



SFOP Quarterly NEWSLETTER

FALL | 2026

From My Desk: Growing Opportunity Through the 43,560 Project

The 43,560 Project is an exciting initiative being implemented at Randolph Farm, where we are demonstrating what can be accomplished on just one acre of land. The name "43,560" represents the number of square feet in an acre, and the project is designed to showcase how small-scale farming can be both productive and sustainable when best management practices are applied.

As part of the Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP), this project serves as a hands-on educational and demonstration site for farmers, students, and agricultural professionals. Our goal is to provide practical examples of how strategic planning, efficient land use, and sound management practices can maximize productivity and profitability on limited acreage.

The 43,560 Project also supports the VSU College of Agriculture's "Rooted and Rising" priorities, which aim to transition the College into nationally recognized programs in:

- Functional Foods Development
- Health & Nutrition Innovation
- AI-enabled Smart Agriculture for Small Farmers
- A Model for Academic Program Transformation

By integrating research, technology, education, and community engagement, the project helps bridge the gap between innovation and practical application for small and limited-resource farmers.

One of the most valuable components of the project is the integration of student participation. Students will be gaining hands-on experience through field activities, data collection, and project tracking, providing them with practical skills while contributing to the success of the initiative. This real-world learning environment will help prepare the next generation of agricultural leaders while supporting the project's ongoing development.

We are also working toward becoming GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certified, positioning the project as a model for small farmers seeking to improve food safety, farm management, and recordkeeping practices.

Through this process, we hope to demonstrate that food safety certification and sound agricultural practices are achievable goals for farms of all sizes.

The 43,560 Project represents a strong collaboration among the SFOP, Research Faculty, Extension Specialists and SFOP Farm Technicians, bringing together expertise from multiple areas to support education, innovation, and outreach. By showcasing the potential of a single acre at Randolph Farm, we hope to inspire small farmers to explore new possibilities, diversify their operations, increase productivity, adopt innovative technologies, and see firsthand what can be achieved through careful planning and management of even a limited amount of land.

As the project continues to evolve, we look forward to sharing lessons learned, highlighting successes, and demonstrating how one acre can serve as a powerful example of what is possible for small-scale agriculture.

For more information about the 43,560 Project, please contact Danielle M. Freeman-Jefferson at dfreeman-jefferson@vsu.edu or call (804) 898-9142.

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William Crutchfield
SFOP Director

Break the Disease Cycle This Fall for Peace of Mind Next Season

Zelalem Mersha, Associate Professor in Plant Pathology, Agricultural Research Station

Every year, plant pests and diseases reduce an estimated 20 to 40% of global crop production. For small farmers and gardeners, these losses can mean less income, smaller harvests and frustration when the same problems return year after year. The good news is that many disease problems can be reduced by acting at the right time. Fall is not only a cleanup season in Virginia, but also an important growing and harvest season for many vegetables. Many plant pathogens survive the winter in infected plants, roots, fruits, weeds, soil, tools, pots, trays and stakes. When warm and wet conditions return, they may become active and infect new crops. A few timely fall practices can reduce disease carryover and give next season's crops a healthier start.

Practice 1: Remove Diseased Plants and Break the “Green Bridge”. One of the most important fall practices is removing diseased plant material from fields, gardens, orchards and high tunnels. Infected leaves, stems, roots, fruits and vines can help plant pathogens survive between growing seasons. Remove diseased materials residues with leaf spots, blights, wilts, rots, cankers, mildew or mold symptoms. Even plant materials that look dry and harmless may still carry plant pathogens.

Pay close attention to infected roots, rotten fruits and vegetables, volunteer crop plants, weeds, cull piles and discarded produce near production areas. A good example is brown rot of peaches. shriveled, infected peaches, called mummies, may remain on the tree or fall to the ground. In some years, mummies on or near the soil surface may produce small, cup-shaped structures called apothecia. These structures release spores that can infect flowers and fruit. Removing mummified fruit from the tree and orchard floor can help reduce this source of brown rot.

Volunteer crops and weeds may form a green bridge, which means they keep hosts available for pathogens and arthropod vectors between crops. Remove volunteer plants, along with weeds in beds, high tunnels, field edges and fence lines. Complete removal may not be practical in a field but mowing, incorporating residues and removing diseased areas can reduce carryover. Do not leave piles of diseased plants beside fields, gardens, orchards, compost areas or high tunnels.

Where Should Diseased Plant Material Go? Remove diseased plant material as soon as possible. Compost it only if the pile is actively managed, turned regularly and becomes hot enough, about 140-160 °F, throughout to kill many pathogens and weed seeds. When unsure, do not compost heavily diseased vines, roots, fruits, mummies or other infected plant material. Bag and discard them according to local waste rules. For small growers and gardeners, rotating or mobile compost bins placed nearby can make turning easier and help the pile heat more uniformly. Heavy duty black trash bags may also be used to collect and solar-heat small amounts of plant debris before disposal but they should not be counted as a substitute for properly managed hot composting.



Cover crop planting at Randolph Farm featuring a former student, Michael Ibarra-Bautista.

Practice 2: Clean, Clean and Stay Clean. Pathogens can survive on tools, trays, flats, pots, stakes, benches, containers, gloves and boots. Before storing or reusing these items, remove all soil and plant debris, wash with detergent, rinse and then disinfect. Disinfectants work poorly on dirty surfaces but make sure they also dries completely. For hard, nonporous items, prepare a 10% Clorox (bleach) solution by mixing one part household bleach with nine parts of water. Dip or spray pruning tools between crop sections or whenever disease plants are handled. Prepare only what you need and keep it in a sealed container because bleach loses strength over time.

Place trays, pots, stakes, and small tools in a sturdy, covered tub that is large enough for the items to be fully submerged. Keep the tub covered during treatment to reduce splashing, fumes, and loss of solution strength. Leave the items in the solution for the contact time stated on the bleach or disinfectant label. After treatment, rinse when directed, allow the materials to dry and store them away from diseased plants and dirty equipment.

Bleach can damage metal, clothing and plant tissue. Rinse and dry metal tools well to reduce rust. Work in a well-ventilated area, wear gloves and eye protection, and never mix bleach with ammonia, vinegar, acids, or other cleaners. Other labeled greenhouse disinfectants such as quaternary ammonium, hydrogen peroxide and peroxyacetic acid products may also be used. Certified organic growers should first check with their organic certifier. The key message is simple: remove dirt first, disinfect second and store materials clean.

Practice 3: Rotate Crops, Protect the Soil and Break the Disease Cycle. Planting the same crop or another crop from the same botanical family in the same place each year can allow pathogens to build up in the soil and crop residues. For example, tomato, pepper, eggplant and potato are all in the nightshade family while cucumber, squash, pumpkin, melon and watermelon are in the cucurbit family. Rotating tomato to pepper, or cucumber to squash, may therefore provide little disease-management benefit. When space permits, rotate to an unrelated crop family for two or more years. In small gardens, perfect rotation may not be possible but moving crops between beds, using clean containers and potting mix and avoiding the same crop family in the same place every year can still help.

Cover crops can also protect soil, add organic matter, improve soil structure and provide a break from continuous production. Options may include cereal rye, oats, clovers, vetches or mixtures selected for the farm's planting schedule and management goals. However, they will not cure every soilborne disease, some may even host pathogens or nematodes of concern. So, choose them based on the field's disease history, next crop, planting date and local recommendations. USDA NRCS Cover Crop Planning Manual 1.0 is a useful resource for Virginia growers.

Do Not Guess, Get the Problem Diagnosed. Different diseases, arthropod pests, nutrient problems, herbicide injury, poor drainage and environmental stress can produce similar symptoms. Applying fungicide or changing crops without knowing the cause will waste money and allow the real problem to continue. The Virginia Tech Plant Disease Clinic diagnoses problems caused by infectious (plant pathogens) and non-infectious (disorders) factors such as environmental stress. Digital photographs, physical plant samples or both may be submitted according to current clinic procedures. Small farmers and gardeners should begin by contacting their local Virginia Cooperative Extension office. Extension agents and Extension Master Gardeners can help evaluate symptoms, collect a useful sample and determine whether laboratory diagnosis is needed. A correct diagnosis this fall can guide decisions about sanitation, rotation, resistant varieties, drainage, seed and transplant selection and disease management next season.

Virginia resources include a) [Virginia Tech Plant Disease Clinic](#), b) [Small Farm Outreach Program](#), c) [Virginia Cooperative Extension Offices](#) and d) [Virginia Extension Master Gardeners](#). Pest Management Guides can be helpful for mitigation strategies. For accurate diagnosis:

- Submit plants that are beginning to show symptoms, not only completely dead plants.
- Include healthy and affected plant tissue when possible.
- Keep roots and nearby soil when root or wilt problems are suspected.
- Take clear photographs of the entire plant, affected area, field pattern, and close-up symptoms.
- Provide the Crop variety, planting date, recent weather, irrigation, pesticide use and problem history.

Fall cleanup cannot prevent every disease but it can greatly reduce the places where problems survive. Remove infected plants, eliminate volunteer hosts and weeds, clean reusable materials, rotate crops, protect the soil and obtain a diagnosis when the cause is uncertain. A few thoughtful steps this fall can provide greater peace of mind and a healthier beginning next spring.

Zelalem Mersha | zmersha@vsu.edu

Why Cleanup Under the Tree Canopy Matters



Brown rot survives the winter in mummified fruit. Consistent cleanup reduces this source of spores and helps protect next year's crop.

4-H Beyond Ready Institute: Youth Innovation in Food Safety, Food Security, and Civic Engagement

Dr. Cherise Cobb, 4-H Extension Specialist, Civic Engagement

Food safety and food security are not just public health issues; they are community issues, family issues, farming issues, civic issues, and youth leadership issues. Around the world over 600M people are affected by foodborne illness each year, and in the United States alone, foodborne illness costs approximately \$75B annually. These numbers remind us that safety of our food system matters from farm to table and that we need to engage young people as active contributors to developing innovative, community-based solutions.

The “4-H Beyond Ready Institute: Youth Innovation in Food Safety, Food Security, and Civic Engagement” initiative is designed to prepare youth to become problem-solvers, innovators, and civic leaders. Through this initiative, students are learning how food safety and food security connect to agriculture, science, technology, policy, and community action. The Institute gives youth opportunities to move beyond learning about problems and to begin creating real-world solutions.

One of the most exciting parts of this work is the collaboration between 4-H JROTC students and 4-H Extension Specialists and researchers from Virginia State University, Virginia Tech, and Drexel



University. Together, they are exploring the concept of a mobile contamination detection device that could help identify microbial contamination in produce such as lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, herbs used in teas, and tree crops such as apples. The students named their concept ‘SafeScan’ and their work shows how youth innovation can support stronger, safer food systems.

The 4-H JROTC students from Petersburg High School and Vernon Johns Middle School have already demonstrated the power of youth voice and leadership. They presented their SafeScan concept at IGNITE’s Lead to Change conference and to Dr. Jewel Bronaugh,

Dean of the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University, along with researchers, Extension professionals, and staff. Their presentation showed confidence, creativity, teamwork, and a clear understanding that food safety and food security are issues that affect children, families, farmers, and communities.

As part of the 4-H Beyond Ready Institute, 4-H JROTC students and Youth In Action winners attended 4-H Congress at Virginia Tech and facilitated the workshop, “From Ideas to Action: Youth Leading Food Security Solutions.” The workshop served as a youth-led focus group activity for the Institute. Before the session, Dr. Cobb trained the youth facilitators and 4-H JROTC students to guide discussions, ask meaningful questions, listen carefully, and encourage participants to share their ideas. Through this process, students stepped into leadership roles and identified the following three action plans: better awareness about food safety and food security; after-school educational programs; and government-sponsored grocery stores that buy produce from farmers and sell it at reasonable prices.

The work of the 4-H Beyond Ready Institute is still growing. From student innovation to community action planning, from SafeScan to Robotic Chatbots, this initiative is helping youth become more than participants, they are becoming leaders, designers, and solution-builders.

There is even more outstanding emerging from the 4-H Beyond Ready Institute, which we will highlight in a future story. For more information, to become a sponsor, or to serve as a 4-H volunteer, please contact Dr. Cherise Cobb: ccobb@vsu.edu | (804) 802-0398.

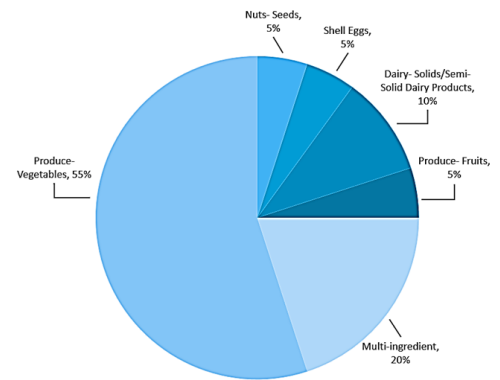


Figure 1. Responses with Identified Product(s)* Linked to Illnesses, by Associated Food Category, 2024 (FDA, 2026)



4-H JROTC Presents to VSU Dean & Extension Professionals and Staff

TIM'S TIPS



AG TIPS TO HELP YOU THRIVE

By Tim Sexton, Grant Coordinator, Herd Health and Forage Improvement

Fall is a busy and important time on the farm. As temperatures begin to cool, farmers and livestock producers should focus on preparing pastures, animals, crops, equipment, and facilities for the months ahead. A little planning now can help protect livestock, improve soil and pasture health, prevent costly equipment problems, and—most importantly—keep everyone safe. Here are some key fall management and safety reminders to keep your farm running smoothly.

- This fall keep animals out of paddocks that are being stockpiled
- End grazing of summer annuals by mid-September
- Spot spray and weed issues in September also
- Apply fertilizer for pasture, fall crops and hay according to soil test results
- Prepare for fall calving and ensure you have optimum nutrition for your animals
- Feed hay to your animals that had spring calves
- Watch Grazing closely (Do not graze any cool season grasses shorter than 4 inches)
- Avoid grazing sorghum and millet following a frost
- Strip graze any summer annuals that were planted as cover crops and finish grazing any fields that have orchard grass and clover

Harvest Safety

- **Personal Protective Equipment**
 - o Wear Safety Glasses – you only have one set of eyes
 - o High Visibility Clothing- make sure everyone can see you
 - o Respiratory Masks – there are many things you don't want to breathe
 - o Hearing Protection – It is really nice to be able to hear
- **Equipment Safety**
 - o Thoroughly inspect and maintain all farm equipment
 - o Include safety guards and shields are in place and functional
 - o Review your operator manuals
 - o Make sure everyone is properly trained
 - o Implement Lockout/ Tagout procedures
 - o Isolate energy sources, both electrical and hydraulic before working on machinery
- **Fatigue Management**
 - o Remember that fatigue can lead to accidents
 - o Take breaks
 - o Get plenty of sleep
 - o Do not work under the influence of alcohol or drugs

• Road Safety

- o Be cautious on roadways
- o Slow down when you encounter farm equipment
- o Be patient when passing
- o Careful on wide turns
- o Always look for deer and other road hazards

Soil and Crop Management

• Harvesting

- o Complete your harvest before frost
- o Consider the moisture content of hay and check bale temperature

• Plant Cover Crops

- o Plant rye or wheat to improve soil health, take up nutrients left behind from previous crops, suppress weeds, and prevent erosion
- o Mulch around perennial plants to protect roots
- o Avoid aggressive tilling as it can disrupt soil biology

• Water System Management

- o Insulate pipes and faucets
- o Consider heating elements for water troughs
- o Inspect irrigation systems and water sources

• Livestock Management

- o Repair and insulate shelters
- o Seal drafts and cracks in barns and fences

• Inspect and Pull Maintenance on All farm Equipment

- o Change oil and lubricate moving parts
- o Check antifreeze
- o Store under cover

• Develop an Emergency Action Plan

- o Stay informed about weather conditions and adjust activities accordingly
- o Have phone numbers on hand
- o Check smoke detectors
- o Maintain heaters and heating systems
- o Make sure everyone is aware of a specific place to meet in the event of an Emergency

Fall preparation is about more than getting ready for colder weather—it is an opportunity to protect your animals, land, equipment, and yourself. Take time to inspect, repair, plan, and prepare before winter arrives. A few proactive steps this fall can prevent problems later and help set your farm up for a safe and productive season ahead.

MEU SCHEDULE

September–November 2026

SEPTEMBER 2026				
DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	TARGET AUDIENCE
Wednesday, Sept. 2–Saturday, Sept. 5	5–10 p.m. Noon–10 p.m.	Franklin County Fair	Rocky Mount, VA	County Residents
Monday, Sept. 10–Thursday, Sept. 13	9 a.m.–9 p.m.	Ag & Land Grant Celebration Week	South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, SC	1890 Community and Stakeholders
Friday, Sept. 18–Sunday, Sept. 20	3 p.m. Friday – 6 p.m. Sunday	Field Day of The Past	Church Road, VA	Dinwiddie County Residents
Monday, Sept. 21–Sunday, Oct. 4	10 a.m.–4 p.m.	VA State Fair	Doswell, VA	VA/NC/MD Residents
OCTOBER 2026				
DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	TARGET AUDIENCE
Thursday, Oct. 8–Sunday, Oct. 11	3 p.m. Thursday – 6 p.m. Sunday	Suffolk Peanut Festival	Suffolk, VA	Residents in and surrounding
Saturday, Oct. 17	9 a.m.–3 p.m.	Midlothian Day Festival	13501 Midlothian Turnpike Midlothian VA	Community Members



Record Cost-Share Funding Continues for Virginia Farmers

By Matt Sabas, Sr PR & Marketing Specialist, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

For the fifth consecutive year, farmers across Virginia have access to record levels of cost-share assistance through the [Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program \(VACS\)](#).

Virginia farmers can contact their local [soil and water conservation district \(SWCD\)](#) to access up to \$300,000 annually for implementing more than 60 best management practices (BMPs) on their farms. Here's a look at how several BMPs can benefit both the environment and a farm's bottom line:

COVER CROPS

Cover crops help protect farmland from erosion, improve soil health by increasing organic matter and reduce nonpoint source pollution by slowing runoff and capturing excess nitrogen before it can reach groundwater. They can also support a farm's long-term profitability by improving soil fertility, potentially increasing crop yields and reducing the need for fertilizer and other inputs.

This year, the cost-share reimbursement rate is \$40 per acre for traditional small-grain cover crops. Farmers may also qualify for additional payments for early planting, rye cultivars and late termination.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Nutrient management planning helps farmers use fertilizer efficiently by applying the right amount at the right time. This reduces excess runoff, protects water quality and cuts fertilizer expenses while helping crops receive the nutrients they need to reach their yield potential.

There's another important benefit: a fully implemented nutrient management plan is required for more than 30 VACS and tax-credit practices. For farmers who are new to BMPs, developing a nutrient management plan can be a smart first step toward reducing input costs and gaining access to additional cost-share opportunities.

LIVESTOCK STREAM EXCLUSION

Keeping livestock out of streams helps reduce streambank erosion and the amount of sediment entering local waterways. It also limits bacteria from livestock waste that can contribute to illness in animals and people. Protecting water resources can benefit livestock as well, as cleaner water can contribute to improved cattle weight gain.

This year, the cost-share reimbursement rate is up to 100% of the cost of eligible components, depending on the width of the buffer and the practice lifespan.

SMALL HERD INITIATIVE

Farmers with 20-49 head of cattle may qualify for the Small Herd Initiative. The program provides funding to help smaller livestock operations keep animals out of streams without competing for funding with larger operations.

The initiative provides up to 100% cost-share for eligible stream protection practices, with a maximum of \$50,000 per operation.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Department of Conservation and Recreation administers the cost-share program in partnership with Virginia's 47 SWCDs. Local SWCDs work directly with farmers to distribute VACS funding and provide technical assistance to help implement eligible conservation practices.

Farmers interested in applying for funding should contact their local SWCD. A map of Virginia's conservation districts, along with contact information, is available here:

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/swcds>.



NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL
AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
EASTERN SHORE



SAVE THE DATE

2027 Mid-Atlantic Regional Agriculture Outreach Conference



Monday, Feb. 22—
Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2027



COMING SOON!

Location & Registration Details

SMALL FARM CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 15-16, 2026

Save the date!

ROOTED & RISING

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

Registration Opening in August



VIRGINIA STATE College of
Agriculture

Virginia
Cooperative
Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Interested in sponsorship or exhibit space?
Call (804) 895-9815 for more information.

SFOP Workshops: October-December 2026

Date	Workshop	Time	Location	PA	Limit
Thu, Oct 1	Understanding the State Corporation Commission: Business Registration, Compliance, and Resources for Farmers and Entrepreneurs	3-4 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Dukes	-
Thu, Oct 1	VDACS Animal Health Laboratory Tour	6-8:30 p.m.	250 Cassell Rd. Wytheville, VA, 24382	Fletcher	20
Sat, Oct 3	4-H Beyond Ready Institute: Food Safety and Food Quality Workshop	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Cobb	35
Sat, Oct 3	4th Annual Farming Ag Day	11 a.m.-3 p.m.	22734 Cinema Dr., Grundy, VA	Browning	-
Mon, Oct 5	Fall Pasture Lambing	1-3 p.m.	2778 Cut Bank Rd Warfield, VA 23889	Holler	20
Mon, Oct 5	Virginia Apex Accelerator	1:30-4 p.m.	4100 Virginia Beach Blvd, Virginia Beach, VA, 23452	Dukes	-
Tue, Oct 6	Herd Health and Forage Improvement for Animal Production	9 a.m.-1 p.m.	2375 Darvills RD.Blackstone, VA 23824	Sexton	30
Tue, Oct 6	Fall Vegetable Gardening	10 a.m.-Noon	2778 Cut Bank Rd. Warfield, VA 23889	Holler	20
Tue, Oct 6	Worming 101: Intro to Vermiculture	11 a.m.-1 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Middleton	-
Tue, Oct 6	Virginia Apex Accelerator	12:30-4 p.m.	2410 Wickham Ave, L. Marian Poe Room. Newport News, VA23607	Dukes	50
Tue, Oct 6	Herd & Forage Improvement Farm Field Day	4-6 p.m.	160 S. Montevideo Circle. Penn Laird, VA 22846	Dalke	-
Wed, Oct 7	Backyard Urban Farming	11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Private address to be sent out with registration	Middleton	15
Wed, Oct 7	Tree Walk and Talk	1-3 p.m.	5846 Blue Ridge Pkwy. Waynesboro, VA 22980	Hobbs	20
Wed, Oct 7	Fall High Tunnel Nutrient Management	1-4 p.m.	2778 Cut Bank Rd. Warfield, VA 23889	Holler	15
Wed, Oct 7	Indigenous Microorganisms (IMO)	1:30-4 p.m.	2410 Wickham Ave, L. Marian Poe Room Newport News, VA 23607	Dukes	30
Wed, Oct 7	Trees for Bees	3-5:30 p.m.		Gibson	-
Wed, Oct 7	Soil Test Results & Interpretation	5-6 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Dukes	-
Thu, Oct 8	Safety on the Farm	10-11:30 a.m.	21300 Plank Rd. Courtland, VA 23837	Banks	10
Thu, Oct 8	Focus Group Follow Up	5:30-7:30 p.m.	1118 Indian Trail Rd. Keezletown, VA 22832	Freeman-Jefferson	32
Thu, Oct 8	Shenandoah Valley Small Farm Summit	5:30-7:30 p.m.	1118 Indian Trail Rd. Keezletown, VA 22832	Dalke	30
Thu, Oct 8	High Tunnels: Growing for the Cool Season and Winter Preparations	6-7:30 p.m.	449 Agricultural Dr. Clintwood, VA 24228	Browning	-
Fri, Oct 9	Increasing Soil Health with Cover Crops	9-11 a.m.	332 Princess Anne Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23457	Dukes	12
Fri, Oct 9	Increasing Soil Health with Cover Crops	2-4 p.m.	16299 Savagetown Rd. Painter, VA 23310	Dukes	-
Wed, Oct 14	How to Correctly Sample Soil and Apply the Resulting Data	9 a.m.-Noon	2748 Dogtown Rd. Goochland, VA 23063	Gibson	-
Thu, Oct 15,	3rd AgriCulinary Tech Chef Challenge	9 a.m.-4 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Reese	-
Fri, Oct 16	Dahlia Field Day	9 a.m.-3 p.m.		Childress	30
Sat, Oct 17	Harvesting Hope – A Mental Health Initiative for Farmers	9:30-11:30 a.m.		Peralta	-
Mon, Oct 19	DIY Small Acreage Woodlots	10-11:30 a.m.	21300 Plank Rd. Courtland, VA 23837	Banks	10
Wed, Oct 21	Bus Tour (North Carolina State Fair	7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	1025 Blue Ridge Rd. Raleigh, NC 27607	Cladd	50
Wed, Oct 21	Electric Fence-Building	8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.	Mount Jackson, VA 22842	Dalke	30
Wed, Oct 21	COA Regional Focus Group Follow Up	10 a.m.-Noon	33446 Research Dr. Painter, VA 23420	Freeman-Jefferson	50
Wed, Oct 21	SFOP and USDA Information Update	10 a.m.-Noon	South Jefferson St. Lexington, VA 24450	Hobbs	20

SFOP Workshops: October-December 2026

Date	Workshop	Time	Location	PA	Limit
Wed, Oct 21	Stop Diseases in Their Tracks: Fall Strategies for Next Year's Crop Success"	1-3 p.m.	Randolph Farm Pavilion	Estes	-
Wed, Oct 21	COA Regional Focus Group Follow Up	5-7 p.m.	1425 Norchester Ave, 2nd Floor Cloud Meeting Room, Norfolk, VA 23504	Freeman-Jefferson	25
Thu, Oct 22	Coop Camp, Part 1: Planning The Flock	9 a.m.-Noon	5620 E. River Rd Foster, VA 23056	Dukes	12
Thu, Oct 22	Farm Financing and Business Plan	3-5 p.m.		Gibson	-
Sat, Oct 24	Increasing Soil Health with Cover Crops	10 a.m.-Noon	26230 Orange Spring Rd. Unionville, VA 22567	Terrell	-
Sat, Oct 24	Quick Books	1-4 p.m.	One Partnership Cr. Abingdon, VA 24210	Maclin	30
Tue, Oct 27	Basic Soil Science for Small Farmers	9 a.m.-Noon	133 Legrande Av. Charlotte, VA 23923	Sexton	30
Tue, Oct 27	Introduction to Small Scale Berry Production & High Tunnel	10-11:30 a.m.	105 Oak St. Emporia, VA 23847	Banks	10
Tue, Oct 27	Follow Your Brand Compass-Branding for Farmers	Noon-1:30 p.m.		Middleton	-
Tue, Oct 27	Interpreting Soil Samples for Farm BMP's	6-7:30 p.m.	300 Gordondale Rd. Atkins, VA 24354	Fletcher	40
Wed, Oct 28	Nutrient Management for Small Farmers	10 a.m.-Noon	9432 N James Madison Hwy. Rapidan, VA 22733	Terrell	20
Wed, Oct 28	Lebanon Farmers Market	10 a.m.-2 p.m.	137 Highland Dr. Lebanon, VA 24266	Browning	-
Wed, Oct 28	Cover Crops for the Win!	1-4 p.m.	4144 Lew Jones Rd. Alberta, VA 24821	Estes	-
Wed, Oct 28	SFOP and USDA Information Update	3-5 p.m.	190 Rockfish School Ln. Afton, VA 22920	Hobbs	-
Thu, Oct 29	H2A Employer Responsibilities: Understanding Compliance & Worker Protections	2-3:30 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Bugg	-
Fri, Oct 30	Agriculinary Botany: From Conservation to Culinary Innovation Fig & Thyme: Agroforestry Meets Gourmet Agriculture	2-3:30 p.m.	1609 East Washington St. Petersburg, VA 23803	Bugg	30
Wed, Nov 4	Basic Soil Fertility for Farmers	9 a.m.-Noon	16351 Dunn St. Amelia, VA 23002	Sexton	30
Wed, Nov 4	COA Regional Focus Group Follow Up	10 a.m.-Noon		Freeman-Jefferson	25
Thu, Nov 5	On-Farm BioSecurity	10 a.m.-Noon	Virtual (online)	Holler	-
Thu, Nov 5	Twilight Advanced Farm Tour Series of Broad Fork Farm	4-6 p.m.	9501 Deer Range Rd., Browns Summit, NC 27214	Summers	-
Thu, Nov 5	Interpreting Soil Samples for Farm BMP's	6-7:30 p.m.	12326 VPI Farm Rd. Glade Spring, VA 24340	Fletcher	40
Fri, Nov 6	Heirloom Mum Field Day	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Randolph Farm Pavilion	Childress	30
Fri, Nov 6	5th Annual Harvest Ball	6 p.m.-Midnight		Cladd	-
Mon, Nov 9	Wreath Making	10-11:30 a.m.	21300 Plank Rd. Courtland, VA 23837	Banks	10
Mon, Nov 9	Biochar- Soil Health Regeneration	10 a.m.-Noon	Virtual (online)	Holler	-
Mon, Nov 9	Recognizing and Responding to Farmer Financial Stress	11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Maclin	-
Tue, Nov 10	Focus Group Follow Up	10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	118 E Danville St. South Hill, VA 23970	Estes	-
Tue, Nov 10	SFOP and USDA Information Update	10 a.m.-Noon	1219 Main St. Lynchburg, VA 24504	Hobbs	-
Tue, Nov 10	Follow Your Brand Compass-Hybrid	Noon-1:30 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Middleton	-
Wed, Nov 11	Herd Health and Forage Improvement for Animal Production	9 a.m.-Noon	21300 Plank Rd. Courtland, VA 23837	Sexton	30
Wed, Nov 11	COA Regional Focus Group Follow Up	10 a.m.-Noon	9432 N James Madison Hwy. Rapidan, VA 22733	Freeman-Jefferson	20

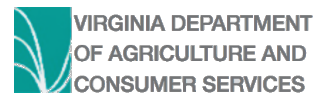
SFOP Workshops: October-December 2026

Date	Workshop	Time	Location	PA	Limit
Wed, Nov 11	COA Regional Focus Group Follow Up	6-8 p.m.		Freeman-Jefferson	20
Thu, Nov 12	Info & Techniques to help Small Farmers In their Farming Operations	1-3 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Summers	-
Thu, Nov 12	Twilight Advanced Farm Tour Series of Broad Fork Farm	4-6 p.m.	9501 Deer Range Rd. Moseley, VA 23120	Summers	-
Thu, Nov 12	Shenandoah Valley Young Farmers Coalition	6-8 p.m.	Location TBD	Dalke	50
Tue, Nov 17	Small Farm Orientation	9-11 a.m.	Virtual (online)	Dukes	-
Wed, Nov 18	Recap of 2026 Drought and Growing Season Across the SW Mountains and Virginia - A Look Ahead to Winter 2026-27	10-11 a.m.	Virtual (online)	Browning	-
Thu, Nov 19	COA Regional Focus Group Follow Up	10 a.m.-Noon		Freeman-Jefferson	20
Thu, Nov 19	AgFTAP Education	10 a.m.-Noon		Cladd	25
Thu, Nov 19	Exploring High Tunnels	1-3 p.m.	Randolph Farm Pavilion	Summers	-
Fri, Nov 20	Agriculinary Botany: From Conservation to Culinary Innovation Pumpkin: From Field Crop to Functional Foods	2-3:30 p.m.	1600 East Washington St. Petersburg, VA 23803	Bugg	40
Sat, Nov 21	Growers Protections under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) Part I	9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.		Peralta	
Sat, Nov 21	Producers Training - Submitting a P.A.C.A Claim Part II	11 a.m.-Noon		Peralta	
Sun, Nov 22	Mushroom Cultivation	2-4 p.m.	4675 E. Princess Anne Rd. Norfolk, VA 23502	Dukes	10
Sun, Nov 22	Mushroom Cultivation	5-7 p.m.	4675 E. Princess Anne Rd. Norfolk, VA 23502	Dukes	10
Tue, Dec 1	Managing Agricultural Risk: Protecting Your Farm and Future	1-3 p.m.	3300 Kings Mountain Rd. #102 Martinsville, VA 24112	Noell	20
Wed, Dec 2	Managing Agricultural Risk: Protecting Your Farm and Future	1-3 p.m.	1255 Franklin St. Rocky Mount, VA 24151	Noell	20
Wed, Dec 2	How To Have A Healthy Soil	10 a.m.-Noon	9432 N James Madison Hwy. Rapidan, VA 22733	Terrell	20
Wed, Dec 2	High Tunnel Basics	10 a.m.-Noon	118 E Danville St South Hill, VA 23970	Estes	20
Tue, Dec 8	Backyard Poultry 101	9:30 a.m.-Noon	3300 Kings Mountain Rd. #102 Martinsville, VA 24112	Noell	20
Wed, Dec 9	Niche Crops for Small-Scale Farmers	10 a.m.-Noon	9432 N James Madison Hwy. Rapidan, VA 22733	Terrell	20
Wed, Dec 9	Tree Measurements for Value & Health	10-11:30 a.m.	21300 Plank Rd. Courtland VA 23837	Banks	10
Thu, Dec 10	Backyard Composting	9:30 a.m.-Noon	1255 Franklin St. Rocky Mount, VA 24151	Noell	20
Sun, Dec 13	Mushroom Cultivation	2-4 p.m.	4675 E. Princess Anne Rd. Norfolk, VA 23502	Dukes	10
Sun, Dec 13	Mushroom Cultivation	5-7 p.m.	4675 E. Princess Anne Rd. Norfolk, VA 23502	Dukes	10
Thu, Dec 17	H2A Housing, Transportation & Worker Well-Being	2-3:30 p.m.	Virtual (online)	Bugg	-
Fri, Dec 18	Agriculinary Botany: From Conservation to Culinary Innovation Ginger & Clove: Global Spices, Botanical Wellness & Value-Added Agriculture	2-3:30 p.m.	1600 East Washington St. Petersburg, VA 23803	Bugg	40



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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please call 804-524-3292 / TDD 800-828-1120 during business hours of 8 am and 5 pm to discuss accommodations five days prior to the event.

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