



Newsblast

November 8, 2021

Photo by Daiga Ellaby on Unsplash

A Message from VBFRC

Greetings! We hope you, your farm, family, and community first frosts begin to greet us. 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

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 Highlights

Virginia State University's Small Farm Outreach Program is hosting the annual Small Farm Conference at the Hotel Roanoke on Friday, November 19 and Saturday, November 20.

Join Virginia farmers, landowners and agriculture professionals at the 2021 Small Farm Conference 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.

[Find more information on the event and registration details on their website.](#)

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Announcements

A Taste of Farming: An Online Series for Aspiring and New Farmers

We designed this “learn as you go” online series so you can get a taste of different farming practices and concepts to help you explore your interests, gain a basic understanding of many different farming topics, avoid common pitfalls, and get to know the Extension professionals in Virginia who are here to assist you. From October 2021 to March 2022, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) agents and Small Farm Outreach Program Associates will be posting short videos (15-20 min) highlighting key information and considerations about different farming practices and concepts on topics they have had years of experience helping aspiring and new farmers navigate. A week after each video is posted, the VCE professional will offer a live-time Q & A session by Zoom where aspiring and new farmers can ask their questions directly and discuss their needs with the agent.

Graze 300 Survey

This survey was developed by the VCE Graze 300 team in partnership with the VA Tech Department of Sociology. The goal of this survey is to gather information to evaluate various factors that influence farmers' attitudes toward adoption of rotational grazing. The survey is designed for all producers, whether they practice rotational grazing or not. The survey can be completed online:

<https://tinyurl.com/Graze300VT>

Farmer of the Year, Virginia: Charles Edwin “CJ” Isbell Jr.

CJ Isbell, former Coalition advisory group member, was awarded the Sunbelt Ag Expo’s Farmer of the Year. Congratulations, CJ!

New Grant Program Supporting Local Food and Farming Infrastructure

Governor Ralph Northam today announced a new grant program designed to support equitable and sustainable local food systems for small-scale agricultural producers, farmers markets, and food hubs. It is a new component of the Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund. Local governments can apply for grants to support farmers markets and small-scale agricultural facilities until November 15.

November Events

November 10: Soil Health to Go on Pastured Livestock

Ready to learn more about how to take your pastures up a notch? Join us as we chat with pastured livestock producers Amanda Paul and her husband, Sam White, of Leaning Pine Farm. The farm, established in 1939 by Amanda's family, has long prioritized soil health, and they continue to refine and enhance their soils today. Sam and Amanda recognize that although these farming practices can be time- and energy-intensive, they are also more cost effective and generate more profit per acre than their previous farming methods. Leaning Pine specializes in raising quality beef through sustainable, soil-health-conscious practices. In addition to 100% grass-fed beef, Sam and Amanda also harvest honey, free range eggs, and raspberries. No hormones, antibiotics, herbicides or pesticides are used on the farm.

November 10: Estate Planning for Farmers

Lillian “Ebonie” Alexander lives on her family farm in rural Southside Virginia and is the Executive Director of the Black Family Land Trust, Inc. (BFLT). The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reports that family-owned farms account for 97 percent of the 2.1 million farms in the U.S. Yet only 30% of these farms survive into the second generation, and only 12% are still operating by the third. Farmland preservation has become very important with higher prices being offered for nonfarming uses. Farmers need to plan for passing their farms to the next generation to ensure it stays in the family and farming industry. Ebonie will talk about the importance of farm estate planning and show you that it’s not complicated and demonstrate why you need to take action and make your plan.

November 12: Women in Agriculture Gathering (Orange, VA)

This event will equip female farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network with peers, hone technical skills, and discuss solutions to the unique challenges they face.

November 12: Vegetable Production and Food Safety Requirements Virtual Q&A Session

As part of the [Taste of Farming Series](#), hear from Ursula Deitch, Northampton County’s Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, who will share the basics of vegetable production and along with the food safety requirements in which beginning farmers should be aware in her video. Then join for the virtual Q&A session to talk directly with Ursula to answer any questions you bring.

November 13: An Introduction to Growing Medicinal Forest Herbs (Catawba, VA) ALMOST FULL

Join the Virginia Tech Catawba Sustainability Center (VT CSC) for a workshop providing an introduction to growing medicinal forest herbs. This in person workshop held on Saturday, November 13, 2021 from 9 am to 1 pm at the Catawba Sustainability Center is the official launch of the VT CSC’s Herb Network that aims to help prospective and new growers in the Roanoke and New River Valleys to cultivate, process, and sell woodland medicinal herbs. The workshop will include an overview of the VT CSC Herb Network, a presentation on woodland medicinals and forest farming (the intentional cultivation of these species) by Dr. John Munsell, and a hands on “in the forest” session where participants will learn how to dig, divide/propagate, and plant black cohosh.

November 13: Women in Agriculture Gathering (Wytheville, VA)

This event will equip female farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network with peers, hone technical skills, and discuss solutions to the unique challenges they face.

November 13: Small Engine Maintenance and Repair

Save time and money with these best practices to maintain small engine farm equipment and keep it running year after year. Four-cycle engines are found on many types of equipment used by farmers including mowers, tillers, chain saws, ATVs and more. This workshop will help you understand how a small engine works. Common problems that occur, and how to fix them. Information on safety and risk management issues related to small engine repair will also be included as part of this hands-on workshop.

November 16: What Markets Are the Best Fit for Me?

Did you know there are at least 14 different types of markets that a beginning farmer could sell to? With so many choices, how do you know which one you should do? In this class, we will explain the 14 different types of markets available to beginning farmers and help participants to better understand

which markets are best suited to their personality. If you are thinking about where you will sell your farm products to and you are just getting started in farming, then this class will benefit you!

November 16: Quickbooks for Farmers

Come join other farmers for an evening designed to help both beginning and experienced farmers learn to manage accounting and recordkeeping for their businesses. This workshop is presented by a local professional Accountant, Debbie Mott, who has years of experience helping others, while running her own successful small farm operation. The topics to be covered include setting up financial records, preparing a chart of accounts, entering payments, deposits and invoices, tracking customers and creating estimates, reconciling bank statements, analyzing financial data and printing reports. Training does not include QuickBooks software or licenses.

November 17: How to Winterize Bee Hives

Keith Tignor, our State Apiarist, will cover the steps needed to winterize your beehives. Topics will include opening a hive for inspection, pest identification and management, techniques to feed bees over the winter, the best cover crops and species of trees to plant that produce the most nectar and pollen and when and how to order honeybee nucs in preparation for the spring. Information received during the program will help attendees mitigate hive loss over the winter. All attendees must bring a bee suit to wear during the hive inspection part of this workshop. No open toe shoes, wear light clothes and no perfume or cologne.

November 17: Virtual Program- Innovative Agriculture Centers in the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences

Controlled Environment Agriculture and the use of new technologies are rapidly growing areas in agriculture. Two new centers created in the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences (SPES), the “Controlled Environment Agriculture Innovation Center” and the “Agriculture Technologies Innovation Center” are focused on these exciting emerging areas. Dr. Mike Evans ’85 horticulture, director of SPES, will discuss how the School is leading in these areas in both research, teaching and economic development in Virginia.

November 19: Small Farm Annual Conference

Join Virginia farmers, landowners and agriculture professionals at the 2021 Small Farm Conference 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.

November 19: Integrated Pest Management Basics Virtual Q&A Session

As part of the [Taste of Farming Series](#), hear from Laura Maxey-Nay, Hanover County’s Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent specializing in Crop and Soil Sciences, who will share the basics of integrated pest management to support healthy crops in her video. Then join for the virtual Q&A session to talk directly with Laura to answer any questions you bring.

November 30: Using Free Google Forms to Take Online Orders

COVID-19 Social Distancing has changed the way your customers do business with you. Maybe you have been thinking about taking online orders, but the learning curve or extra cost has been too steep. Well, if you don’t want to invest too much time or money to take your customers online orders, then you may be interested in a step by step tutorial on how to use FREE Google Forms to set up a simple online

ordering system. If you are not comfortable with computers, but have a relative or friend who is, why not ask them to participate in this class with you?

November 30-December 2: Virginia Farm Bureau 2021 Annual Convention

Virginia Farm Bureau Federation's 2021 Annual Convention will be held Nov. 30 through Dec. 2 at the Williamsburg Lodge.

December Events

December 1: Succession Solutions & Estate Planning for Farm Families

This FREE in person workshop will explain essential provisions you need to include in your documents to accomplish your objectives during your lifetime, when disabled, and upon your death. You will also learn probate, avoidance, cost-saving, conflict-reduction, and privacy-enhancing techniques. If multi-generational success is your goal, this presentation is for you.

December 2: Basic Computer Skills for Farmers

Small Farmers are invited to join the Beginning Computer Training workshop to learn computer skills that are beneficial for use at home and in farm business operations. Designed especially for those with little prior computer experience, participants will be introduced to computers operating systems, using a mouse, how to create, save and manage documents and images, creating an email address and sending email, navigating the Internet safely and effectively, and more.

December 3: Getting Started in the Greenhouse Virtual Q&A Session

As part of the [Taste of Farming Series](#), hear from Ed Olsen, Horticulture Agent in Henrico County, who will share an introduction to greenhouse production in his video. Then join for the virtual Q&A session to talk directly with Ed to answer any questions you bring.

December 6-9: National Grazing Lands Conference

The conference promotes grazing land sustainability by bringing together hundreds of land managers from across the nation for education and technological advancements. Attendees will have the opportunity to gain the latest information in scientific and applied research, and practical, workable applications for building partnerships. The conference will focus on management methods that are successful in bridging agricultural needs with environmental and social benefits.

December 7: Growing Fall Crops in High Tech High Tunnel

Participants will tour the high tech High Tunnel and learn about all the features the it offers. Participants will also get to see and ask questions about the Fall Tomato and Pepper crop and how start and maintain a crop like this for the Fall and the early Spring. Other alternative crops will also be discussed.

December 7: Becoming Debt Free: A Simple Secret to Your Long-term Success in Farming and Life

In this class, Dr. Nartea will share the simple secret to being a long-term success in farming and life: Becoming Debt Free! You will learn the deep importance of not going into debt to start a farm business and how participants can use a personalized worksheet to determine if they can financially take on a beginning farm enterprise. If you are considering investing yourself into a new farm business, do yourself a favor and attend this class!

December 17: Horse Management 101 Virtual Q&A Session

As part of our [Taste of Farming Series](#), hear from Carrie Swanson, Albemarle County's Animal Science Extension Agent, who will share a basic overview of horse management in her video. Then join for the virtual Q&A session to talk directly with Carrie to answer any questions you bring.

January Events

January 14: Pumpkins Virtual Q&A Session

As part of our [Taste of Farming Series](#), hear from Joanne Jones, Charlotte County's Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, who will share about pumpkin production in her video. Then join for the virtual Q&A session to talk directly with Joanne to answer any questions you bring.

January 13-14: Save the Date for the 23rd Annual Future Harvest Conference

More information coming soon.

January 18-21: 2022 Winter Forage Conference

This year's winter forage conference series will explore and challenge the common claim that beef is bad for the planet. From issues like water quality to climate change, our speakers will show how well-managed grasslands can produce healthy meat and be part of the solution to the environmental issues we face.

January 21: Forestry Virtual Q&A Session

As part of our [Taste of Farming Series](#), hear from Neil Clark, Southampton County's Natural Resources Extension Agent, who will share an introduction to forest management as part of whole farm planning and management in his video. Then join for the virtual Q&A session to talk directly with Neil to answer any questions you bring.

January 22-24: 22nd Annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference

The three-day Conference includes: Pre-Conference intensive workshops, 48 sessions, presentations and panel discussions, 50 tradeshow exhibitors, locally sourced farm meals and book sales with author signings. The Conference highlights include a Silent Auction and networking opportunities including regional meetings and fireside chats, morning yoga and the Taste of Virginia Expo & Social.

January 28: Grazing Math Virtual Q&A Session

As part of our [Taste of Farming Series](#), hear from Carl Stafford, Culpeper County's Agriculture and Natural Resources Senior Extension Agent, who will share principles driving the flexible management of natural systems needed by grazing livestock in his video. Then join for the virtual Q&A session to talk directly with Carl to answer any questions you bring.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family or veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State, Petersburg.