

Newsblast



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February 4, 2020

A Message from VBFRC

Warm wishes from the Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition! As you plan for the year ahead, check out some of these amazing events.

If you are interested in an event listed below, you can find more details by clicking the links to flyers and specific event pages given below, 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

Partner Highlights

Congratulations to the Virginia Association for Biological Farmers for hosting another successful annual conference. This year preregistration was up 14-15% with 408 pre-registrations, not counting the 45 exhibitors for the tradeshow and the 33 vendors at the Taste of Virginia tradeshow. Further, this year 80-85% of the menu was locally sourced!

To read more about the conference, check out the article written in the Roanoker titled “Resilient Thinking’ for Farms and Communities” ([Click here](#)).

General

[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. Webinars will be held from 6 PM to 8 PM on the scheduled day. Past webinars are archived on website and are available for free streaming.

[The Fauquier Education Farm 2020 Workshop Series \(Warrenton, VA\)](#)

The Fauquier Education Farm has announced their 2020 workshop series including topics such as heirloom tomatoes, regenerative agriculture, cut flowers, and 3-d Deer fencing. See their full schedule at the link above.

[VSU's Small Farm Educational Outreach Programs from January to June 2020](#)

These educational workshop, demonstrations, and tours across the state are offered by Virginia State University and Virginia Cooperative Extension and intended to help pave the way to sustainable farming.

February 2020

[February 12: Agritourism Safety in Virginia Webinar \(Zoom call\)](#)

An overview of Virginia Agritourism, as well as the importance of the industry to the Commonwealth, will be presented by Livvy Preissler of Virginia Cooperative Extension. Agritourism Safety will be explained and discussed for producers that have agritourism operations or producers that are possibly looking to diversify and begin an agritourism operation. Topics will include: insurance, signage, employee and visitor safety, and much more.

[February 13: Mid-Atlantic Women in Agriculture Conference \(Dover, DE\)](#)

The conference goals are to provide women involved in agriculture an opportunity to come together to learn about current issues and topics so they can make informed decisions concerning their agribusinesses and family lives. Sessions will cover topics in marketing, financial, production and legal.

[February 16: Application Deadline for FARM Intern Recruitment \(Abingdon, VA\)](#)

The FARM Student Internship allows high school and college students who are or have participated in Ag education programs to be connected with mentor farmers. From producing and harvesting to managing a small enterprise, students will have the opportunity to be mentored by experienced producers and establish long-term relationships to further develop their skills into permanent professional experiences. Appalachian Sustainable Development is offering a Farmer And Rancher Mentoring (FARM) Program in 2020 that consists of a 200 hour on-farm internship. Applications are due February 16, 2020.

[February 19: Whole Farm Planning: An Introductory Training for Socially Disadvantaged & U.S. Military Veteran New, Beginning Farmers and Ranchers \(Machipongo, VA\)](#)

Whole Farm Planning puts beginning farmers in a good position to maintain or improve profitability while enhancing their sustainability. Whole Farm Planning helps beginning farmers define long- and short-term goals to help you achieve a better quality of life at home and in your community.

[February 20: Whole Farm Planning: An Introductory Training for Socially Disadvantaged & U.S. Military Veteran New, Beginning Farmers and Ranchers \(Halifax, VA\)](#)

Whole Farm Planning puts beginning farmers in a good position to maintain or improve profitability while enhancing their sustainability. Whole Farm Planning helps beginning farmers define long- and short-term goals to help you achieve a better quality of life at home and in your community.

[February 20: Dr. Monica White to Speak at Virginia Tech \(Blacksburg, VA\)](#)

Dr. White is the author of *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement*, which "expands the historical narrative of the black freedom struggle to embrace the work, roles, and contributions of southern black farmers and the organizations they formed."

[February 20: Farm Safety Dinner Theatre \(Syria, VA\)](#)

A roast beef dinner, a 2 act production about farm safety, and a discussion to follow hosted by Madison County Cooperative Extension.

[February 20-21: 2020 Virginia Women in Agriculture Gathering \(Goochland, VA\)](#)

"We cordially invite you to join us for the 3rd annual 2020 Virginia Women in Agriculture Gathering, which will kick off with an in-depth farm transition workshop on Thursday, February 20 and ending with a full day of conference speakers, sessions, and networking on Friday, February 21 from 9:15-3:30 (8:30 registration). This event will take place at the Goochland Agriculture Center at Central High School (2748 Dogtown Road, Goochland 23063) and 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. In addition to a suite of concurrent ag topic sessions throughout the Friday program, this year's conference will also have special emphasis on farm business structure and legal considerations as well as managing farm stress. Speakers will be industry leaders from across the region."

[February 22: Women in Agriculture Conference 2020 \(Lebanon, VA\)](#)

"The Women in Agriculture Conference is designed for anyone interested to come learn in an atmosphere where all questions are good questions and welcomed! We are excited to offer youth activities for youth that are 5– 13 years old this year! We also hope youth 14-18 years old join us for our regular sessions. Join us at the roundtable as four local farm women entrepreneurs share their secrets to success while remaining on the farm! We have a diverse agenda that we hope offers something for everyone!" ([Click here for the Brochure](#)).

March 2020

[March 6-8: The Organic Growers School Spring Conference \(Mars Hill, NC\)](#)

"The Spring Conference is a one-of-a-kind event that offers regionally specific workshops on organic growing and sustainable living. Our mission is to provide down-to-earth, practical advice while remaining affordable and accessible."

[March 12: Virginia Berry School \(Petersburg, VA\)](#)

The two-day school will provide experienced and beginning Virginia berry growers with the latest research and information about starting a berry enterprise and production management of berry crops, including blueberries and blackberries.

[March 17-18: Veteran Farmers Conference: Boots to Roots \(Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA\)](#)

Join veteran farmers, landowners and agriculture professionals 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.

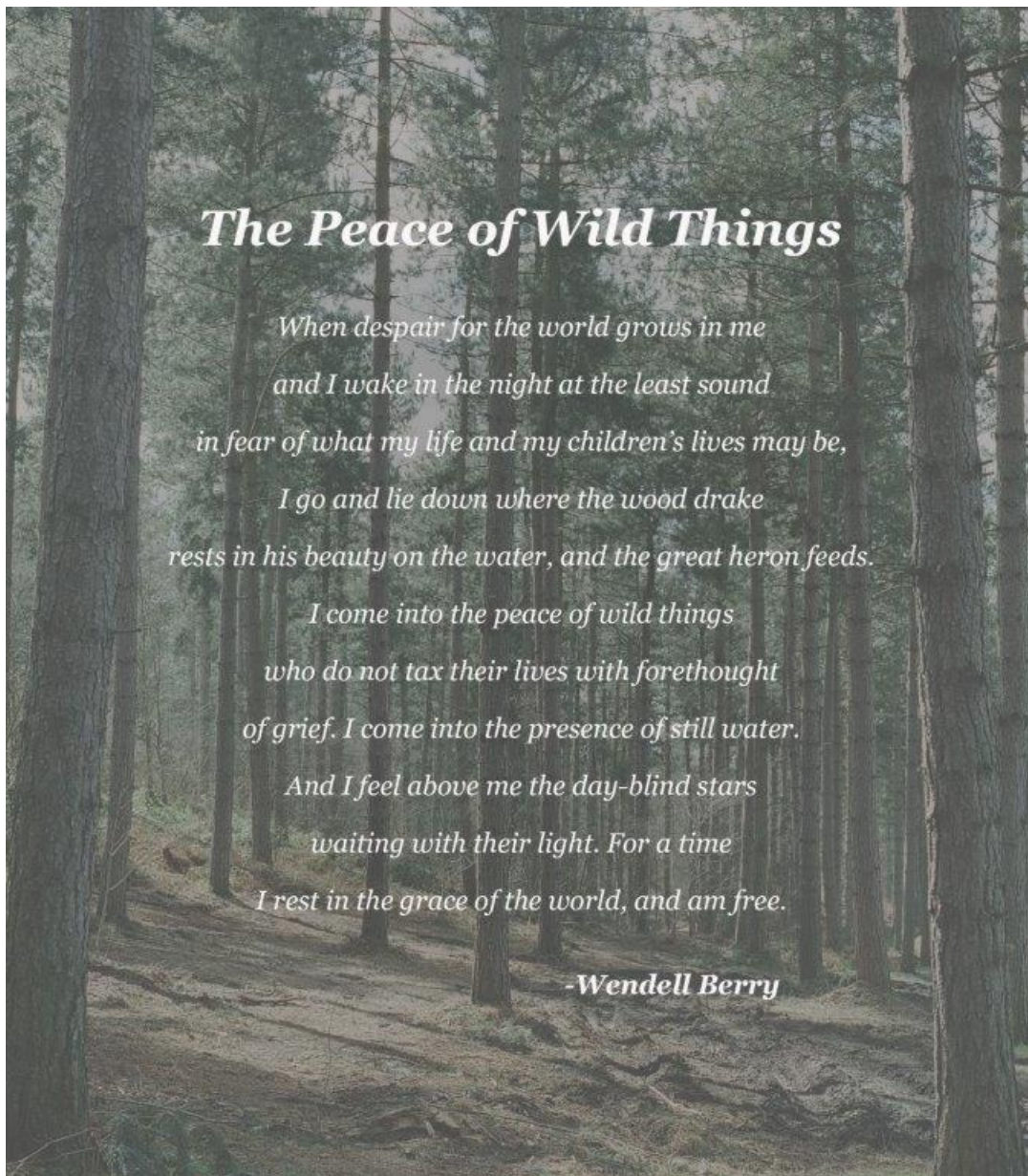
[March 25-May 2: An Introduction to Getting Your Hand Dirty \(Warrenton, VA\)](#)

The Northern Piedmont Beginning Farmer Program (NPBFP) is pleased to offer, An Introduction to Getting Your Hands Dirty. This is a 6 week course with 2 Saturday labs at the Fauquier Education Farm and one farm tour. This course is

intended for serious gardeners and Beginning Farmers who want to sharpen their production skills by broadening their basic level knowledge of the tools and concepts of professional crop production. ([Click here for the Program Flier](#)).

[March 30-April 1: Virginia Agritourism Conference \(Smithfield, VA\)](#)

A two-day conference including agritourism farm tours and educational programs for beginning agritourism producers, experienced agritourism producers and marketing programs. More details will follow.



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 was sponsored by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Southern Risk Management Education Center Grant. For more information about the program or funding, contact Kim Niewolny, Program Director and Extension Specialist, at niewolny@vt.edu or 540-231-5784.