

# Newsblast

VIRGINIA  
Beginning Farmer & Rancher  
COALITION PROGRAM

September 18, 2020

[Markus Spiske](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## *A Message from VBFRC*

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We hope you, your families, communities, farms, and gardens are well as we enter Autumn. Below you will find a number of webinar offerings in September.

If you are interested in a listed event, 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 well!

## *Partner Highlights*

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Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) is a non-profit organization founded in 1995 in southwest Virginia and works with farmers across Central Appalachia. ASD's mission is to assist farmers and enhance food production in Appalachia. Celebrating 25 years, ASD is strategically planning to create a pathway for future programming. ASD has created a survey for farmers and landowners in order to understand what farmers think about particular agroforestry practices. Any farmers or landowners in Central Appalachia are encouraged to take this survey, it should take no longer than 13 minutes. You can find the survey here: <http://bit.ly/agroforestrysurvey> and the survey will close on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Note: Green underlined text is a link

## Announcements

### Appalachian Sustainable Development's (ASD) Agroforestry Survey

ASD offers much needed support for agroforestry practices in Virginia and beyond. Please consider filling out their survey so they have a better idea of how to move forward in service to agroforestry across Appalachia. Any farmers or landowners in Central Appalachia are encouraged to take this survey, it should take no longer than 13 minutes. You can find the survey here: <http://bit.ly/agroforestrysurvey> and the survey will close on October 5th 2020. Feel free to contact Chloe Yates at [agroforestry@asdevelop.org](mailto:agroforestry@asdevelop.org) with questions or concerns.

### USDA Disaster Assistance Programs

This year, our nation has experienced several natural disasters – wildfires, drought, derecho, tropical storms and hurricanes – that have greatly affected our communities and agricultural operations. USDA offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers and livestock producers recover. In order to better assist our producers, USDA has published a new brochure that is a quick reference guide on available Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) disaster assistance programs.

## September Events

### September 22: Wormy Life of Fishes

Have you ever wondered what might be living inside and on a fish? Have you caught bluegill with redworm dangling from it? Or have you had a tropical fish in your aquarium with white spots on it? Learn all about the critters that can be found on sport fish, aquarium fish, and more because it is a wormy life for a fish.

### September 23: Building Raised Beds (Culpeper, VA)

In this in-person workshop, presented by Thunder Lane of Lane Farms, participants will learn practical ways to construct raised beds and how to install and use a drip irrigation system for the raised bed. Participants will also receive information on building materials and estimated construction costs. This educational workshop is free and open to the public. **SPACE IS LIMITED TO 10 PARTICIPANTS.**

### September 24: USDA Information Session

Beginning, minority and veteran farmers can get help to prepare applications for farm ownership and operating loans and obtain the required borrower training. Find out about the resources and current grants that are available from USDA, including the Rural Development Renewable Energy for America (REAP) grant and loan guarantee program, Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program, and Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs are also available to help you implement conservation practices that reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters.

### **September 25: Virginia Virtual Farm to Table Program on Grains**

Learn about the Common Grain Alliance and how grains are grown and harvested. Then take a virtual tour of Ardent Mills in Culpeper, Virginia to learn how grain is milled into flour. Finally, learn how Great Day Gardens makes scones with 100% Virginia-grown grains.

### **September 28: Beekeeping for Beginners**

Join VCE for an informative discussion on beekeeping with Rob Davis of Heavenly Hideaway Lavender Farm. Davis, who is a new and beginning farmer, will discuss how to manage bees year-round, what equipment is needed for beekeeping, how to protect your hives from predators and other pests and what blooming plants provide the best forage for bees. For more information, contact Susan Cheek at (804) 720-5539 or via email at [scheek@vsu.edu](mailto:scheek@vsu.edu)

### **September 30: Mindfulness and Self Care for Farmers**

This webinar will cover the ways farmers can take care of themselves to protect their physical and emotional health through the seasons. Here, Kara Dodson will review yoga postures, movements, and other forms of bodywork that can help to relieve stress; heal tired, aching muscles and tendons; and restore energy. Dodson will also cover the reasons why self-care should be a priority for all farmers and the ways that taking care of one's body and mind can improve the vitality and viability of life on a farm.

## November Events

### **November 9-12: 2020 National Young Farmers Leadership Conference**

The Young Farmer's annual Leadership Convergence is online from November 9 through 12. This year's program is very exciting, with a theme of "Achieving Equity through Agriculture." While Convergence 2020 is an invite-only event, they will have limited public tickets available for the two keynote addresses by Leah Penniman and Chris Newman. Stay tuned on their website for those links!

## Recent Webinar Recordings

### **Spotlight on the Farm Safety, Health, and Wellness Toolkit for Managing Farm Stress and Mental Health [Sept 16]**

This webinar covers the most recent resources developed for farmers and service providers by Virginia Cooperative Extension's Farm Safety, Health, and Wellness Initiative. Here, we'll share our toolkit that includes discussion-based, decisionmaking, and "best practice" resources for addressing the growing concerns about farm stress and wellbeing, specifically as they pertain to the current coronavirus crisis. These resources address several issues and themes that build upon each other, including: how to identify and manage farm financial stress, understanding stress and grief in farm families, and ways to improve mental health communication and referral strategies with farmers and farm organizations. We will also raise awareness about our current programs led by VCE agents and AgrAbility Virginia field staff for continued education and community outreach.

### **Using the Farm Financial Stress Assessment Tool: A Webinar for Extension Agents [Sept 9]**

Extension agents are closely involved in advising farmers and farm families on identification and

mitigation of financial risks unique to the agricultural industry. Financial decisions are often time-sensitive and complicated, and the source of many sleepless nights to farmers and advisors alike. This webinar provides agents with an overview and demonstration of our Farmer Financial Health and Wellbeing Assessment. This tool is intended for use as a communication aid to foster safe, productive conversations between farmers and agents. This webinar is designed to complement related resources aimed at supporting the mental health of our farmers who make tough decisions under conditions of uncertainty on a daily basis. All agents are welcome to join us!