



# Newsblast

September 4, 2024

Photo by Kristaps Ungurs

## *A Message from VBFRC*

Hello everyone! We hope September is treating you well. There are a number of workshops, programs, and opportunities we are excited to share with you in this newsblast. We hope you enjoy!

*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 Highlight*

We are excited to announce our new Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Certification Program. This 13-month hybrid program, running from November 2024 to November 2025, is designed to support historically underserved farmers in Virginia, the Maryland Eastern Shore, and North Carolina. Participants will gain essential skills in agribusiness production, financial management, whole farm planning, and marketing strategies.

Applications are due by September 27, so don't miss this opportunity to join the first cohort of 10 to 15 farmers.

For more information and to apply, visit our [website](#) or contact Katie Trozzo at [ketrozzo@vt.edu](mailto:ketrozzo@vt.edu).

Note: Green underlined text is a link

## Announcements

### Beginning Farmer and Rancher Certification Program

The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Certification Program is a 13-month comprehensive educational initiative offered by the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition. Supported by Virginia Tech's Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation and Virginia State University's Small Farm Outreach Program, this hybrid program combines online and in-person learning to equip historically underserved farmers in Virginia, the Maryland Eastern Shore, and North Carolina with essential skills to successfully operate a farm. Key topics include agribusiness production, financial management, whole farm planning, and marketing strategies. Ten to 15 farmers will be selected to participate in the first cohort, which runs from November 2024 to November 2025. For More Information and To Apply Visit our website. Applications are due by September 27 at 5:00 PM Eastern.

### Relaunch of the Virginia Produce Safety Website

We are excited to announce the relaunch of our fully updated and reorganized website! The site now includes new materials on assessing on-farm risks, CEA-related topics, GAP certification, FSMA, value-added products, consumer food safety, and more. Key sections also feature "roadmaps" to help guide users through the content.

### Forest Farming Interest / Experience Survey

The Accelerating Forest Farming in Central Appalachia Team would LOVE to hear from you! The Appalachian Regional Commission recently sponsored a project through its Appalachian Regional Initiatives for Stronger Economies (ARISE) program focused on improving services and infrastructure for forest farmers. This short survey will help organizations learn about your needs and interests. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for general reporting purposes. Please provide your contact information if project leaders want to contact you for more discussion. The survey should take between 5 and 15 minutes depending on your level of experience.

## Series

### 360 Beef Discussion Group in Goochland County

Save the Date for the 360 Beef Discussion Group gatherings every month from 6-7 pm in Goochland County! September 17, October 8. Contact Erin Small for more information (804)-556-5841.

### 360 Cut Flower Discussion Group in Goochland County

Save the Date for the 360 Cut flower Discussion Group gatherings every month from 9 – 10 am in Goochland County! September 19, October 15. Contact Erin Small for more information (804)-556-5841.

### Virginia State University, Small Farm Outreach Program Cohort Series - "Unveiling the Mystery of Palynology"

Join us for a year-long (September 25, 2024 - October 29, 2025:) cohort series designed to help producers, land stewards, agricultural stakeholders, and researchers understand the role of pollinators, pollinator plants, and palynology in various agricultural systems. This series will explore their

relationship with soil health, food safety, grazing, herd management, climate mitigation, and community revitalization. The series includes 12 meetings, with a focus on topics such as soil health, native plants, apiary production, and urban agriculture. For more information, contact Tabitha Bugg at 804.892.2997 or [tbugg@vsu.edu](mailto:tbugg@vsu.edu).

## 4 the Soil Highlights



### **Episode 24 - 18: Volunteering and Getting Your Hands Dirty**

Do you like to volunteer, dig in the soil, and get your hands dirty? Planting and harvesting vegetables, experimenting with cover crops, and reducing tillage can be great fun as well. Virginia Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener program and the Fauquier Education Farm offer two tangible ways to volunteer, dig in the soil, get your hands dirty, and give back to the community.

### **Episode 24 - 17: Horticultural Realities and Soil Health with Tim Ohlwiler of VCE Fauquier Part I**

What are the realities for building soil health in orchards and vineyards? Tim Ohlwiler is an extension agent for horticulture with Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) in Fauquier County, Virginia. Tim works with nurseries, landscapers, orchards, vineyards, small fruit growers, and vegetable growers in the Northern Piedmont Region. In this episode, Tim talks with Jeff, Mary, and Eric about horticultural realities and soil health and how he is working with orchards and vineyards to minimize soil disturbance, while also working to get school children excited and energized about soil science.

### **4 the Soil Blog**

Check out the latest 4 the Soil blog!

## September

### **September 3: Virginia Tech Sheep Center 25th Annual Production Sale (Online)**

The Virginia Tech Sheep Center will be hosting its 25th annual Production Sale exclusively online on Tuesday, September 3. We will be offering Suffolk and Dorset ram lambs and ewe lambs. Attached is a catalog with details. Additional information can be found on our web page Virginia Tech Sheep Center Production Sale.

### **September 11, 10:00 AM - Noon: Permaculture Workshop at Sandy's Plants (Mechanicsville, VA)**

Join us at Sandy's Plants, located at 8011 Bell Creek Road, Mechanicsville, VA, for a workshop on permaculture, a land management and design approach inspired by natural ecosystems. This workshop

will explore design principles that focus on working with nature rather than against it. Sandy's Plants, one of the largest suppliers of container-grown plants on the East Coast, ensures the durability of their plants by utilizing open beds. Each perennial is labeled with detailed descriptions of their traits.

**September 12, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM: Understanding Farm Loans & Insurance Coverage (Bristol, VA)**

Join us at Sugar Hollow Park—Waldo Miles Pavilion, located at 23261 Sugar Hollow Road, Bristol, VA, for an informative evening with agricultural professionals from First Bank & Trust and Felty Insurance Agency. This session will cover key topics such as financing your farm's needs, FSA financing tools, preparing to meet with your lender, and ensuring that your farm and property have the correct, complete, and customized insurance coverage. We will also discuss whether additional coverage is needed to direct market your value-added farm products. Dinner will be provided. Registration is required by September 10th.

**September 14, 2024, 8:45 AM - 12:30 PM: Christmas Tree Production Workshop (Mt. Solon, VA)**

Join us at Caritas Tree Farm, located at 309 George Waltons Road, Mt. Solon, VA 22843, for a hands-on workshop on Christmas tree production. Kyle Peer, Superintendent at Reynolds Homestead Forest Resources Research Center, and Tim Grove, grower of Caritas Tree Farm, will cover topics such as seedling selection, planting techniques, farm layout, and shearing. The workshop will also include discussions on the safe application of pesticides and herbicides. This event will feature both indoor and outdoor sessions, so please wear appropriate footwear and bring work gloves. Please pre-register by September 9th.

**September 17, 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM: Agroforestry Fundamentals (Petersburg, VA)**

Join us at Virginia State University's Randolph Farm to learn about the principles, practices, design tools, and historical context of agroforestry in Virginia. Hear from farmers and natural resource professionals about their experiences with agroforestry systems, and participate in hands-on activities, including a forest farmed mushroom demonstration. This event will provide you with a deeper understanding of agroforestry and how you can support your clients with these practices. Lunch is provided. More information is available in the attached flyer and on our website. Register soon to secure your space.

**September 17, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM: Building a Climate-Resilient Farm through Permaculture Design (Petersburg, VA)**

Join us at the VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion, located at 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA 23803, for a workshop on building a climate-resilient farm through permaculture design. Discover how implementing a permaculture-based plan can help farms and ranches quickly recover from weather-related disasters and minimize or even eliminate these setbacks altogether.

**September 17, 2024, 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM: Essentials of Sheep and Goat Management (Emporia, VA)**

Join us at the VCE Greenville Office, located at 105 Oak Street, Emporia, VA, to learn the steps to successfully manage sheep and goats on your farm or homestead. Dr. Dahlia O'Brien, a small ruminant specialist at VSU, will discuss the selection and care of small ruminants. Tammy Holler, a nutrient management specialist, will cover pasture management and how to improve your grass variety for better grazing.

**September 17, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM: Small Farm Orientation (Zoom or Independence, VA)**

This two-hour course is designed for new farmers with zero to five years of experience operating a farm. Ben Dukes and Derrick Gooden, regional program assistants for the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program, and Dr. Nartea, extension specialist for VSU Integrated Marketing Program, will guide attendees through the process of developing a productive and profitable farm. Participants will receive a Small Farm

Orientation manual. You may attend this course either online via Zoom or in person at the G.A.T.E. Center, 122 State Rte T 1101, Independence, VA. Full details will be sent after registration.

**September 18, 10:00AM - 12:00PM: Agroforestry Farm Tour (Harrisonburg, VA)**

Join us in Harrisonburg, VA at The Farm at Willow Run, where we'll be discussing Silvopasture systems, the importance of genetic repositories, and cooperative land management. We'll begin with a short discussion followed by a walking tour and conversation about this unique system.

**September 19, 2024, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Urban Forestry (Rapidan, VA)**

Join us at the Carver Center, located at 9432 N. James Madison Highway, Rapidan, VA, to learn about the care and management of trees in urban settings to improve the urban environment. This session will cover the importance of urban forestry, best management practices in Virginia, and resources and tools developed by the USDA Southeast Climate Hub and various partners to manage climate-smart forestry in urban areas.

**September 19, 7:00 PM - 8:15 PM: Small Ruminant Webinar Series: Health & Antibiotic Resistance Q&A (Zoom)**

Join us for the Small Ruminant Webinar Series, designed to provide aspiring, early career, and experienced farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in sheep and goat production. This session will focus on health and antibiotic resistance, with speakers from across the United States. This online seminar series is held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from June to December 2024. Registered attendees will receive a Zoom link.

**September 20, 2024, Noon - 1:30 PM: How to Make Fish Fertilizer (Petersburg, VA)**

Join us at the VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion, located at 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA, for a workshop on making fish fertilizer. Fish has been used as a plant fertilizer for hundreds of years, a technique developed by indigenous people. This workshop will demonstrate how to make fish hydrosylate and fish amino acids, providing both quick and slow methods of making fish fertilizer. We will also discuss how and when to apply these fertilizers to your soil.

**September 20: Sheep Field Day and Forage-based Ram Sale (Glade Spring, VA)**

On Friday, September 20, we will be hosting a Sheep Field Day and Forage-based Ram Sale at the Southwest AREC in Glade Spring, VA. This forage-based hair sheep ram performance test includes an evaluation of parasite resistance. The educational program will center around this activity, and the top-performing rams will be sold. The Field Day will begin at noon, with the sale to follow. Attached is a flyer, and more details are available on our VT Sheep Extension site.

**September 20-21: Southeast Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat (Providence Forge, Virginia)**

Join the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension for a Landowner Retreat in Southeast Virginia. This retreat will provide information on hardwood and pine forest management, legacy planning, management planning, and more. It combines classroom instruction, field trips, and hands-on activities to teach concepts of sustainable woodland and wildlife management. For more information, contact the Virginia Department of Forestry or Virginia Cooperative Extension.

**September 20-21: Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat (Providence Forge, VA)**

Landowner Retreats are co-hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Retreats provide information on hardwood and pine forest management, legacy planning,

management planning, and more. They combine classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities to teach concepts of sustainable woodland and wildlife management.

**September 21, 2024, 10:00 AM - Noon: Drip Irrigation (Unionville, VA)**

Join us in Unionville, VA, for a workshop on drip irrigation, a method that can save water and nutrients by allowing water to drip slowly to the roots of plants. Participants will learn how to identify the necessary components for crop irrigation, which will aid in the design and installation of a drip system. Additionally, you will receive tips on how to operate and maintain the system to ensure it runs smoothly and efficiently.

**September 24, 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM: Greenhouse and Nursery Crop School (Rapidan, VA)**

Join us for the Greenhouse and Nursery Crop School at The Carver Center in Rapidan, VA. The morning session will cover greenhouse lighting techniques, reducing nursery transplant shock, and pesticide applicator recertification. The afternoon session will take place at Grelen Nursery. This event is organized by Virginia Cooperative Extension. More information and registration details are available in the attached flyer. For additional details, contact Ashley Appling, Extension Agent, VCE - Culpeper, at (540) 727-3435 or [ashappling@vt.edu](mailto:ashappling@vt.edu).

**September 24, 2024, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM: Meat Birds—Seeds of Faith Farm Tour (Brookneal, VA)**

Join us for a farm tour at Seeds of Faith Farm in Brookneal, VA. The tour will feature high tunnels, a large blueberry field, cattle, goats, and a variety of pastured poultry. Farm manager Debbie Gagon, who raises several batches of chickens for local markets each year, will provide a tour of her farm and offer step-by-step guidance on raising quality pasture-reared meat birds successfully. Learn about chick selection and ordering, feed types, feeding methods, setting up a brooder, pasture management, and processing setup. This is an outdoor event, so please dress appropriately for the weather and wear proper footwear.

**September 26, 2024: VT Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation 5-Year Anniversary Celebration (Blacksburg, Virginia)**

Join us to celebrate the 5-year anniversary of the VT Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation. The event will take place on Thursday, September 26, 2024, from 4:00 - 6:00 pm at the Virginia Tech Creativity and Innovation District Building, Main Floor, 185 Kent St. Blacksburg, Virginia. We will honor our partners and projects while looking forward to the next five years of food systems programming, research, and collaborations. Refreshments will be served, and you can enjoy the Food Moments exhibit by artist Pat Augsburg and Food Anthropologist Phyllis Ressler. Please RSVP for planning purposes.

**September 26, 2024, 10:00 AM - Noon: Fundamentals of Planting and Growing Garlic (Woodford, VA)**

Join us in Woodford, VA, for a workshop on the fundamentals of planting and growing garlic. Garlic is a wonderful crop that's easy to grow with almost no pest problems. It can be planted either in the ground or in a raised bed. Late September and October are ideal times to plant garlic in the northern Piedmont, ensuring it is done at least two weeks before the first frost and before the ground freezes. This workshop will cover the proper techniques for planting garlic, preparing the ground, and caring for it during the growing season.

**September 28, 2024, 10:00 AM - Noon: Pasture Renovation (Reva, VA)**

Join us in Reva, VA, for a workshop on pasture renovation, the process of improving species composition and extending the productive life of pastures. This workshop will cover the six critical steps for successful pasture renovation, addressing how to improve your pasture and why it is worth the effort. While pastures naturally decline over time, proper care can significantly slow down this process and maintain pasture productivity.

## October

### **Fall Forestry and Wildlife Field Tours**

Join landowners, natural resource professionals, and other outdoor lovers for day-long tours that explore a variety of sustainable forestry and wildlife management practices. Tours visit private, public, and industry-owned lands.

- October 3 -Wise County
- October 11 – Rockingham County
- October 24 – Bedford County
- October 25 - Dinwiddie County

### **October 24-25: Silvopasture 201: Design Intensive (Catawba, VA)**

Join us at the Virginia Tech Catawba Sustainability Center for advanced silvopasture training that goes beyond the basics. This design-intensive course will share the latest research, technical resources, and real-life silvopasture examples. Learn from experienced farmers and natural resource professionals and engage in hands-on design activities to put your learning into practice. This training will help you better support landowners with silvopasture technical assistance. An introductory online silvopasture course, or participation in last year's Silvopasture Fundamentals training, is a required prerequisite. Lunch is provided both days. More information is available in the attached flyer and on our website. Register soon to secure your space.

### **October 26: Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Workshop (Lynchburg, VA)**

Generation NEXT is an award-winning, nationally recognized educational program that will get you started on the right path to keeping your land intact, in forest, and in family.

## November

### **November 3, 2:00 –6:00 pm: Annual WNC Medicinal Herb Growers Grower Buyer Event (Mills River, NC)**

Join the WNC Medicinal Herb Growers for their 8th Annual Grower & Buyer Social at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension Center in Mills River, NC. Network with regional growers, attend buyer presentations, and get sourcing updates. Share samples of herbs and planting stock in this engaging event. Register today for \$12. For more information, contact [margaret\\_bloomquist@ncsu.edu](mailto:margaret_bloomquist@ncsu.edu).

## Winter

### **January 10-12: 25th Annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference! (Roanoke, VA)**

We are excited to announce new sponsorship opportunities for the Virginia Biological Farming Conference, including the Taste of Virginia Expo & Market Sponsor, Tote Bag Sponsor, and our

Demonstration Add-On. Sponsors will enjoy enhanced benefits and recognition through our extensive promotional channels. Held January 10-12, 2025, at The Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. Proposals for both Pre-Conference Workshops and Conference Sessions are due by August 29, 202

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