



September 1, 2021

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A Message from VBFRC

Greetings! We hope you, your farm, family, and community are well as we enter Fall. 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

Check out the [24th Annual Culpeper Harvest Days Field Tour](#) coming up on September 18 and 19. The tour, a self-guided driving experience, can be started at any of the participating farms. In addition to online and through the Farm Tour app, brochures will be available at all participating farms. Join at the Welcome Center for fun, games, and goodies for the kids, and check out the Piedmont Railroaders display. Be sure to check out the Carver Center along the route where the Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont and Botanical Bites and Provisions will be sharing and demonstrating the benefits of vermicomposting.

Note: Green underlined text is a link

Announcements

Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 for Livestock, Poultry Contract Producers and Specialty Crop Growers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is updating the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) for contract producers of eligible livestock and poultry and producers of specialty crops and other sales-based commodities. CFAP 2, which assists producers who faced market disruptions in 2020 due to COVID-19, is part of USDA's broader Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has set an Oct. 12, 2021 deadline for all eligible producers to apply for or modify applications for CFAP 2.

45th Annual Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tour

Join other forest landowners and natural resource professionals for an educational and fun day in the woods learning about forest and wildlife management. Register here:

<https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu/onlineregistration.html>

Common Grain Alliance Survey

The Common Grain Alliance (CGA), in partnership with Local Food Network and GO Virginia, is working to identify opportunities for food producers to collaborate around sharing and leveraging logistics infrastructure. This infrastructure could be dry or reefer truck space or dry or cold storage.

To achieve this, CGA is working to survey Virginia food producers to understand 1) the logistics landscape for small agricultural businesses and 2) survey participants' exact needs and logistics pricing models. Please fill out this survey to help connect Virginia food producers who can share or use extra storage and truck space to test a cooperative approach to logistics management.

To participate, please click here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/local-i-program>

Please email any questions to local.i.program@gmail.com.

September Events

September 8: Cover Crop Field Tour and Demonstration

Rob Davis will take us on a tour and demonstrate the uses of cover crops on his farm. This will be done at Heavenly Field Lavender Farm, in Prince George Virginia. The purpose of this tour and discussion is to share some of the uses for crops, including beneficial habitat and soil management.

September 10: Small Diversified Veteran Owned Farm Tour

Join for an afternoon tour of Lillian Lee Farm in Aylett, VA. Tim Vaughan is a Navy Veteran and along with his wife, Becky, they operate a 52-acre diversified farm in King William County that focuses on sustainability and humanly raised poultry and livestock. They have a laying flock and they also raise and process broilers on pasture. They raise hogs on both pasture and in the woods. They have also installed a Honey Locust windbreak on their farm that provides pollen and nectar to their 5 beehives and the windbreak also serves as a food source for the local deer and turkey. Attendees will gain knowledge on their processes to raise, butcher, market and sell their eggs, chicken, pork and honey.

September 11: 2021 Family Farm Day

The objective of Family and Farm Day is to educate the general community about the benefits and importance of agriculture. Hands-on, inquiry-based learning activities are used to educate the next generation about all the exciting aspects of agriculture and science.

September 11: New Christmas Tree Growers Meeting

Kyle Peer of Reynolds Homestead is offering his annual workshop for new farmers interested in starting a Christmas tree farming operation (see attached flyer). This year's workshop will be at Valley Star Christmas Tree Farm in Luray VA with Dave Thomas as the farm host. Dave is also involved in pumpkins and corn mazes so the workshop will cover a little bit about running an agritourism operation in general.

September 13: 2015-2020 Farmer of the Year Bus Tour #1

On day one participants will visit our 2017 winner, Herbert Brown Sr.'s farm, Browntown farms. He mainly produces vegetables and has created a line of value-added products from his fruit and vegetable production.

September 13: Small Farm Orientation

The two-hour zoom course is geared to new and beginning farmers with zero to five years of experience operating a farm. Participants' are directed through the process of developing a productive and profitable farm operation. The developer and zoom meeting instructor has over 40 years of work experience in the Virginia agriculture industry. Participants also will receive a Small Farm Orientation Manual developed by the course instructor.

September 14: 2015-2020 Farm of the Year Bus Tour #2

On day two, join to head over to visit our 2018 awardee, Susan Hill's farm, Hill's Vintage Vegetable Farm. She grows in mainly in high tunnels and sells through her CSA as well as a bit of honey production and being a private chef and nutritionist. We will also be stopping by to see our 2015 winners, Thomas and Anita Roberson of Botanical Bites and Provisions. This couple grows both in the field and in high tunnels. They produce vegetables, flowers, honey, and value-added products. Their markets are on-farm and farmers' markets.

September 14: Research-based Best Practices for Working with Heir Property Landowners

This interactive workshop will be facilitated by Dãnia Davy, Esq. Director of Land Retention & Advocacy Director of the Regional Heirs Property & Mediation Center at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund.

September 14: Drip Irrigation for Backyard Gardens

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

September 14: On-Farm Composting & Compost Use Webinar Series Part 2: Ellen Polishuk

Join for Session 2 of *On-Farm Composting & Compost Use Webinar Series* featuring Ellen Polishuk, biological farming consultant, educator, and co-author of *Start Your Farm*. This session will map out how farmers can add the production of high-quality compost to their operations.

September 14: Kentland Farm Field Day

This field day from 8 am to 4 pm is hosted by Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and

Virginia Cooperative Extension and will include highlight research at Kentland and offer a variety of workshops and demonstrations.

September 15: 2015-2020 Farmer of the Year – Bus Tour #3

On day three we will round out our trip with our 2019 and 2020 awardees. These are some of our newer farms. First, we will visit Rosa at Rosa's produce is a combination of field and tunnel grown production of fruits and vegetables. They have an on-farm stand and also distribute produce. For our final stop, we will visit Carolyn Quinn of Dug-In-Farm. She is our most recent awardee and grows a variety of produce and flowers both infield and under protection. She has an on-farm market as well as selling to local shops and cafes. This farm offers others a location open all week to sell their products including, but not limited to: plants, meats, and eggs.

September 16: Nature Walk on Randolph Farm's Trail in the Woods

We will be joining Joel Koci, our very own VSU arborist. He will guide us through the nature trails located on Randolph Farm. During this tour, we will learn to identify local trees and plants. He will also be discussing the management required for a nature trail project. This is a great opportunity to learn about more uses for our great outdoors on your own property in those often ignored woody areas.

September 17-18: Forest Farming Intensive Propagation to Processing

Whether you're just getting started with forest farming, or looking to ramp up production for market, this intensive has something for everyone. On Friday evening, spend time networking with other aspiring and experienced forest farmers over dinner and enjoy a keynote from Dr. Jeanine Davis. On Saturday, get ready to dig in with intensive learning stations covering site selection, propagation, syrup production and sustainable harvest at Appalachian Cove Forest Farm, and post-harvest handling and processing at the Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub. From propagation to processing for sale - we look forward to seeing you for a day and a half of networking and learning from experienced forest farmers, researchers, technical service providers, and herb brokers!

September 18: Small Engine Maintenance

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program and the Catawba Sustainability Center. Registration opening soon.

September 18-19: 24th Annual Culpeper Harvest Days Field Tour

The tour, a self-guided driving experience, can be started at any of the participating farms. In addition to online and through the Farm Tour app, brochures will be available at all participating farms. Join us at the Welcome Center for fun, games, and goodies for the kids, and check out the Piedmont Railroaders display. Be sure to check out the Carver Center along the route.

September 21: How to Make and Market Goat's Milk Soap

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program and the Catawba Sustainability Center. Registration opening soon.

September 22: Working Lands for Wildlife

This webinar will explore the complexities of forest degradation as result of poor forest management planning. We will gain a basic understanding of land-use history as it pertains to forest degradation and how misconceptions of forest ecology have led to poor land management practices. Then, we will learn how forest products markets (or lack thereof) can perpetuate the mismanagement of forest resources.

Once we grasp these basic concepts, we will learn from applied research on conditions of degraded forests and what we can do to restore them.

September 22: Improving the Soil Health on your Farm

Improving your farm's soil health increases yields which results in net profit. Using cover crops along with good fertility management can provide multiple benefits to your soil's health. VSU Small Farm Outreach Program Nutrient Management Specialist Tammy Holler and Anthony Howell with USDA NRCS along with the local Soil and Water Conservation District representative will discuss steps that can be taken to improve your soil's health.

September 22: Small Diversified Farm Tour

This farm tour is for those interested in starting or expanding a small diversified sustainable farm. Dennis and Sarah Williams, successful beginning farmers in their own right, will provide a tour which will include: Pastured broilers, layers and turkeys; pastured and forest raised hogs; dairy and meat goat production; meat rabbits; how to use cover crops to improve your pasture; silvopasture and rotational grazing techniques; goat dairy CSA and on-farm sales; non-GMO feed sales; farm risks and how they manage them; how they market their products, business & Financial Management.

September 23: Aquaponics

Aquaponics is the integration of growing plants and fish into one system. Find out how to begin small scale aquaponics systems for hobbyists, schools, and as an enterprise for a farm or urban setting. A small scale aquaponics unit will be demonstrated as part of the workshop. This course is presented by Dr. David Crosby.

September 23: Mapping with Drones for Precision Agriculture

The use of drone aerial photography processed using the Drone Deploy software to elaborate maps that can be used to interpret soil & water conditions, crop health, stand or plant crop to estimate production or quantify losses, elevation differences, distances, area in acres, and in Forestry applications to estimate harvestable trees and lumber available.

September 23-24: Beginning Woodland Owner's Retreat (Southeast Virginia)

This retreat is hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension, is geared towards landowners who are new to forest management, provides information on both hardwood and pine forest management, offers chances for interaction with natural resource professionals from various agencies in Virginia, as well as with other landowners, provides information on estate planning, management planning and certification, and provides hands-on experience with tree identification, forestry equipment, and more...

September 25-26: Forest Farming Intensive Growing Under the Forest Canopy

This weekend intensive will provide an overview of forest farming from the forest floor to the shelf. We'll explore the basics of growing woodland medicinals, the economics of forest products, value-added and natural product development, Academic and industry experts will address regionally adapted, sustainable forestry operations from propagating and cultivating, to harvesting, processing and marketing forest products. Participants will gain knowledge on a variety of plants including ginseng, goldenseal, black cohosh, and various tree nuts. On Sunday, a choice of Farm Tours will be available to see hands on what growers are doing on the ground. The goal of this workshop is to train beginning

forest farmers, both novices and experienced farmers, landowners and land lessees, to develop income streams and economic growth while also promoting forest health and diversity.

September 28: Sweet Potato Varieties and Taste Test

Carolyn Quinn, the 2020 VSU Small Farmer of the Year Award recipient will host a sweet potato pie tasting with several sweet potato varieties to sample such as the heirloom White Hayman, Hernandez, Ginsing, Marisaki and All Purple. Attendees will cast their vote for their favorite variety of sweet potato pie. Tracy Porter, the VSU SFOP Regional Program Assistant will be on hand to answer any questions about variety selection, integrated pest management for sweet potatoes, and how to plant, drip irrigate, hill, harvest, cure and store sweet potatoes.

September 28: Cumberland State Forest Tour

Want to put your woods to work for you? Join us to see forest management in action at the Cumberland State Forest. Virginia Department of Forestry staff will show you the full cycle of pine forestry, from planting through harvest. We'll also see examples of how forest management benefits wildlife, and learn what to do (and what not to do) with hardwoods. Space limited to 15 participants.

September 28-October 1: Virginia Forestry Summit

This year's Summit features a dynamic lineup on the hottest topics in Virginia forestry today. Whether you're looking for insightful, big picture perspective on markets, or are more keenly focused on challenges and opportunities closer to home, the 2021 Summit has something for you.

September 29: How to Dig, Cure, and Store Sweet Potatoes

Tracy Porter, a VSU SFOP Regional Program Assistant will provide a lecture and a pre-recorded video on how to dig, cure and store sweet potatoes. Marketing strategies will also be discussed. Tracy has years of experience planting and harvesting sweet potatoes. This workshop will help all beginning farmers and those looking to increase value.

October Events

October 2: Small Engine Storage, Maintenance and Repair

William Lewis a retired Career and Technical Education (CTE) Agriculture Education instructor with 35 years of experience will be the presenter for the workshop . He taught the small engines class as a volunteer for 5 years and he is currently the instructor. William is also an Adjunct Professor of Agriculture in the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University . He will be assisted in the workshop by Roland Terrell and Michael Carter Sr. Regional Program Assistants with the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program.

October 5: Weed Control with Goats

Join us on Slade Family Farm in Surry, Virginia to learn how to use goats to control weeds on your farm. Topics will include breed considerations, stationary and mobile fencing options, mob grazing, rotational grazing, solar powered fence energizers, predator control, supplementary feeding with hay, housing, watering systems and more. Dennis Williams of Bees Knees Farm in King William Virginia will demonstrate two mobile fence systems that he uses on his farm. Tracy Porter will discuss how to make your own solar powered fence charger to keep your goats in and predators out. And Clif Slade will share with you his first time experience with using goats to keep weeds down in his sweet potato fields.

October 6: Estate Planning Essentials: Steps to Protect You & Your Family

This Workshop will explain essential provision you need to include in your documents to accomplish your objectives during your lifetime, when disabled, and upon your death. This is a free in-person workshop. Refreshments will be served and seating is limited. Please register by October 1, 2021 at <https://tinyurl.com/EstatePlanningWorkshopVCE>

October 8: Mapping with Drones for Precision Agriculture

With increasingly more potential benefits from the use of drones in Agriculture and the availability of drones designed especially for agricultural applications, it is important for Small Farmers to understand the basic introduction to drones in agriculture. Learn the concept of precision agriculture by means of drone applications. These applications can readily facilitate information through aerial photography and maps that can help to make decisions to improve yields and lower operational costs.

October 12-13: 2021 Advanced Grazing School Ranching for Profit

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council has partnered with the American Farmland Trust and the Mountains to the Bay Grazing Alliance to bring the professional Ranching for Profit Workshops to the heart of Virginia. Learn from cattleman, rancher, instructor and CEO of the Ranch Management Consultants, Dallas Mount, in a 2-day Ranching for Profit Workshop.

October 12-14: Mid-Atlantic Urban Agriculture Summit

This event launched five years ago and was formerly known as the Virginia Ag Summit. New in 2021, organizers at Virginia Cooperative Extension have extended it to the entire Mid-Atlantic region to facilitate the sharing of even more knowledge and experiences. They invite urban farmers, gardeners, policymakers, government officials, foodies and other interested individuals to three partial days of: Learning about one of agriculture's fastest-growing sectors, virtual tours of successful urban farms, and virtual networking.

October 21: USDA Information Session

Join us for an inviting conversation with various agencies of USDA including Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS) among others. USDA officials from around the state will share the agencies programs and opportunities for small farmers and will answer your questions concerning eligibility and participation. Join us to stay informed on all the new and current programs USDA has to assist our Virginia farmers.

October 21-22: Solar-powered Water Pumping Systems for Livestock

This in-person and hands-on workshop is focused on water pumping systems for livestock. Participants will learn the principles and applications of solar-electric water pumping. The primary focus will be on solar-powered water pumping systems, however, some other alternatives will be discussed too. Learn more about these systems, some considerations for their use, and hear farmer experiences.

October 22-23: Beginning Woodland Owner's Retreat (Central Virginia)

This retreat is hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension, is geared towards landowners who are new to forest management, provides information on both hardwood and pine forest management, offers chances for interaction with natural resource professionals from various agencies in Virginia, as well as with other landowners, provides information on estate planning, management planning and certification, and provides hands-on experience with tree identification, forestry equipment, and more...

October 23: Introductory Workshop: Micro-hydro Power Systems

Please join us for an introductory workshop exploring micro-hydro systems and applications for energy generation. Participants will learn the principles and applications of hydro-electric water pumping. Learn more about these systems and some key considerations for their use. The session will begin with presentations in the morning through lunch, followed by an optional site visit in the afternoon to a field site approximately 6 miles away for in-person site assessment work. Please note, rugged terrain and difficult access to field site.

Fall and Winter Events

November 5: Mapping with Drones for Precision Agriculture

With increasingly more potential benefits from the use of drones in Agriculture and the availability of drones designed especially for agricultural applications, it is important for Small Farmers to understand the basic introduction to drones in agriculture. Learn the concept of precision agriculture by means of drone applications. These applications can readily facilitate information through aerial photography and maps that can help to make decisions to improve yields and lower operational costs.

November 6: Drip Irrigation Layout

The goal behind drip irrigation is to place water directly into the root zone and minimize evaporation. The changing and unpredictable climate does not allow us to control water to our crops. This workshop will teach you how to set up a drip irrigation system, that will allow you to control proper water to the roots of the plants.

November 17: How to Winterize Bee Hives

Hosted by VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program. Registration opening soon.

November 17: Alternative Ways to Improve Soil Health

Registration opening soon.

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.

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