



SFOP Quarterly NEWSLETTER

SUMMER | 2026

From the Director's Desk Building Resilience: Supporting Small Farmers Through Drought Challenges

As we enter another growing season, drought remains a critical challenge for small and limited-resource farmers across the Commonwealth. Extended periods of low rainfall and high temperatures continue to strain agricultural communities.

For small-scale, urban, and historically underserved producers, drought is more than an environmental issue—it is economic, social, and deeply personal. Reduced soil moisture weakens crops, limits livestock forage, and leads to lower productivity and financial stress.

Drought affects all farmers, but not equally. Small and limited-resource producers often operate with fewer reserves and limited access to irrigation or credit, relying heavily on rainfall. When rain is scarce, the impact is immediate. Livestock producers face shrinking pastures and rising feed costs, while vegetable growers see reduced yields and missed market opportunities. Urban farmers must manage higher water costs and usage restrictions, and historically underserved farmers often face additional barriers that make recovery more difficult.

Despite these challenges, there are practical strategies that can strengthen resilience. Improving soil health through compost, cover crops, and reduced tillage helps retain moisture. Efficient water management—such as drip irrigation, mulching, and watering during cooler hours—can reduce water use while maintaining production.

Crop diversification also plays a key role. Drought-tolerant crops like okra, black-eye peas, and sweet potatoes can help stabilize yields. Livestock producers can mitigate risk by adjusting herd sizes early, rotating grazing areas, and securing feed supplies. Urban growers can benefit from rainwater harvesting systems to supplement water use.

Farmers do not have to face these challenges alone. Resources are available through USDA Farm Service Agency programs, NRCS conservation cost-share opportunities, Soil and WATER Conservations Districts, along with technical assistance from your Small Farm Outreach Program agents. Our role is to ensure these resources are accessible, relevant, and equitable through education, outreach, and advocacy.

As droughts become more frequent and intense, it is essential that we focus on long-term resilience by investing in soil health, water-efficient practices, farmer education, and strong community partnerships.

Closing Thoughts

As always Small farmers continue to demonstrate resilience, innovation, and determination in the face of adversity. By working together, sharing resources, and strengthening our support systems, we can help ensure that our agricultural communities not only endure—but thrive.

William Crutchfield
SFOP Director



@VSU_AG



Transforming Food Systems Through Innovation and Community Partnerships

Aaron Dudley, Ph.D. Research Scientist-
Food Science and Technology



Value added agricultural products produced by the UMT, including dill salt, dried basil, and dried vegetable soup mix.

Food science, to me, has always been about more than what ends up on a plate- although that's certainly one of the best parts. It is about solving problems and creating opportunities. At Virginia State University (VSU), my work at the intersection of research, service, and teaching aims to augment how students and communities think about health, nutrition, and innovation in the food systems and resources around them.

I work as a Research Scientist in Food Science and Technology, with an emphasis on Food

Engineering and Food Product Development, at VSU's Agricultural Research Station. I focus on finding practical ways to transform agricultural and food resources into value-added products that improve food quality, reduce waste, and support healthier communities. Much of my current research centers on functional food systems and evaluating plant-derived bioactive compounds that may have health, food safety, and food quality benefits. My research includes dairy-free yogurt analogs fortified with baby ginger, natural antimicrobial packaging for strawberries, investigations into plant extracts and food functionality, and sustainable approaches to utilizing fish processing byproducts for biomaterials and food packaging applications.

One of the things that excites me most about food science is the opportunity to look at familiar resources in new ways. I often ask myself: How can we reduce waste, strengthen food systems, and create products that better serve communities? That perspective extends beyond the laboratory. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the Upper Mattaponi Tribe (UMT) in King William, VA, where I observed small-scale farming operations and learned more about their interest in value-added food products. What stood out to me was the creativity and innovation already taking place.



Dr. Dudley with undergraduate student researchers, TyAnna Taylor and Matthew Renfroe Aponte during their poster and oral presentations at the VSU Undergraduate Research Symposium.



Dr. Dudley with undergraduate student researcher, Gabriel Smith.

In one case, agricultural materials that might otherwise be discarded are being freeze-dried and transformed into ready-to-eat soup mixes on a bench-top scale.

What became clear during conversations with the UMT was the opportunity for technical support from a food science and technology perspective. Questions surrounding formulation, food safety, food quality, packaging, and product optimization naturally emerged. This experience with the UMT emphasized, to me, the important role VSU can play in partnering with small farms, tribal agricultural communities, and underserved producers to help move promising ideas toward market-ready products.

While research is central to my work, mentorship is equally important to me. Students in my laboratory are not simply observers but are active participants in the research process. From learning experimental design, laboratory techniques, and data management to presenting data through poster and oral presentations, they gain hands-on experience designed to build hard and soft skills and, most importantly, confidence. One of the most rewarding aspects of my work is watching students grow into the best versions of themselves.

I'm thankful that at VSU I can do work that I am passionate about. I will continue to build a program centered on innovation, student development, collaboration, and creating lasting impact across communities.

For more information reach out to **Dr. Aaron Dudley** adudley@vsu.edu | (804) 524-2904.



Meet DCR's Small Farm Nutrient Management Specialist

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

Meet Alex Hessler, the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Small Farm Nutrient Management Specialist. Alex joined DCR in March 2025 and supports small farms throughout the state by working with farmers to create site-specific nutrient management plans that match crop needs while also protecting natural resources. Read on to learn more about his role with DCR:

What inspired you to pursue a career in nutrient management, and what drew you specifically to working with small farms?

For seven years beginning in 2014 I was the manager of Homefield Farm, the nine-acre educational organic farm at Virginia Tech providing food to on-campus dining halls. Since 2019, my wife and I have run our own vegetable farm, Riverstone Organic Farm, in Floyd. Being as efficient and productive as possible is particularly important when acreage is limited, and I find that challenge fascinating. Nutrient management is a cornerstone of achieving great yields while sustaining the health of the soil and surrounding environment.

What advice would you give to a small farmer who wants to improve soil health but doesn't know where to start?

Start by taking soil tests and address any major nutrient deficiencies in your soil. Soil fertility and soil health are interconnected: healthy productive crops and cover crops grow bigger and add more organic matter to the soil. Find ways to integrate cover crops into the rotation whenever possible. In pastures, use temporary electric fencing to rotate animals around pastures instead of letting them graze the entire pasture continuously.

Are there any emerging practices or technologies you're excited to introduce to small farmers in Virginia?

The Pre-Sidedress Nitrate Test (PSNT) is a fast and simple way to get a snapshot of how much nitrogen is available in the soil. It can help a farmer decide whether to add additional nitrogen to a crop early in the season. Considering today's fertilizer prices, now is a perfect time to reach out to DCR about having a PSNT done on your farm.

What are you most looking forward to in your new role, and how can farmers connect with you or access your support?

I've had so much fun visiting with farmers throughout Virginia since I started. I look forward to meeting and learning from more farmers each year. Anyone can reach me at 540-290-3602 or alex.hessler@dcr.virginia.gov to start a conversation about nutrient management on their farm.

Veteran Business Ownership: Capital and Strategy in Virginia

By Stu Allison

After retiring from the Air Force, I learned that success in business—especially agriculture—starts with local relationships and a strong support network. For veterans transitioning into farming or launching a new venture, securing capital is critical, but so is understanding the landscape and showing up where it counts.

The SBA and Federal Strategy

- The SBA typically does not provide start-up grants. Instead, it offers mentorship, training, and loan guarantees that make bank financing more attainable.
- For direct revenue opportunities, prioritize SDVOSB and VOSB certifications. The federal government sets aside 5% of contract dollars for servicedisabled veteranowned small businesses—this is a protected market, not a handout.
- If you've been out for a while, Boots to Business (B2B) Reboot is a practical on-ramp to refresh your knowledge and re-engage with federal resources.

Virginia State and Agricultural Resources

- Start with the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD): sbsd.virginia.gov Secure your SWaM certification early—it's a prerequisite for many state-level opportunities and contracts.
- For agriculture-specific programs, tap into VDACS: vdacs.virginia.gov and USDA: usda.gov
- The Virginia Farmers Market Association: vafma.org is an excellent hub for market access and training. Executive Director Kim Hutchinson is a valuable contact for local producers, and local managers—like Arielle in Hopewell—regularly share opportunities.
- For innovation and early-stage funding, the VAFairs Bullpen: vafairs.com offers a platform to pitch and secure agricultural support.

Support Networks and Specialized Training

- VBOC at ODU: odu.edu – Targeted training and counseling for veteran entrepreneurs.
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC): virginiasbdc.org – No-cost advising, market research, and funding strategies.
- AgrAbility: agrability.org – Practical support for veterans managing disabilities in agriculture.
- Farmer Veteran Coalition Fellowship Fund: farmvetco.org – Competitive awards for essential farm equipment.
- VA VR&E Apprenticeships – Use Veteran Readiness and Employment to bring on apprentices; the VA supplements pay and provides a subsistence allowance, reducing overhead while building skilled labor.
- Virginia Values Veterans (V3): dvsv3.com – Employer certification that can unlock hiring incentives, including grants up to \$10,000.
- USDA Beginning Farmer/Rancher Coordinator – Maintain contact with your local coordinator; connecting early can accelerate access to technical assistance and costshare programs.

Local Opportunities and County Support

- Explore city, town, and county programs designed for small enterprises. Example: Prince George County EDA MicroBusiness Grant: princegeorgecountyva.gov – accessible capital for small operations.
- Stay active with your local Chamber, such as SOVA Chamber: sovachamber.com to expand your network and learn about procurement, workforce, and marketing opportunities.

Foot Stomp: Relationships First Don't open with "Do you have grants?" Lead with relationships. Show up at local meetings, ask good questions, and offer value. Information and opportunities flow to those who are visible, prepared, and consistent. Rejection isn't failure—it's feedback to refine your plan.

A Smart Force Multiplier Complete AI training to streamline grant drafting, cashflow modeling, and business plan refinement. Combined with a solid network and persistence, these tools compound your momentum. Keep moving forward—your mission continues.

TIM'S TIPS



AG TIPS TO HELP YOU THRIVE

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

Summer is one of the busiest and most rewarding times of the year for farmers. Crops are growing, livestock require additional attention, and farm management decisions made now can have a lasting impact on productivity throughout the season. Tim shares the following practical tips to help farmers make the most of the summer months.

Think Smaller

Avoid taking on too much. Limit crops based on the time you have available to invest. Likewise, avoid taking on too many animals at once. Starting small and managing well is often more successful than expanding too quickly.

Choose the Right Crops

Select crops that are well-suited to your soil conditions, local weather patterns, and market demand. Careful planning can improve both yields and profitability.

Learn About Soil Management

Remember, the soil is the foundation of your whole farm, and it needs love too. Healthy soil is essential for healthy crops.

Keep your soil covered following harvest. Consider planting a green manure crop such as buckwheat, wheat, or oats and tilling it in when you are ready to plant your next crop. The nutrients in the green plants decompose quickly and help provide nutrients for the succession crop.

Watch for Pests and Disease

Early detection is the key to having a plentiful crop. Most diseases and pest infestations begin in a small area and spread rapidly if left unchecked. Diligence is essential.

Keep Good Records

Maintain records of:

- Planting dates
- Fertilizer applications
- Herbicide and pesticide applications, including dates and rates
- Expenses and income
- Time spent on each crop

Good records help guide future decisions and improve farm profitability.

Practice Efficient Water Management

Consider installing drip irrigation systems. Drip irrigation is approximately 95% effective at delivering water directly

to plants, while overhead irrigation is typically only 45–55% effective.

Market Cleanliness Matters

When selling at a local farmers market, pay close attention to cleanliness and proper hygiene.

Always wash produce at home before bringing it to market. Thoroughly clean fruits and vegetables before display to remove any possible contaminants and present a high-quality product to customers.

Manage Summer Grazing

Consider grazing fields that were cut for hay earlier in the season. If you are planting summer annuals for grazing, wait until they reach approximately 20 inches in height and graze them down to about 10 inches.

Provide Additional Water for Livestock

As temperatures rise, consider adding extra waterers or troughs to ensure livestock have consistent access to clean drinking water.

Control Weeds in Pastures

June and July are excellent times to manage weeds in pastures. Weeds compete with desirable forage for water and nutrients and can reduce pasture productivity. Remember that some weeds may also be toxic to livestock.

Utilize Summer Annuals

Summer annuals can provide high-quality forage during the warmer months. However, if drought conditions persist, consider closing off pastures and feeding hay to prevent overgrazing and long-term pasture damage.

Prepare for Fall Stockpiling

Begin preparing now for fall pasture stockpiling. Cut old growth, which is often only about 25% digestible, and consider top-dressing with ammonium sulfate. It does not volatilize quickly and also supplies sulfur, an important plant nutrient.

Summer farming requires careful planning, observation, and adaptability. By focusing on soil health, water management, recordkeeping, pest control, and livestock care, farmers can position themselves for a productive season and lay the groundwork for success in the months ahead. Small, consistent management decisions often make the biggest difference.



ORGANIC RESEARCH ON RANDOLPH FARM

10-Acre Field Conversion Nears Completion while Grant-funded Organic Tomato Research Continues

Amy Carpenter-Driscoll, Marketing Specialist

The Extension Horticulture Program at Virginia State University is transitioning a 10-acre field plot on VSU's Randolph Farm to an organic field, which opens possibilities for future applied research projects in organic production and new opportunities for Virginia growers to learn about organic production. Now in its third year of the mandatory three-year transition period, during which synthetic fertilizers and pesticides cannot be applied, Dr. Sanjun Gu, VSU's Extension specialist for horticulture, is preparing the necessary paperwork for official certification through the National Organic Program (NOP). Once the systematic review and on-site inspection are complete, the field will become certified organic later in 2026.

"Organic agriculture is the fastest growing sector in U.S. agriculture," says Dr. Gu, who previously conducted organic research through Extension in Missouri and North Carolina. "Organic food sales in the United States surpassed \$76.6 billion in 2025 and are projected to cross the \$100 billion threshold in 2030. Organic production is highly suitable for small farms and often yields higher profits than conventional produce."

The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) Program under USDA NIFA is prioritizing, among other efforts, the development of seed varieties well-suited for organic farming and improvements in organic agricultural production. Organic production faces unique challenges: organic crops are labor-intensive, climate conditions can stress plants, and farmers must manage pests and diseases in accordance with NOP rules.

For the last 10 years, OREI has funded the Tomato Organic Management and Improvement Project (TOMI) to support the production of organic tomatoes, a popular crop in organic agriculture. Consumers express a preference for organic tomato varieties and their superior flavor; however, TOMI indicates that these varieties are more susceptible to foliar diseases. Parts 1 and 2 of TOMI took the first steps toward identifying the best-suited existing varieties for organic production and developing biocontrol strategies to manage foliar diseases, which pose a significant risk to farmers' yields and crop quality.

Despite progress in TOMI 1 and 2, organic farmers continue to struggle with foliar diseases, even as demand for organic tomatoes grows. *"Foliage disease is a significant challenge to production," says Gu, who cites late blight, early blight, and septoria leaf spot as the main foliage diseases of tomato plants. "Septoria leaf spot and early blight will not kill plants quickly, but will damage the plant's health, reducing quality and yield. Late blight can wipe out an entire crop."*

ORGANIC RESEARCH ON RANDOLPH FARM *cont. from page 6*

TOMI 3 released funding in 2024 for the next round of research projects for organic tomato production. Purdue University received a \$3 million grant, under which VSU received a sub-award of \$ 465,000, along with project partners Oregon State University, North Carolina State University, the University of Wisconsin, e-Organic, and the Organic Seed Alliance.

This grant focuses on an integrative approach to managing foliage diseases, including selective breeding for resistance genes and biological control agents for plants, developing Extension and outreach components, and investigating a disease forecast model to predict regional incidences. Regional growth conditions and climate impact organic tomato production, and models informed by disease progression from neighboring states, leaf wetness, pathogen presence, and spore counts can project when and where an outbreak will occur. Fortunately, a plant variety with a gene for immunity to specific pathogens will prevent or reduce disease, even when a pathogen is present and environmental conditions are right for disease.

Gu describes partnering universities as having strong organic breeding programs, but that's not the specific role that VSU is playing in this project, which is in its second year of a four-year project. *"VSU is responsible for coordinating field days across the region for farmer education, conducting breeding trials, biocontrol studies in our high tunnels, and conducting surveys of growers to determine the success of previous project elements,"* Gu explains. In Virginia, a local farmer is participating in field trials of bio-control efforts to compare data with those from the same efforts in VSU's high tunnels.

Once certified, the organic plot at VSU can trial new tomato breeds. Gu hopes to expand organic research efforts to include small fruits, vegetables and specialty crops. As VSU and other TOMI grant awardees continue to research organic tomato production and best practices in breeding and foliar disease prevention and management, Gu and other Extension specialists are looking forward to hosting new workshops and field days for Virginia producers to learn about and apply information and techniques in organic production.

Point of contact: **Gu, Sanjun, Ph.D. Horticulture Specialist** (804) 524-3654 | Sgu@vsu.edu

Agriculture Finance, Tax and Asset Protection (AgFTAP)

By James Maclin, Agribusiness
Management Coordinator

The Agricultural Finance, Tax and Asset Protection (AgFTAP) education program seeks to enhance farmer and rancher ability to understand and navigate the farm business tax and asset protection decisions for their operations, as well as the important relationships between federal income taxes and USDA farm programs. This mission is carried out through an online portal of educational training and resources.

The AgFTAP program is led by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Southern Risk Management Education Center. Center and AgFTAP Project Director, Ron Rainey, has strategically built upon the capacity of the land-grant system to develop a national program.

The AgFTAP collaborative strategically leverages the on-going relationships of the ERME Centers and Land-Grant Extension farm management committees. The capacity of 1862, 1890 and Hispanic Serving Institutions leverages AgFTAP to engage in on-going communications to understand producer needs at the grass-roots level and to deliver impactful educational programming to diverse producer groups across the country.

- Build relationships between small and beginning farmers and Extension educators.
- Strengthen collaboration between 1862 Land-Grant Universities, 1890 Land Grant Universities, 1994 Land Grant Universities, and Hispanic Serving Institutions.

More Information:

Contact the Small Farm Outreach Program at Virginia State University. SFOP is a Cooperator for this program. Point of contact: **James (Jimmy) Maclin** (804) 731-6595 | Jlmaclin@vsu.edu

MEU Schedule

June - November 2026

The Mobile Education Unit (MEU) from Virginia State University's College of Agriculture brings hands-on learning directly to communities across the Commonwealth. Equipped with interactive educational resources and staffed by knowledgeable agricultural professionals, the MEU serves as a traveling classroom, connecting youth, families, farmers, and community members with information about agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, environmental stewardship, and STEM careers. By taking education on the road, the Mobile Education Unit helps make agricultural learning accessible, engaging, and relevant to audiences of all ages.

June 2026				
DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	TARGET
Tuesday, June 2 *NEW	10 a.m.-1 p.m.	High Tunnel Grand Opening	Franklin High School Greenhouse Franklin, VA	County Officials, Small Farmers and local farmers
Saturday, June 6	8 a.m.-8 p.m.	Dairy Day	Fairground Road Farmville, VA	County Residents
Thursday, June 25 *NEW	9 a.m.--1 p.m.	Fun on the farm youth camp	Harvest and Learn Outreach. Norlina	Warren County Youth

July 2026				
DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	TARGET
Saturday, July 18	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Back to school bash	Hopewell High School	3rd-12th Graders
Wednesday, July 28-Thursday, July 29	(TBD)	The Ag Expo	Meadow Event Park	

August 2026				
DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	TARGET
Friday, Aug. 7-Saturday, Aug. 8	8 a.m.-7 p.m.	Grayson County Ag. Fair	County Fairgrounds Elk Creek, VA	County Residents

September 2026				
DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	TARGET
Saturday, Sept. 12 *NEW	9 a.m.-5 p.m.	4-H County Fair	King George, VA	Youth Grades 3-12
Friday, Sept. 18-Sunday, Sept. 20	Friday 3 p.m. Sunday 6 p.m.	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

FARMER FIELD DAY

**Friday,
June 26**

**VSU RANDOLPH
FARM PAVILION**

8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Registration starts | 7:30 a.m.

4415 River Road,
Petersburg, VA 23803

Join us for **FREE** Small Farmer-Focused Field Day designed to help you enhance your farm and protect the environment! Learn about various production systems to boost farm profitability and sustainability. Join us for informative sessions with our faculty and staff from the College of Agriculture to explore exciting opportunities in the field of agriculture.

Light refreshments provided and boxed lunch will be served at noon.



Register at

ext.vsu.edu/calendar

For more info, contact: **Jessica Harris**
(804) 524-5964 | jharris@vsu.edu

VSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE | @VSU_AG

Visit ext.vsu.edu for information on this and other upcoming events.

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.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and local governments, and is an equal opportunity employer. For the full non-discrimination statement, please visit ext.vt.edu/accessibility.

SFOP Workshops: July–September 2026

Date	Workshop	Time	Location	PA	Limit
7/1/26	Lavender Farm Tour	9 a.m.–Noon	Red Fern Farm, 1405 Fowlkes Rd Victoria, Lunenburg, 23974	Estes	20
7/2/26	Nutrient Management for Small Farmers	9 a.m.–Noon	20712 4th Ave Ettrick, Virginia, 23806	Sexton	20
7/3/26	Dickenson County Farmers Market	9 a.m.–3 p.m.	200 Chase Street Clintwood, VA, 24228	Browning	
7/7/26	Farm Service Agency & Crop Insurance Workshop	5:30–6:30 p.m.	18 Government Center, Room: Smith West Verona, Augusta, VA	Dalke	
7/8/26	Pine View Greenhouses	9 a.m.–12:10 p.m.	11510 Lebanon Church Rd, Jarratt Jarratt Virginia, 23867	Banks	15
7/8/26	Farm Service Agency & Crop Insurance Workshop	5:30–6:30 p.m.	600 N Main Street, Suite 100A Woodstock, Shenandoah County, 22664	Dalke	
7/16/26	Raising Chickens on your Farm	10 a.m.–Noon		Summers	
7/10/26	43560 project garden tour	10 a.m.–Noon	Randolph Farm Pavilion	Holler	15
7/14/26	Forestry Basics	10 a.m.–Noon	21300 Plank Road Courtland Va., Southampton, 23837	Banks	15
7/14/26	Norton Friends and Farmers Market	4–6 p.m.	115 8th St. SW Norton, Wise, 24273	Browning	
7/15/26	ON-FARM HIGH TUNNEL FIELD DAY	8–10 a.m.	6093 Riverside Farm Lane Cape Charles, Northampton, 23310	Dukes	
7/15/26	Irrigation and Soil Management	10 a.m.–Noon	9432 N James Madison Hwy. Rapidan, Va., Culpeper, 22733	Terrell	
7/16/26	Aerial Imagery For Small Farms	9 a.m.–Noon		Gibson	
7/16/26	Drought and Weather Update on the 2026 Growing Season	1–2 p.m.	online	Browning	
7/16/26	Strawberry Production for Small Farmers	3–5 p.m.		Summers	
7/18/26	Harvesting Hope – A Mental Health Initiative for Farmers	9:30–10:30 a.m.	online	Peralta	
7/20/26	Starting an LLC workshop: A Beginners Guide for Virginia Farmers	6–8:30 p.m.	300 Gordondale Rd. Atkins, Smyth, 24311	Fletcher	40
7/20/26	FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC THREATS TO AGRICULTURE	7–8 p.m.	online	Ben Dukes	
7/21/26	SMALL FARM ORIENTATION	9–11 a.m.		Dukes	
7/21/26	INTRODUCTION TO JADAM FARMING	2–4 p.m.	Jordan-Newby Anchor Branch Library at Broad Creek, 1425 Norchester Ave, Large Meeting Room Norfolk, 23504	Ben Dukes	20
7/22/26	VSU SFOP and USDA Information Update	10 a.m.–Noon	South Jefferson Street, McCrumm's Parking Lot Lexington, Rockbridge, 24450	Hobbs	
7/23/26	Farm Profit Systems & Scaling: Income-Producing Plant System	10 a.m.–Noon	Winfield Farms, 2446 Alliance Road Surry, 23883	Bugg	0
7/23/26	VSU SFOP and USDA Information Update	10 a.m.–Noon	Buena Vista Farmers Market, Corner of 21st and Magnolia Avenue Nelson, Rockbridge, 24415	Hobbs	
7/23/26	AgFTAP Education	10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	online	Cladd	25
7/23/26	Managing Agricultural Risk: Protecting Your Farm and Future	1–3 p.m.	Oceanfront Area Library, 700 Virginia Beach Blvd, Meeting Room Virginia Beach, 23451	Dukes	30
7/23/26	Information and Techniques to help Small Farmers In their Farming Operations	3–5 p.m.		Summers	
7/24/26	Managing Agricultural Risk: Protecting Your Farm and Future	10 a.m.–Noon	10789 Stewart Neck Rd Princess Anne MD, Somerset County, MD, 21853	Dukes	30
7/27/26	From Field to Filing Taxes: Smart Tax Strategies for Farmers	10 a.m.–Noon		Peralta	20
7/30/26	Web Soil Survey Basics	10 a.m.–Noon		Holler	
7/30/26	Shenandoah Valley Young Farmers Coalition	6–8 p.m.	414 N Liberty Street Bridgewater, Rockingham, 22812	Dalke	
8/1/26	Risk Management for Poultry and Rabbit Farming	10 a.m.–Noon	100 Dominion Dr. Farmville, Prince Edward, 23901	Holler	15

SFOP Workshops: July–September 2026

Date	Workshop	Time	Location	PA	Limit
8/5/26	Setting Up a Whole Farm Irrigation System	9 a.m.–Noon	841 Potts Spring Rd Dundas, Lunenburg, 23938	Estes	20
8/5/26	Working Towards a Healthy Soil	9 a.m.–Noon	20712 4th Ave Ettrick, Virginia, 23806	Sexton	20
8/5/26	Recordkeeping on your Computer or Smart Phone	6–8 p.m.		Terrell	
8/6/26	VSU SFOP and USDA Information Update	10 a.m.–Noon	562 Front Street, TBA Lovingston, Nelson, 22949	Hobbs	
8/12/26	Herd Health and Forage improvement	9–11:30 a.m.	20712 4th Ave Ettrick, Virginia, 23806	Sexton	20
8/13/26	Agriculture Business Structure Planning Workshop	6–8 p.m.	Campbell County VCE Office, 163 Kabler Lane Rustburg, Campbell, 24588	Hobbs	80
8/15/26	Clinch River Farmers Market	8 a.m.–Noon	16531 Russell Street PO Box 66 St. Paul, Wise, 24283	Browning	
8/17/26	Backyard Poultry 101	9:30 a.m.–Noon	3738 Brambleton Ave. Room 16 Roanoke, Roanoke, 24018	Noell	20
8/18/26	Pest Management in the Home/Yard/ Landscape	10 a.m.–Noon	21300 Plank Road Courtland Va, Southampton, 23837	Banks	15
8/18/26	farming With AI:Leveraging ChatGPT-5 For Smarter, More Sustainable Agriculture	3–5 p.m.		Gibson	
8/18/26	SMALL FARM ORIENTATION	9–11 a.m.	George Washington Carver Agriculture Research Center (GWCARC), 9432 N James Madison Hwy Rapidan, Culpeper, 22733	Dukes	
8/20/26	Intro to Agroforestry Design Systems (Virtual)	12:30–2 p.m.	Eden Green Farms Prince George, Prince George County, 23860	Bugg	0
8/20/26	Switchgrass for Soil & Income	6–7:20 p.m.		Bugg	
8/20/26	Whole Farm Planning	9 a.m.–Noon		CLADD	25
8/21/26	Risk Management for Poultry and Rabbit Farming	10 a.m.–Noon		Holler	
8/25/26	Improving Soil Health and Fertility with Cover Crops	10 a.m.–2 p.m.	5185 Poor Mountain Rd Salem, VA, 24153	Noell	
8/28/26	Silvopasture Meets Agritourism	5:00 PM	2502 Silbury Rd Prince George, 23860	Tabitha Bugg	20
9/2/26	Aerial Imagery for Small Farms	9–11:30 a.m.	20712 4th Ave Ettrick, Virginia, 23806	Sexton	20
9/5/26	Big Stone Gap Farmers Market	9 a.m.–1 p.m.	306 Wood Ave E. Big Stone Gap, VA 24219 Big Stone Gap, Wise, 24219	Browning	
9/8/26	Agribusiness	9:30–11:20 a.m.		Cladd	
9/8/26	Forest Stand Improvement	10 a.m.–Noon	21300 Plank Road Courtland Va, Southampton, 23837	Banks	15
9/9/26	Facebook Ads 101	6–8 p.m.		Gibson	
9/12/26	Basic Soil Fertility for Farmers	9 a.m.–Noon	20712 4th Ave Ettrick, Virginia, 23806	Sexton	20
9/15/26	SMALL FARM ORIENTATION	9–11 a.m.	online	Dukes	
09/16/26	Precision Agriculture	10 a.m.–Noon	9432 N James Madison Hwy. Rapidan, Va., Culpeper, 22733	Terrell	20
9/17/26	Bus Tour (The Tennie Group LLC)	7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.	3005 Village Park Dr, Ste 204B Knightdale, North Carolina, Wake, 27545	Cladd	15
9/17/26	Basic Soil Science for Farmers	9 a.m.–Noon		Gibson	
9/19/26	Growing Garlic for the Beginner	10 a.m.–Noon	26230 Orange Spring Rd. Unionville,Va., Orange, 22567	Terrell	20
9/24/26	Intro to Quail Farming & Agriculinary Systems	11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.	212 Spring Branch Road Waverly, Sussex, 23890	Bugg	20
9/24/26	Farm and Homestead Libality issues and Insurance Coverage	3–5 p.m.		Gibson	
9/25/26	Cooper Farms Century Celebration: 100 Years of Stewardship	4:30–6:30 p.m.	28114 Coopers Lane Waverly, Sussex, 23890	Bugg	30
9/30/26	Informational- Workshop	10 a.m.–Noon	9432 N James Madison Hwy. Rapidan, Va., Culpeper, 22733	Terrell	20



Greater Happens Here
College of Agriculture

P.O. Box 9051
Virginia State University, VA 23806

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PETERSBURG, VA
PERMIT NO. 46

Contact Our Small Farm Agents

Regional Small Farm Agents*

Garry Banks 804-760-3615 gbanks@vsu.edu
Walter Browning 804-760-3932 wbrowning@vsu.edu
Tabitha Bugg 804-892-2997 tbugg@vsu.edu
Marian Dalke 540-232-6010 mdalke@vsu.edu
Ben Dukes 804-731-7916 bdukes@vsu.edu
Beginning Farmers

Marilyn Estes 804-481-0485 mestes@vsu.edu
Amanda Fletcher 804-892-0108 afletcher@vsu.edu
James Gibson 804-720-6826 jegibson@vsu.edu
Forrest Hobbs 804-892-5910 fhobbs@vsu.edu
James Maclin 804-731-6595 jmaclin@vsu.edu
Agribusiness Grant Coordinator
Brent Noell 804-892-0140 bnoell@vsu.edu
Roland Terrell 804-892-4612 rterrell@vsu.edu

State Farm Agents

Frederick Custis | 804-894-0218 | fcustis@vsu.edu
Agriculture Management Coordinator

Derrick Cladd | 804-892-4489 | dcladd@vsu.edu
Bus Tours

James Edwards | 804-720-2588 | jtedwards@vsu.edu
Military Veteran, AgrAbility

Barry Harris | 804-720-6367 | bdharris@vsu.edu
Conservation Practices

Briana Stevenson | 804-586-0961 | Bstevenson@vsu.edu
*National Urban Agriculture Coordinator
Small Farm Outreach Program*

Tammy Holler | 804-229-2730 | tholler@vsu.edu
Nutrient Management

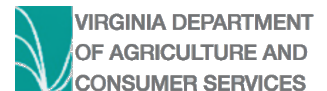
Wanda Johnson | 434-632-9701 | wjohnson@vsu.edu
Community Gardens, Food Services

Yowei Peralta | 804-892-0282 | yperalta@vsu.edu
Outreach Coordinator

Grace Summers | 804-712-0093 | gsummers@vsu.edu
NRCS, SFOP High Tech Tunnel

Tim Sexton | 804-720-5539 | tsexton@vsu.edu
Grant Coordinator Heard Health and Forage Improvement

Alan Diggs | 804-704-5800 | akdiggs@vsu.edu
Financial Management Coordinator



FARM CREDIT



AGUA FUND, INC.



SOUTHERN
EXTENSION
RISK
MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION



VSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE |     @VSU_AG

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.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and local governments, and is an equal opportunity employer. For the full non-discrimination statement, please visit ext.vt.edu/accessibility.