

# VIRGINIA Beginning Farmer & Rancher COALITION PROGRAM



vabeginningfarmer.org December 2018 Page 1

## Programming Highlights 2018

The VBFRC has been hard at work this year offering educational workshops and opportunities, creating learning materials, and addressing issues facing Virginia's beginning farmers and ranchers. A few highlights from our 2018 programming include:

Virginia State University, with the aid of a USDA Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program grant, has been offering farmer trainings and mentoring opportunities for socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers in 64 Virginia counties.

Virginia Tech, as part of a partnership with University of California, Santa Cruz and New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, received a USDA Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Educational Enhancement Team grant and is working to improve evaluation process and outcomes used for beginning farmer training.

Virginia Cooperative Extension specialists and agents at Virginia Tech are completing two Southern Risk Management Education Center grants. The first, Farm to Fork Direct Marketing Initiative, will make direct marketing training materials available online. The second, Food as a Business, has a focus on creating educational materials about food businesses.

Another team of partners, including VCE, Virginia Fresh Produce Food Safety Team, the Agua Fund Inc., USDA-NRCS, Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction, Local Food Hub, and Future Harvest—Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, is working on a Local Food Promotion grant, aiming to increase promotion of local and regional foods produced and marketed by small and mid-sized farms and food businesses.

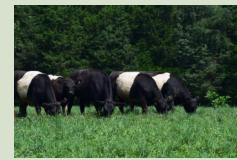
In March, Amy Fannon, VCE agent in Lee County, helped a group of 10 women in southwest Virginia complete an Annie's Project training. These women learned about risk assessments on their farms, personal finance, estate planning, marketing, soil health, and farm and food safety—all over the course of two months, meeting weekly. The class was a success, and several members of the group, along with Amy, continued to meet past the end of the training through the summer and fall.



## A Special Thanks to our 2018 Advisory Group!

Without the contributions by Emily Heizer-Hall, Jessica Palmer, Kiley Clevenger, Marc Pahl, Patrick Johnson, Ramon Arancibia, Rick Cavey, and Rosalea Potter, we would not have been able to accomplish all the great things we did this year!

## Addressing Start-Up and Sustainability Issues



### Farm Safety, Health, and Wellness

The farm safety team worked this year to research and compile existing work and resources, now available on the VBFRC website. The team surveyed providers across Virginia on farm safety needs and submitted a Southern Risk Management Education Center grant to hopefully continue their work in 2019.

### Land Access

The land access team also spent time this year compiling available resources. There have been several events this year addressing land access, offered by VSU/VCE, Piedmont Environmental Council, Farm Credit Knowledge Center, and other partners.

### Market Access

The market access team is continuing their work by way of the Farm to Fork Direct Marketing grant work. Direct marketing materials training is going to be made available in an online format to enable more individuals across the state to offer trainings in the future without having to develop curriculum on their own.

### Women in Agriculture

This team has been developing a backbone system to support service providers and farmers interested in workshops for women in agriculture. Annie's Project trainings are already underway in Virginia, with several trainings being offered this year and more to come in 2019.

### Farmer Veteran Coalition

This November, our FVC advisor for beginning farmers, Marc Pahl, was able to attend the 2018 Farmer Veteran Stakeholders Conference in Kansas City, MO. He states, "This was the best turnout to the stakeholder's annual conference yet, and the camaraderie was intense in a great way. A common theme is networking to expand your opportunities. It was an honor to hear from all of the panelists and I'd encourage any beginning veteran farmer struggling with motivation to look up veteran name Mike Reynolds—what an inspiration! Aside from the wisdom and encouragement, there's the real issue that the state of Agriculture today is a crisis situation fueled by the lack of younger farmers with interest, combined with the aging farmers that will make turnover high. I'd encourage veterans to attend this conference if they should have the chance in the future. If nothing more, it will leave you feeling close to the noble mission of growing/providing our nation's food!"

**To join an action team to help move this work forward, contact Allyssa Mark at [allys91@vt.edu](mailto:allys91@vt.edu)**

# VIRGINIA Beginning Farmer & Rancher COALITION PROGRAM



vabeginningfarmer.org December 2018 Page 2

## Coalition Partner Highlight: The Independence Farmer's Market

It's blustery cold morning the Friday after Thanksgiving, yet dozens of shoppers park, adjust hats, gloves and coats, and briskly walk towards the Independence Farmers Market to pick-up preordered pesticide-free Christmas trees and shop the many vendors booths - some filled with local crafts, but a few with meats and produce...those hardy farmers able to continue producing long after most gardens are a frosted over faint memory. The market typically closes the second week in October, but reopens on *Green Friday* for two consecutive weeks to give local farmers, crafters and patrons one more chance at the outdoor market. The market continues to operate an online weekly market that permits year round operations.

A local grower/producer market, the Independence Farmer's Market is open seasonally on Wednesdays 4:00-6:00 p.m. and Fridays 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. featuring local, naturally raised meats, local and heirloom vegetables, baked goods, herbs, arts and crafts and breakfast at the market. Throughout the season, vendors provide customers with goods grown or made with pride. Ask them for recipes or helpful food preparation tips. The market offers special events throughout the market season, featuring Farm Fresh Kids Day, contest, raffles and local musicians. During the offseason they hold winter workshops to encourage and educate new farmers and customers on farmer's market goods and services. Stop by and see them at the crossroads of Hwy 58 and 21 in historic Independence, Virginia.



A  
P  
P  
L  
E  
  
F  
E  
S  
T  
I  
V  
A  
L

**Mission:** The Independence Farmer's Market aims to provide access to local and healthy foods; to support local farms and market gardens; to educate the public about agriculture, healthy eating habits and local foods; to enrich the lives of the community; and to promote sustainable agricultural practices

**Vision Statement:** The creation of a community based market which provides healthy local food while fostering civic pride, community involvement, social and environmental benefits. A community capable of providing a food supply which financially supports local citizens.

With the assistance of The Farmers Market Coalition <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/>, the market was able to create and collect metrics to determine impact to the local community in ways not typically consider in everyday food shopping. Considering they are in the initial discussions with the Town of Independence to assist in providing a permanent market structure, impact to community is a viable means to communicate economic and community importance.

2018

## Independence Farmers Market

Independence Farmers Market provides the best of local produce, meat, eggs, plants, and baked goods to our community. Enthusiasm, education and a social gathering spot are what makes the Independence Farmers Market unique.



The market is supported by a volunteer Board of Directors elected directly from the market vendors, as well as a paid Market Manager. All of the elected volunteer and paid positions ultimately answer to the membership.

**Learn More At**  
<http://www.independencefarmersmarket.org>

**Stay in touch:**  
[independencefarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:independencefarmersmarket@gmail.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/independencefarmersmarketva>



# VIRGINIA Beginning Farmer & Rancher COALITION PROGRAM



vabeginningfarmer.org

December 2018 Page 3

## Whole Farm Planning Courses and Workshops to Continue in 2019

Several of our Coalition partners will be offering whole farm planning courses and workshops this year. These events take place in a number of locations and provide participants with classroom instruction, farmer-to-farmer networking, and resources from our VBFRC *Whole Farm Planning* curriculum and Coalition service provider network. Below is a list of upcoming workshops and completed events to attend next year. For more details, please visit the [Whole Farm Planning](#) page of our website.

### VSU Whole Farm Planning for Beginners Series

Virginia State University, Small Farm Outreach Program — *full day workshops across Virginia during winter 2018-2019*

### Certified Farm Seekers Program

VA Farm Bureau Young Farmers and the VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services — *networking and resource intensive self-study available throughout 2019*

### Virginia Tech Catawba Sustainability Center

*Hands-on events and opportunities continuing in 2019*

### Whole Farm Planning in Southwest Virginia

Appalachian Sustainable Development and VCE — *topical workshops and mentoring ongoing*

### Northern Piedmont Beginning Farmer Program

VCE and Fauquier Education Farm — *multiple-week course during Jan-Mar 2019*

## Coalition Welcomes Allegheny Mountain Institute

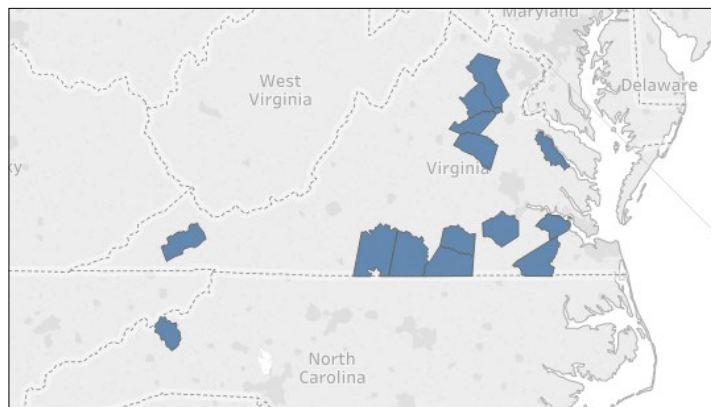


Allegheny Mountain Institute (AMI) is a 501(c) 3 educational non-profit organization with the mission to cultivate healthy communities through food and education. The vision of AMI is a thriving network of collaborative, vibrant communities who value the connection between food and health. Since 2011, AMI has trained its Fellows to become leaders that go forth and improve local food systems by increasing food access and teaching nutrition and farming. AMI seeks to build community, and ensure that every member in that community has access to fresh, healthy food that enables them to take charge of their health and improve their quality of life.

For more information, visit: [alleghenymountaininstitute.org/](http://alleghenymountaininstitute.org/)

## Coalition Programming Evaluation Highlights in 2018

This year, the VBFRC surveyed **428 participants** across **33 workshops** in Virginia. The map below shows all of the counties in Virginia and North Carolina in which at least one workshop was offered.



The participants at these programs included men and women from across the state, with ages ranging from under 18 to over 60. Participants primarily self-identified as white, but over a quarter of participants identified as belonging to a racial minority. Many participants grew up on a farm or had some farming experience and knowledge, but others had no farm background before attending the workshop.

With the formation of the Virginia Chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition, the VBFRC has made increased efforts this year to reach veteran farmers. In 2018, 69 individuals identified as being veterans, 14 were in the Reserves or National Guard, and 2 were on active duty.

**50**  
Limited  
Resource  
Farmers

**58**  
Socially  
Disadvantaged  
Farmers

**25**  
Farm  
Workers

**112**  
Female  
Farmers

The VBFRC is excited to continue working with farmers and ranchers across the state. We will continue our efforts to reach veteran, female, socially disadvantaged, and other historically underserved audiences as we offer programs in the new year.

# VIRGINIA Beginning Farmer & Rancher COALITION PROGRAM



[vabeginningfarmer.org](http://vabeginningfarmer.org)

December 2018 Page 4

## Beginning Farmer Webinar Series

Our beginning farmer webinar series continued this year beginning in the summer. The Coalition surveyed its partners and farmer audience to get feedback on which speakers and topics to include in the series. Visit the [Webinar](#) page on our website to view past webinars. The topics covered by this year's webinar series included:

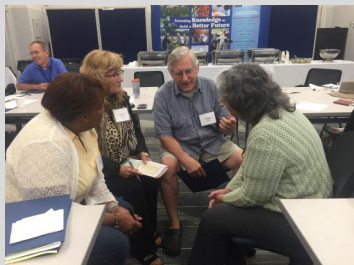
- *The State of the Craft: Virginia Hops Enterprise Budget and Market Analysis*—Dr. Kim Morgan and Ben Garber, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech
- *Virginia Community Garden Network* - Kelli Scott, VCE—Montgomery County Agriculture & Natural Resources; and Meredith Johnson, Family Nutrition Program; Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Programming Coordinator
- *Understanding Fresh Produce Purchasing Considerations to Increase Access by Local Producers to Virginia's Market Sectors*—Amber Vallotton, Extension Specialist, School of Plant & Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech; and Kelli Scott, VCE—Montgomery County Agriculture & Natural Resources

If you have suggestions for speakers or topics you would like to see in next year's Beginning Farmer webinar series, let us know at [vabeginningfarmer@vt.edu](mailto:vabeginningfarmer@vt.edu)

## VBFR Statewide Gathering at Randolph Farm

On July 25, 2018, the Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition partners and friends gathered again at the Virginia State University Randolph Farm in Petersburg, VA. This year's meeting included a farmer panel and breakout sessions addressing critical issues facing beginning farmers and ranchers across the state.

The gathering ended with a tour of the Randolph Farm. Participants rode in a tented trailer to visit the farm's fields and greenhouses.



## Recent Events and Events to Attend in 2019

Visit the [Events](#) page on our website to find a number of workshops, conferences, farm tours, and more! Below is an abbreviated list of opportunities sponsored by Coalition members and other provider networks that you may have attended this year or will be at in 2019:

- June 2018: VSU/USDA Field Day at Randolph Farm, Petersburg, VA
- November 2018: VSU Small Farm Outreach Conference, Danville, VA
- November 2018: Virginia Farm Bureau Annual Convention, Hot Springs, VA
- December 2018: Virginia Farm to Table Conference, Weyers Cave, VA
- January 2019: Future Harvest: Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (CASA) Conference, Hyattsville, MD
- January 2019: Virginia Association for Biological Farming Conference, Richmond, VA
- February 2019: MidAtlantic Women in Agriculture Conference, Dover, DE

To learn more or to share your events, please visit the [Events](#) page on our website, our Facebook page, or join our Listserv.

## Join the conversation online! Social media from the VBFRCP!

- ♦ VBFR Website: [vabeginningfarmer.org](http://vabeginningfarmer.org)
- ♦ Read our Blog: [news.cals.vt.edu/vabeginningfarmer/](http://news.cals.vt.edu/vabeginningfarmer/)
- ♦ Like VBFR on Facebook: [facebook.com/VABeginningFarmer/](https://facebook.com/VABeginningFarmer/)
- ♦ VBFR YouTube Channel: [youtube.com/user/VABeginningFarmers](https://youtube.com/user/VABeginningFarmers)
- ♦ VBFR Instagram: [instagram.com/vabeginningfarmer/](https://instagram.com/vabeginningfarmer/)
- ♦ VBFR Flickr: [flickr.com/photos/virginiabeginningfarmers](https://flickr.com/photos/virginiabeginningfarmers)



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) Award #2017-70011-26861, and the Southern Risk Management Education Center Grant #545015. For more information, contact Kim Niewolny, Program Director and Extension Specialist, at [niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu) or 540-231-5784.

**Virginia  
Cooperative  
Extension**

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, race, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, 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 McKinnis, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.