**

### **E-Commerce During COVID-19: Opportunities for Food Producers to Make Direct Market Sales Online (April 24)**

This webinar discusses the value of e-commerce for farmers, food gatekeepers and retailers at a moment when customers are shifting their buying habits overnight to minimize exposure to COVID-19.

### **Livestock Update Webinar Series (April 24)**

This webinar series offered 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of the month from 12-1 pm contains timely information for Livestock Producers. This first meeting covers beef market current considerations, getting ready for the breeding season, and a pasture management update.

### **Stress and Safety: Decrease one, increase the other (April 20)**

This webinar illustrates the relationships between stress, injury and overall health among farmers.

### **COVID-19 Related Legislation: Labor, Family 1st Act, CARES Act (April 17)**

A webinar offered by Southern Extension Economics Committee that goes over labor updates and challenges and COVID-19 related legislation.

### **Wallace Center Briefing: Food & Farm Businesses Navigate the CARES Act (April 9)**

A webinar to assist food and farm businesses navigate the #CARESAct financial assistance programs. This call was for Technical Assistance providers, support organizations, and other advocates who are assisting small to midsize farmers & food enterprises primarily working in local and regional value chains to access emergency assistance.

### **[Expanding Food Safety Protocols in an Evolving Landscape of COVID-19 Series \(April 9\)](#)**

In this four part series, Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialists discuss COVID-19 and how it impacts food safety practices. Hear the latest facts and myths about reducing coronavirus transmission, and best practices you can use for your farm and food business. Presented by Virginia Cooperative Extension specialists, Melissa Chase, Joell Eifert, Laura Strawn, Rob Williams, and Amber Vallotton.

### **[Ag Policy & Market Outlook Forum \(April 2\)](#)**

During this webinar, faculty and researchers from the Virginia Tech Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics discussed COVID-19 and its anticipated effects on trade and commodity markets; the CARES Act stimulus package; recent Virginia legislation pertaining to agriculture; the outlook for commercial hemp; and the Trade War. Cosponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension.

### **[Market Ready: Farm to eCommerce Webinar \(April 1\)](#)**

Learn the basics of eCommerce marketing including pricing, promotion, and managing risk. Hear from several Virginia businesses that are currently practicing with different eCommerce models.

### **[Risky Business: Managing Risk for Produce Success Webinar Series \(Zoom recordings\)](#)**

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. All webinars are archived on website and are available for free streaming.

## COVID-19 Resources

### **[VCE COVID-19 Updates](#)**

Updates from the Virginia Cooperative Extension state office to keep VCE employees and the public aware of decisions from central administration.

### **[VCE COVID-19 Resources](#)**

A compendium of Virginia Cooperative Extension factsheets, guidelines, and trainings related to COVID-19.

### **[The Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation “The Food System and COVID-19” Resource Page](#)**

This online resource aims to 1) serve stakeholders on an off campus with curated public resources, news, and articles related to COVID-19 and the food system 2) share ideas and inspiration about food system and social change possibilities through position articles written by Center associates and fellows, and 3) steward an ongoing dialogue about structural changes needed to address the inequities COVID-19 is highlighting in our food system.

### **[Virginia Association for Biological Farmers \(VABF\) “Coronavirus Resources, Farmers, Consumers, and Farmers Market Managers”](#)**

A compilation of the most current resources for farmers, market managers, consumers, and other food system stakeholders such that communities can make informed decisions and still have access to fresh, healthy foods in the wake of coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Virginia Farmers Market Association (VAFMA) “COVID-19 and Virginia’s Farmers Markets”**

Detailed information related to COVID-19’s effects on farmers markets in Virginia.

**Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) “COVID-19 Emergency Information Center”**

Provides relevant and up-to-date guidance and resources related to agriculture and agribusiness concerns.

**Virginia Farm Bureau Federation “Producer Resources Related to the Coronavirus COVID-19”**

Information for Virginian farmers relevant to farm operations during this public health challenge.

**COVID-19 Loans, Funding, and Grants for Food and Farm Businesses and more!**

Oregon Tilth has compiled a list of loans, funding, and grants for food and farm businesses available at the link above. Scroll down to “Loans and Grants.” Other COVID-19 resources for farmers are also available on this site.