Coalition Welcomes Allegheny Mountain Institute

The Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition is happy to announce that Allegheny Mountain Institute (AMI) has joined us as a coalition partner. AMI is a 501(c)3 educational nonprofit 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/

Whole Farm Planning Work Continues

Our whole farm planning teams, including the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program, Appalachian Sustainable Development, the Northern Piedmont Beginning Farmer Program, Black Family Land Trust, the Certified Farm Seeker Program, and Catawba Sustainability Center are continuing their work with new and beginning farmers for 2018. For more information on their work, visit: vabeginningfarmer.alce.vt.edu/planning.html

Welcome Marc Pahl to the VBFR Advisory Group

In June 2018, the VBFRC sent out a call for nominees and held an election to add a new member to the VBFRC advisory group. Marc Pahl was elected and has accepted his new role on the team.

Marc Pahl is the owner/creator of Mountain Valley Harvesst LLC, a disabled veteran owned company recognized by the Farmer Veteran Coalition to grow under the Homegrown by Heroes title and a member with Virginia Farm Bureau. We are eager to work with Marc and look forward to the perspective he will bring to the VBFRC advisory group.

Women in Agriculture—Annie’s Project off the Ground

In November of 2017, a group of Virginia Cooperative Extension agents and other agricultural service providers from Virginia and neighboring states attended an Annie’s Project facilitator training. Annie’s Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing educational programs designed to strengthen women’s roles in the modern farm enterprise. To learn more about Annie’s Project, visit the national Annie’s Project page at: www.anniesproject.org

Beginning in March, Amy Fannon 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 so successful that several members of the group, along with Amy, have continued to meet past the end of the training. The group met in June to do a farm tour on one of the women’s farms, and will be meeting every other month through the summer and fall.

There are several other Virginia Cooperative Extension agents and specialists planning to offer Annie’s Project trainings in 2018 and 2019. If you are interested in offering an Annie’s Project training near you, email Jeannie Dudding at jdudding@vt.edu to see if there is a trained Annie’s Project facilitator in your area.