



# Newsblast

March 4, 2025

Photo by Irene Dávila

## A Message from VBFRC

Luck is on your side!

This month, our NewsBlast is filled with exciting conferences, workshops, job opportunities, and program series designed to help you grow and thrive in 2025.

Wishing you a month full of golden opportunities and connections worth chasing!

*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

### Looking to Grow Your Ag Business and Embrace Innovation?

The first annual Agripalooza, hosted by the Roanoke Small Business Development Center and Virginia Western Community College, is the perfect opportunity!

Designed for agriculture business owners and entrepreneurs, this conference will explore emerging ag technologies, business strategies, and the balance between tradition and innovation.

**Join us on April 18 in Roanoke!**

**View the schedule!**

**&&**

**Get your tickets today at,**

**[roanokesmallbusiness.org/agripalooza](https://roanokesmallbusiness.org/agripalooza).**

Note: Green underlined text is a link

## Announcements

### James River Buffer Program – Free Riparian Forest Buffers for Farmers

If your farm is located within the James River watershed, you may be eligible for a free riparian forest buffer to improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and support farm biodiversity. The James River Association, Virginia Department of Forestry, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation are partnering with farmers and landowners to design, install, and maintain forest buffers for three years at no cost. The program allows you to select tree species, including income-generating options like sugar maple for syrup production. Learn more and get involved today!

### Lead Farmer / Manager – Fleur-de-lis Farms, LLC

Fleur-de-lis Farms, LLC is hiring a Lead Farmer / Manager for the 2025 season to oversee daily farm operations, including crop planning, planting, harvesting, and sales using Certified Naturally Grown practices. This seasonal, contracted position runs from February to November 2025, offering \$20.00–\$21.00/hour, paid holidays, one paid week off outside peak season, and free farm produce. Candidates should have 2–3 years of farm experience, a valid driver’s license, and familiarity with sustainable agriculture. To apply, send a cover letter, resume, and 2–3 references to [emailus@fleurdelisfarmsllc.com](mailto:emailus@fleurdelisfarmsllc.com). Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.

### Farm Crew (Seasonal) – Glade Road Growing

Glade Road Growing, a Certified Naturally Grown farm in Blacksburg, is hiring seasonal farm crew members to assist with vegetable production, pasture-raised pork and poultry, and farm stand operations. No agricultural experience is required—just a positive attitude, strong work ethic, and willingness to learn. Candidates must be physically fit, adaptable, reliable, and able to lift 40 lbs. Benefits include free produce, homemade lunches (M-F), discounted farm meats, and meal discounts at Rising Silo Brewery.

### Farm Manager – Allegheny Mountain Institute (Highland County, VA)

Allegheny Mountain Institute (AMI) is hiring a full-time, seasonal Farm Manager to oversee day-to-day farm operations at Allegheny Farm from April to October. This role is ideal for a passionate organic market farmer with experience in agro-ecology, regenerative farming, and community-based food systems. Responsibilities include vegetable production, facilities maintenance, team leadership, and supporting workshops and retreats. Candidates should have strong leadership, organizational, and mentoring skills, along with a deep commitment to sustainable agriculture. Evening and weekend work may be required.

### Farm Steward – The Community Food Collaborative (Fairfield Middle School, VA)

The Community Food Collaborative (CFC) is hiring a Farm Steward to support crop production, educational programs, and outreach at Cornerstone Farm, a collaborative initiative with Henrico County Public Schools. This 25-hour/week seasonal position (April–September) offers \$18/hour and involves tasks such as planting, harvesting, equipment maintenance, farmers’ market operations, volunteer coordination, and community engagement. Candidates should have 3+ years of farming, gardening, or food project experience, be able to lift 40 lbs., and hold a valid Virginia driver’s license. Evening and weekend availability is required. Potential for transition to a year-round Community Outreach Coordinator role in July. Apply by March 15, 2024.

### **Market and Field Staff – Bellair Farm (Charlottesville, VA)**

Bellair Farm is hiring Market and Field Staff for the 2025 season! This role involves manual labor in vegetable production and customer service at farmers' markets and CSA pickups (1–2 shifts per week). Responsibilities include harvesting, planting, weeding, irrigation, produce washing, and market sales. Candidates should be physically fit (able to lift 60+ lbs.), detail-oriented, and comfortable working in all weather conditions. Full-time (up to 40 hrs/week) and part-time positions available, starting ~April 1. Pay: \$16.50–\$17.00/hr DOE, plus free veggies & eggs, PTO, crew discounts, and farm access for walking/swimming. No experience required, but farm work or manual labor experience is a plus!

### **Part-Time Regenerative Farming Intern – Monticiano Farms, LLC**

Monticiano Farms, LLC is seeking a Regenerative Farming Intern to gain hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture. This part-time position involves assisting with soil health management, crop cultivation, livestock care, agroforestry practices, farm maintenance, and community outreach. Ideal candidates should have a passion for regenerative farming, physical stamina, strong teamwork and problem-solving skills, and a willingness to work flexible hours. Benefits include hands-on training, fresh organic produce, networking opportunities, and potential academic credit. Farming experience is a plus but not required. Apply today to join our team!

### **American Farmland Trust Biochar Survey – Closes March 8, 2025**

Farmers interested in applying biochar are invited to take the national biochar survey led by American Farmland Trust's Climate and Soil Health Initiative. This 15-minute survey helps identify factors influencing biochar use, challenges, and opportunities for greater adoption. Participants can enter a drawing to win a \$100 gift card!

### **Adopt an Established Market Garden Near Charlottesville!**

A rare opportunity awaits an experienced grower/entrepreneur to take over an established ¼-acre market garden—without land or major infrastructure costs! This unique arrangement allows the tenant farmer to grow and sell rent-free, retaining most of the net profits, with the goal of ensuring the garden's long-term sustainability. Key Features: Organic/regenerative practices required, including no/low-till methods, Fenced plot with irrigation in place, Well-established beds ready for cultivation, Ideal for a dedicated farmer looking to expand or establish their own market garden operation. If interested, please contact John Murphy at [resolutionfarms@gmail.com](mailto:resolutionfarms@gmail.com).

### **Wholesale Market Producer Survey: Now Open (Online)**

Black, Hispanic, and Tribal farmers and ranchers are invited to share their wholesale needs and experiences by participating in this important survey. Conducted by researchers from Virginia Tech and the Illinois Institute of Technology, this project aims to understand the distinct technical assistance needs of producers when accessing and scaling into wholesale markets. For more information or assistance, please contact Pratyosh Kashyap at [pratyosh@vt.edu](mailto:pratyosh@vt.edu) or Weslyne Ashton at [washton@iit.edu](mailto:washton@iit.edu).

### **We Want Your Feedback on the Virginia Quality Assured (VQA) Program!**

Your input is vital to strengthening the Virginia Quality Assured (VQA) Program. Whether you currently sell through the program or not, your feedback will help shape its future and ensure it meets the needs of Virginia's beef producers.

## **Series**

**April 3 – May 8, Thursdays 7:00 – 9:00PM: Introduction to Getting Your Hands Dirty – Beginning Farmer Course (Warrenton, VA)**

Join the Northern Piedmont Beginning Farmer Program (NPBFP) for a 6-week classroom lecture course covering the basics of vegetable and flower crop production. This course is ideal for home gardeners and aspiring commercial farmers, with topics including soil science, crop selection, pest and weed control, and farm infrastructure. A Saturday hands-on lab will take place on May 3, 1:00 – 3:00PM at the Fauquier Education Farm. For more information, contact Jim Hankins at [fauquieredfarm@gmail.com](mailto:fauquieredfarm@gmail.com)

### **Summer 2025: Central Virginia Urban Farmer Fellowship (Richmond, VA)**

The Central Virginia Urban Farmer Fellowship is a 12-week training program teaching regenerative agriculture, urban greening, and community building in Richmond, VA. Participants will gain hands-on skills to create and sustain urban green spaces, fostering community engagement, economic vitality, and environmental health. Classes meet Wednesdays (6:00 – 9:00PM) and Saturdays (11:00AM – 3:00PM), with an apprenticeship from July – September 2025. The program includes 72 total learning hours, and the registration fee is \$500 (financial assistance available). Application deadline: Friday, March 14 at 5:00PM. Must be 18+ years old to apply.

### **Backyard Poultry Zoom Series: Now Open for Registration (Online)**

Join us for this engaging Zoom series on backyard poultry care and management. Each session is free and will be held from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM ET.

- Thursday, March 6, 2025: Disease and Parasites
- Thursday, March 27, 2025: Housing, Pasture Grazing, and Predator Control
- Thursday, April 17, 2025: Humane Handling and Biosecurity
- Thursday, May 8, 2025: Going to the Market: Regulations & More

### **Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation Spring 2025 Fellows Speaker Series (Online)**

Join the *Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation* for the Spring 2025 Fellows Speaker Series, featuring experts discussing key topics in food systems, sustainability, and community resilience. Each session will provide insights from research, practice, and lived experiences in food and agricultural systems. If you are an individual with a disability and desire accommodation, please contact Lia Kelinsky-Jones at [kelinskyjones@vt.edu](mailto:kelinskyjones@vt.edu) or (540) 231-1534 during regular business hours at least 10 days prior to the event. Upcoming Sessions:

- March 19, 2pm – 3pm ET  
*Results from the 2024 Virginia Tech Employee Food Access and Wellbeing Study.* Register: [tinyurl.com/CFSTMARSERIES2025](https://tinyurl.com/CFSTMARSERIES2025)
- April 23, 2pm – 3pm ET  
*Indigenous Climate-Food-Health Nexus: Insights from Community-Engaged Research in the Global North and South.* Register: [tinyurl.com/CFSTAPRSERIES2025](https://tinyurl.com/CFSTAPRSERIES2025)
- May 29, 3pm – 4pm ET  
*Revisiting UVA's BIPOC Procurement Initiative: Successes, Challenges, and Opportunities to Wholesale Acquisition* Register: [tinyurl.com/CFSTMAYSERIES2025](https://tinyurl.com/CFSTMAYSERIES2025)

### **Fifteen Minutes in the Forest: Now Streaming (Online)**

Join us for the award-winning Fifteen Minutes in the Forest video series, featuring a wide array of topics. Videos premiere on the 4th Friday of each month at 12:15 PM ET on Facebook and YouTube.

- Friday, March 28, 2025: The Woods in Your Backyard
- Friday, April 25, 2025: Bobcats in the Bush
- Friday, May 23, 2025: Brush Piles
- Friday, June 27, 2025: Before the Storm

## FDA's FSMA Final Rule on Pre-Harvest Agricultural Water: Webinar Series Now Open for Registration

Join us for this informative webinar series on the FDA's FSMA Final Rule for Pre-Harvest Agricultural Water. Each session is free and will take place from 12:00 – 1:00 pm ET.

- **Monday, March 25, 2025:** A deeper dive into inspections, updates on implementation, and final Q&A for participants.

## 4 the Soil Highlights



### **Episode S5 - E3: Defying Obstacles and Honoring the Land with Farmer Cee (Podcast Part 1)**

Join us for *4 The Soil: A Conversation* with Clarendia "Farmer Cee" Stanley, a visionary entrepreneur, farmer, herbalist, and advocate for ethical business and sustainable living. As the founding CEO of Green Heffa Farms, Farmer Cee has built a wellness brand and herb farm dedicated to honoring the land and promoting social and environmental responsibility. Green Heffa Farms is the first Black-owned farm in the U.S. to earn the Certified B Corp credential, a testament to its commitment to sustainability. In this episode, Farmer Cee shares the obstacles she has overcome, her dedication to prosperity and entrepreneurship, and the importance of bringing underrepresented voices into conversations on sustainability and ethical living. Tune in for an inspiring discussion on caring for the planet, fostering community, and building a purpose-driven business.

### **Episode S5 - E4: Cultivating Wellness from the Soil Up with Farmer Cee (Podcast Part 2)**

Clarendia "Farmer Cee" Stanley of Green Heffa Farms believes that wellness begins with the soil. As the founding CEO of Green Heffa Farms, a Black woman-owned Certified B Corporation and herb farm, Farmer Cee is committed to sustainable agriculture, ethical business practices, and holistic wellness. In this episode of *4 The Soil: A Conversation*, she shares insights with Mary, Jeff, and Eric on how Green Heffa Farms cares for the land, stays strategically competitive, promotes transparency, and harnesses the healing power of plants. Tune in to hear how her values-based approach supports better health outcomes, sustainability, and soil regeneration for all.

### **4 the Soil Blog**

Check out the latest 4 the Soil blog!

## March

### **March 5-6, 2025 Advanced Soil Health Training (ASHT) in the Mid-Atlantic (Central MD)**

American Farmland Trust is excited to launch the 2025 Advanced Soil Health Training (ASHT) program in

the Mid-Atlantic, funded by the USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities program. In collaboration with Truterra/Land O' Lakes, AFT will sponsor and train soil health advisors to deepen their expertise and support their communities. This program is designed for experienced farmers and farm advisors, equipping them to share advanced soil health practices with a wider audience. For more information, contact [gsalazar@farmland.org](mailto:gsalazar@farmland.org).

**March 5 - 7: Remote Pilot (Drone) Certification Test Prep Workshops (Virtual)**

Join this 2-day virtual workshop designed to prepare participants for the FAA Remote Knowledge Aircraft Test (Part 107). This course provides essential knowledge on federal regulations, the best flight operational strategies, and safety procedures to help you successfully obtain your drone certification.

**March 6, 12:30 – 2:30PM: Shenandoah Valley Small Farm Summit (Harrisonburg, VA)**

Join small farmers from across the Shenandoah Valley for a luncheon and discussion on Virginia State University's Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP). This interactive session provides an opportunity to share insights, explore resources, and shape future SFOP programming in the region. Spanish interpretation will be available.

**March 6, 1:00 – 3:00PM: Growing Blueberries Workshop (Smithfield, VA)**

Join Heirloom Gardens for a hands-on workshop on blueberry cultivation, seasonal care, and pruning techniques at their U-pick farm in Isle of Wight County. Learn about the farm's journey with rabbiteye blueberries and organic farming practices, including the challenges faced along the way. Restrooms are not available on-site.

**March 12, 9:00 – 11:30AM: Aerial Imagery for Farmers (Petersburg, VA)**

Learn how aerial imagery can help with early detection of pests and disease, real-time decision-making, and improving planting, spraying, fertilizing, and yield consistency. This workshop at VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion will provide farmers with practical tools to identify and address field issues before they become major problems.

**March 12, 3:00 – 5:00PM: Farm Liability Issues Workshop (Petersburg, VA)**

Understanding farm liability is crucial for landowners and homesteaders. Join Virginia Farm Bureau agents at VSU Randolph Farm to learn about liability risks, visitor safety, and the importance of having proper insurance coverage to protect against financial loss. The session will include a Q&A opportunity.

**March 13, 2025, 6:30pm – 8pm: “ How to Make the Woods Work for You” (Orange, VA)**

Gain insights into agroforestry practices and learn how to optimize your wooded spaces. Topics include Shiitake inoculation, ginseng and goldenseal cultivation, silvopasture, and crop tree management.

**March 14–15, 9:30AM – 5:00PM: 2025 Beginner Sheep Shearing School (Dublin, VA)**

Join the Virginia Sheep Producers Association for a hands-on beginner sheep shearing school at Pulaski Livestock Market. Learn machine setup, blade selection, and full-pattern shearing with guidance from experienced shearers. Cost: \$50 per day (plus a \$25 non-refundable deposit due by March 7). Pre-registration required.

**March 16 - 17: 2025 Mid-Atlantic Grain Fair & Conference (Leesburg, VA)**

The Mid-Atlantic Grain Conference will be March 17, 2025, at Riverside on the Potomac, bringing together grain practitioners and enthusiasts from across the Mid-Atlantic grain value chain, from breeders and farmers to millers and distributors, to bakers, pasta-makers, brewers, maltsters, distillers, and other grain artisans.

**March 15, 7:00pm: The Malaga Ship: A Story of Maine and the Middle Passage (Roanoke, VA)**

Let Me Tell Ya! presents *The Malaga Ship*, a powerful tour-de-force performance by award-winning

storyteller Antonio Rocha. Through mime, song, and narration, Rocha brings to life the history of the Malaga Ship, a brig built in Maine and used in the transatlantic slave trade in the 1800s. This 45-minute performance is followed by a 30-minute talk-back session.

**March 15, 4:00 – 6:00PM: 2025 Growers Academy – Seed Starting Workshop (Warrenton, VA)**

Join Fauquier Education Farm for a Seed Starting Workshop and learn how to give your garden the best start! This session will cover timing, soil selection, light, water, and temperature to ensure healthy seed growth. While this is a class on seed starting, we will not be planting seed trays. Held in the big greenhouse! Location: 8428 Meetze Rd, Warrenton, VA Free and open to all – No registration required. For more information, contact Jim Hankins at [fauquieredfarm@gmail.com](mailto:fauquieredfarm@gmail.com).

**March 18, 9:00 – 11:00AM: Small Farm Orientation (Virtual – Zoom)**

New to farming? This two-hour virtual workshop is designed for farmers with zero to five years of experience looking to build a productive and profitable farm. Ben Dukes, Derrick Gooden, and Dr. Nartea from VSU Small Farm Outreach Program will guide participants through essential farm business strategies. Attendees will receive a Small Farm Orientation manual.

**March 18, 11:00AM – 3:00PM: VSU AgFest 2025 – National Ag Day Celebration (Petersburg, VA)**

Join Virginia State University College of Agriculture for VSU AgFest 2025, a National Ag Day celebration filled with interactive exhibits, farm animals, local food, entertainment, and hands-on activities. Enjoy hydroponic displays, a farmers' market, live music, line dancing, and a fashion showcase highlighting agriculture's connection to everyday life. Family-friendly fun includes inflatable activities, pedal carts, and educational sessions on nutrition, sustainability, and climate-smart practices. Don't miss this exciting celebration of agriculture and community!

**March 19, 9:00AM – 3:00PM: 2025 Commercial Pesticide Recertification (Weyers Cave, VA)**

The 2025 Commercial Pesticide Recertification Course will be held at Blue Ridge Community College Plecker Center in Weyers Cave, VA. This course is designed for licensed commercial pesticide applicators to maintain certification, stay updated on regulations and best practices, and ensure compliance with industry standards. For more details, contact your local extension office.

**March 19, 2:00 – 3:00PM ET: Virginia Tech Employee Food Access and Wellbeing Survey Presentation (Blacksburg, VA & Zoom)**

Join CFSCT March Fellows Series and Virginia Tech researchers for a presentation on findings from the 2024 Virginia Tech Employee Food Access and Wellbeing Survey, which examined food security among staff and non-tenure track faculty. This hybrid event will be held in-person at Newman Library Goodall Room and via Zoom (registration required). Presenters include Dr. Chanita Holmes, Dr. Sarah Misyak, and Dr. Ralph Hall.

**March 19, 9:00am – 12:00pm: Cut Flower Discussion Group (Farmville, VA)**

Join specialists from Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia Tech, and Virginia Cooperative Extension for the first session of this year's cut flower discussion group. This session will focus on techniques and business strategies for market success. Connect with fellow flower farmers from across the state to learn, grow, and network. If you would like to attend, please RSVP via email Erin Small: [erins96@vt.edu](mailto:erins96@vt.edu).

**March 20, 9:00AM – 12:30PM: Birds, Bees, and Urban Trees Workshop (Emporia, VA)**

Join Dr. Trakela Wright-Hicks, Urban Forestry Specialist at VSU, for an in-depth discussion on the connections between birds, bees, and urban trees within urban forestry ecosystems. Explore how urban sprawl and heat islands impact wildlife and learn which trees best support birdwatching, pollinators, and honey production.

**March 20, 1:00 – 5:00PM: How to Plan and Purchase a Greenhouse or High Tunnel (Petersburg, VA)**

Thinking about buying a greenhouse or high tunnel? This workshop at VSU Randolph Farm will cover types, sizing, customization, and funding options for your structure. Harry Edwards (RIMOL Greenhouse Systems) will discuss greenhouse and high tunnel options, while Dr. Theresa Nartea (VSU Integrated Marketing) will guide you in marketing strategies based on your crops. A USDA representative will present loan and grant opportunities, followed by a high tunnel site visit and layout planning session.

**March 20, 6:30 – 8:00PM: Small and Niche Meat Processing Q&A (Virtual – Zoom)**

Join the VSU Small Ruminant Team for a live Q&A webinar on small-scale meat processing and production. This session will cover building relationships with processors, maximizing profitability from cut sheets, and accessing seasonal markets. Panelists include meat processors and extension experts who will provide insights and answer participant questions.

**March 22, 10:00AM – 12:00PM: Growing Herbs for the Beginner – Part 2 (Rapidan, VA)**

Learn about the health benefits of growing herbs and their potential in value-added products at this beginner-friendly workshop. Sheila Jackson, garden coordinator for Minority Veteran Farmers of Piedmont, will share her herb-growing journey, while business owner Kae Walker will discuss how she found success using herb by-products.

**March 22, 4:00 – 6:00PM: 2025 Growers Academy – Early Spring Planting (Warrenton, VA)**

Join Fauquier Education Farm for an Early Spring Planting session and learn how to maximize your garden by planting cool-season crops like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Asian greens, peas, onions, and potatoes. Discover how early planting can boost your harvest and improve success in the growing season. Location: 8428 Meetze Rd, Warrenton, VA Free and open to all – No registration required For more information contact Jim Hankins, [fauquieredfarm@gmail.com](mailto:fauquieredfarm@gmail.com).

**March 25–26, Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training (Online)**

Virginia fruit and vegetable farms, don't miss the opportunity to attend the Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training at a highly discounted rate of just \$50 for Virginia farms, thanks to VDACS funding. This course fulfills the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule training requirement, and the certificate you receive is valid for life. Encourage attendance before rates increase to \$200–\$300. This is an invaluable opportunity for farms to meet compliance requirements and enhance produce safety knowledge.

**March 25 - 26, 1pm – 5pm: PSA Grower Training Course (Online Zoom Event)**

Gain insights into FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule) compliance through this comprehensive training. Topics include hygiene, agricultural water safety, postharvest handling, and more.

**March 26, 8:30AM – 3:00PM: Energize, Empower, and Equip – Unlocking Social and Emotional Wellness Summit (Petersburg, VA)**

Join Extension Agents, community leaders, volunteer educators, and wellness advocates at Virginia State University for a summit focused on social and emotional well-being in honor of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This event will inspire meaningful discussions and transformative actions to support healthier communities. A pre-summit event will take place on March 25, from 2:00 – 5:00PM.

**March 28–29: Central Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat (Appomattox, VA)**

Join the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension for the *Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat*, designed for landowners new to forest management. This retreat provides valuable insights into both hardwood and pine forest management while offering opportunities to connect with natural resource professionals and fellow landowners. Participants will gain hands-on experience with



tree identification, forestry equipment, and more, as well as receive essential information on estate planning, management planning, and certification. Don't miss this opportunity to learn practical strategies for managing your woodland!

**March 28–29, 2025: Women in Agriculture Gathering (The Meadow Event Park, Doswell, VA)**

Get excited for the 2025 Women in Agriculture Gathering (WAG)! This event is designed to equip female farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network, hone technical skills, and explore solutions to the unique challenges they face. Highlights Include:, Farm business basics Vegetable and small fruit production, canning, and food safety, Beef, small ruminant, and poultry production and processing, Networking with peers and local agencies. Register by March 15<sup>th</sup>!

## April

**April 1, 9:00am – 2:30pm: Beginning Farm Finance and Conservation Seminar (Danville, VA)**

Join the VA Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry for a free seminar designed for beginning farmers to explore farm financing options and cost-share conservation opportunities. This event provides valuable resources and networking opportunities, with free lunch provided by sponsors.

**April 2, 11:15AM – 12:15PM: From Phenol to PFAS – Managing Municipal Water's Industrial Terroir (Blacksburg, VA)**

Join Christy Spackman for an engaging discussion on how terroir—typically applied to food—relates to municipal water production and the impact of science and technology on sensory experiences. This talk explores how industrial processes have shaped the taste of tap water from the 20th century to today. The talk is on April 2, from 11:15am-12:15pm in the Newman Library, Rm. 207A. For disability accommodations, contact Anna Zeide (zeide@vt.edu) at least 10 business days prior to the event.

**April 4–6, 9:00AM – 3:00PM: 6th Annual Virginia Urban Agriculture Summit (Richmond, VA)**

The Virginia Urban Agriculture Summit brings together 100+ urban farmers, gardeners, food advocates, policymakers, and government leaders for three days of networking and learning about one of agriculture's fastest-growing sectors. Taking place at the Delta Hotel, 555 E Canal St., Richmond, VA, this summit provides a platform to explore the future of urban farming, food systems, and policy development. For more information, contact Dr. Leonard Githinji at [lgithinji@vsu.edu](mailto:lgithinji@vsu.edu)

**April 23, 2:00 – 3:00PM ET: Indigenous-Led Research on Climate, Food Systems, and Health (Online – Zoom)**

Join CFSCT April Fellows Series and Dr. Eranga Galappaththi for a discussion on three international collaborative projects engaging Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka and the Canadian Arctic to address climate change, food systems, and health challenges. This talk highlights the importance of community-driven research and explores how local experiences can inform broader policy frameworks. Offered online via Zoom (registration required).

## May

**May 5 - 6, 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM: Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training (Online)**

Virginia fruit and vegetable farms can now access the highly discounted Produce Safety Alliance Grower

Training, fulfilling the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule training requirement. Thanks to VDACS funding, the registration fee is currently only \$50 for Virginia farms, and participants will receive a lifetime certificate.

**May 7–9: Virginia Forestry Summit (Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, VA)**

Join forestry professionals, landowners, and natural resource experts for the *Virginia Forestry Summit*, a premier event featuring discussions on forestry management, conservation, and industry trends. This three-day gathering offers educational sessions, networking opportunities, and a special Urban Forestry Tour exploring the green spaces of Roanoke and Salem.

**May 9, 12:30pm – 4:30pm: Urban Forestry Tour (Roanoke, VA)**

Experience an in-depth tour of Roanoke’s urban forestry efforts, including: Lunch and a guided tour at the historic Fishburn Mansion, featuring insights on Missouri Gravel Beds, tree propagation, and community gardens. A visit to Virginia Western Community College, a Bee Campus USA, with a guided tour of their arboretum. A stop at Sherwood Memorial Park in Salem to learn about Virginia’s Big Tree Program, see the Champion Atlas cedar, and discuss efforts to protect urban ash trees from the emerald ash borer. Registration opens in March. Contact Jennifer Gagnon, [jgagnon@vt.edu](mailto:jgagnon@vt.edu), 540-231-6391 for more information.

**May 30–31: Southwest Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat (Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center, Abingdon, VA)**

Join the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension for the *Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat*, designed for landowners new to forest management. This retreat provides valuable insights into both hardwood and pine forest management while offering opportunities to connect with natural resource professionals and fellow landowners. Participants will gain hands-on experience with tree identification, forestry equipment, and more, as well as receive essential information on estate planning, management planning, and certification. Agenda and registration will be available in March. Stay tuned for more details!

## Summer

**July 21–23, 2025: Beef Cattle University (The Inn at Virginia Tech & VT German Club, Blacksburg, VA)**

We are thrilled to announce Beef Cattle University 2025, a premier event bringing together beef producers, industry leaders, and experts for three days of education, networking, and innovation. This all-inclusive experience will feature engaging educational sessions on herd health, marketing, nutrition, business management, reproduction, and meat science. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore the latest advancements in beef industry technology through a vibrant trade show, connect with fellow producers during entertainment and networking opportunities, and gain valuable insights to empower and inspire their work in the beef industry.

-----

*Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.*

