

VIRGINIA Beginning Farmer & Rancher COALITION PROGRAM



www.vabeginningfarmer.org

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Greetings from the Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition Program

The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program (VBFRCP) team has been having a really good year! We have much to be thankful for from the many wonderful beginning farmers and ranchers we work with to the Coalition educators that help keep us moving forward. We are especially grateful to have received our 2nd Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grant funded by the USDA for 2014-2017. This funding will enable the VBFRCP to continue offering high quality trainings, resources, mentoring, webinars, networking, and more! This newsletter edition highlights many of our these opportunities for you to tap into and learn from!

— Kim Niewolny, Director of the VBFRCP

Whole Farm Planning Courses and Workshops

Thanks to our newest round of USDA funding, we once again offered local programs designed for beginning farmers and ranchers to establish and sustain viable agricultural operations through whole farm planning curriculum and resources. 2015 was a successful program year with several courses and workshops offered, and more are on the way. These events take place in a number of locations and provide participants with classroom instruction, farmer-to-farmer networking, and resources from our Whole Farm Planning curriculum and Coalition service provider network. Below is a list of program completed with prospect dates to attend next year. Please visit our website, www.vabeginningfarmer.org, for more details.

Certified Farm Seekers Program

Team: VA Farm Bureau Young Farmers and the VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

When: Year long

Contact: Katie Myer at certifiedfarmseekers@gmail.com

VSU Whole Farm Planning for Beginners

Team: Virginia State University, Small Farm Outreach Program

When: Winter and spring 2016

Contact: Jim Hankins at (804) 892-4492 or jhankins@vsu.edu

Growers' Academy

Team: Virginia Tech's Catawba Sustainability Center and VCE

When: Winter 2016

Contact: Josh Nease at 540-553-2311 or jnease@vt.edu

Whole Farm Planning in Southwest Virginia

Team: Appalachian Sustainable Development and VCE

When: Fall 2015 and winter 2016

Contact: Tamara McNaughton at tmcnaughton@asdevelop.org

Northern Piedmont Beginning Farmer Program

Team: VCE and Fauquier Education Farm

When: Winter and spring 2016

Contact: Jim Hankins at (804) 892-4492 or jhankins@vsu.edu

Farmer Mentoring

The VBFRCP mentoring program develops and strengthens relationships through networking to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills of experienced farmers and the beginning farmer and rancher community. For 2015-2016, our goal is to focus on local community mentoring in three locations across Virginia. Our farmer mentor coordinators are VCE agents who work with their individual groups to hold on-farm events and a number of hands-on learning experiences to link beginning farmers with experienced farmers. Ideally, this programming is designed for those individuals who have already participated in our whole farm planning programs and coursework. If you are interested in participating in one of our farm mentor networks, or you would like to inquire about becoming a mentor or mentee, please contact:

New River Valley: Kelli Scott, kescott1@vt.edu, Montgomery County, working with Certified Farm Seekers and local NRV whole farm planning opportunities

Far Southwest: Amy Fannon-Osborne, afannon@vt.edu, Wise County, working with Appalachian Sustainable Development and local Far SWVA whole farm planning opportunities

Northern Piedmont: Jim Hilleary, jim.hilleary@vt.edu, Loudon County, working with Fauquier Education Farm and local Loudon County whole farm planning opportunities



Kentland Farm includes plots for the Dining Services Garden, which provides fruits and vegetables for Virginia Tech Dining Services. This farm was recently part of a Twilight Tour hosted by Kelli Scott and the NRV mentor network.

Coalition Building and the VBFRCP Advisory Group

We solicited nominations for our 2015-2016 advisory group this spring, and then conducted a successful election online with our coalition members. Thank you to all who voted! Please welcome our new VBFRCP advisory group:

Adrianna Vargo, Director of Grower Services, Local Food Hub

Andy Sorrell, Coordinator of Office of Farmland Preservation, VDACS

Jim Hankins, VSU Small Farm Outreach Program and Fauquier Education Farm

John Fant, Summerfield Heritage Farm, Independence, VA

Matt Lohr, Director of Knowledge Center, Farm Credit of the Virginias

Rose Jeter, Jeter Farm, Roanoke, VA

Steve Bridge, Service Coordinator, AgrAbility Virginia

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Webinar Series for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

We are happy to continue offering free webinars that showcase important start-up topics and resources for beginning farmers and ranchers. Recent and upcoming webinar presentations include:

June 15—Farm Labor Management—Allyssa Mark, Virginia Tech, and Anne Geyer, Agriberry Farm

July 21—Enterprise Budgets—Kim Morgan, Virginia Tech

August 17—Land Transfer—Andy Sorrell and Katie Myer, VDACS

September 16—Internships and Apprenticeships on the Farm—Lorien MacAuley, Virginia Tech

Looking for a previously recorded webinar? Check out our program website for recordings of past webinars and to see what other exciting initiatives are being developed!

Are you interested in presenting a webinar? Do you have a suggestion for a topic? We would love to hear from you. The VBFRCP is seeking presenters for future webinars. If you would like to be a part of our webinar series, please contact us!

How Do They Do It? Farm Labor Case Studies

We have asked several of Virginia's finest farmers about their farm labor and management experiences and cannot wait to share their stories with you! Check our YouTube channel in the Fall to hear what they had to say!

Farm Labor Workshop at VA Farm to Table Conference

In December 2014, several members of the VBFRCP team spoke at the Virginia Farm to Table conference on labor issues for beginning and start-up farmers. The presentation concluded with a Q&A with our wonderful farmer panel: Anne and Pierson Geyer from Agriberry Farm, Rosalea Riley Potter and Chas Potter from Buffalo Creek Beef, and Jason Pall and Sally Walker from Glade Road Growing. Since this workshop, a resource on labor issues has been published and distributed.

Enterprise Budget Workshops

Throughout the winter and spring of 2015, the VBFRCP team held multiple workshops on enterprise budgets for beginning farmers. These workshops took place in several locations across Virginia and Delaware. Participants got a close-up view of what enterprise budgets are and how they can be used to promote farm success.

Events and Learning Opportunities to Attend

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, you may consider attending:

- ASD Farm Tour: Baker Homestead, Abingdon, VA—July 19
- Hay and Forage Field Day, Glade Spring, VA—July 20
- VAFB Young Farmer Summer Expo, Exmore, VA—July 24-26
- ASD Farm Tour: Kelly Ridge Farms, Meadowview, VA—July 27
- VSU Small Ruminant Field Day, Petersburg, VA—September 18
- VABF Richmond Farm Tour, Richmond, VA—October 3-4
- Virginia Urban Agriculture Summit—October 22-23
- VSU Small Farm Conference, Williamsburg, VA—Nov. 12-13
- The Virginia Aquaculture Conference, Newport News, VA—Nov. 13-14

To learn more or to share your events, please visit the Events page on our website, or our Facebook page and Listserv.



Jamie Barrett, Bellair Farm (Left) and Herbert Brown Jr. and Herbert Brown Sr., Browntown Farms (Right) are a few farmers featured in our farm labor case studies and videos to be published this Fall.

Join the conversation online with VBFRCP Social Media!

VBFRCP website: www.vabeginningfarmer.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Virginia-Beginning-Farmer-Rancher-Coalition

VBFRCP YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/user/VABeginningFarmers

VBFRCP Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/vabeginningfarmers/



The Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition Program is a state-wide and coalition-based Extension program, housed in Virginia Tech's Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Funding is sponsored by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) of the USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Award # 2015-70017-22887. Funding is also sponsored by the Southern Extension Risk Management Education Center. For more information, contact Kim Niewolny, Program Director and Extension Specialist, at niewolny@vt.edu or 540-231-5784.

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