



SFOP Quarterly NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

Dear Small Farmers, Ranchers and Veterans,

This is our fifth edition of The Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP) Quarterly Newsletter. In this edition, you will meet some of our Small Farm Advisory Board Members and two of our partners, Brunswick Farms To Families (BFF) and Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont (MVFP).

Our Small Farm Advisory Board is comprised of 10 members, who are intricately involved with small farming. The Board meets once every quarter to discuss real-time issues that small farmers face and strategize ways that SFOP can help address those issues through new and innovative programs.

Our partners, BFF and MVFP, offer additional programs that many small farmers may not be aware of. These programs can provide information that could help reduce risks on your farm operation and enhance your profitability. You can read more about BFF and MVFP in this issue.

To learn more about SFOP offerings, visit our webpage at <https://www.ext.vsu.edu/small-farm-outreach-program> for our calendar of events and link to our online Small Farm Resource Center at vasmallfarmers.com.

We thank you for your participation in VSU Small Farm Outreach Program's educational training workshops, demonstrations, field days and conferences.

Finally, we are excited to inform you that this year's Small Farm Conference will take place on November 19-20, 2021 in Roanoke, Virginia. Look out for registration details coming soon.

Continue to stay safe and practice the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) safety precautions guidelines for COVID-19.

VCE SFOP at VSU keeping you informed,
William Crutchfield, SFOP Director



Meet Our Advisory Board Members



Glenn Slade, who owns Slade Farms in Surry County, Virginia, joined the Small Farm Outreach Program's Advisory Board in 2017 and has served as chairman since 2019. He is a fourth generation farmer and currently grows corn and soybeans. Slade has experimented with alternative crops like hemp and has previously grown peanuts, cotton and raised beef cattle. He is a former agricultural extension agent for Surry County and was employed by Virginia Tech for 15 years. Slade also worked as an outreach agent for SFOP for five years. He is a VSU alumnus and majored in animal science. Slade and his wife, Brenda, have five children. Slade said he has always enjoyed farm life.



Charlie A. Maloney joined the advisory board in 2017 and currently serves as vice chairman. Maloney grew up on a small diversified farm on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. After completing undergraduate and graduate degrees in religion, theology and pastoral counseling at Duke

University, he practiced psychotherapy in the Hampton and Williamsburg, Virginia areas for 25 years. In 1987, Maloney moved with his wife and children to a 180-acre farm, now called Dayspring Farm, in King and Queen County, Virginia. They established a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) market in 1991 with 20 members, and was one of the first CSAs in Virginia. The CSA has increased to over 200 members during the past 30 years. Maloney, his family and workers grow a wide variety of vegetables using sustainable, ecological practices. He also sells produce to several stores and restaurants. Maloney is an adjunct faculty member at The College of William and Mary, where he teaches a

Our Advisory Board Members, *continued*

sustainability and agriculture course in the Environmental Science and Policy Department. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Virginia Association for Biological Farming and the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

He received the SFOP Small Farmer of the Year award in 2016.



Anita Roberson joined the advisory board in 2017. She and her husband, Thomas, are both military veterans and own Botanical Bites & Provisions, LLC in Spotsylvania County, just outside of the city of Fredericksburg.

Their picturesque 10-acre farm is a labor of love and reflects their passion for healthy living. They use agricultural management best practices on their certified farm and are dedicated to producing only naturally grown fruits and vegetables that are free of pesticides and preservatives. The farm includes three high tunnels, several fields and a small apiary. In addition to produce, the Robersons grow cut flowers and produce apiary products and natural cosmetics, such as soaps, lotions, lip balms and salves, from beeswax, propolis and honey. Anita Roberson

said she and her husband take pride in growing produce for others with the same love and attention they want in the foods they eat. The Robersons received the SFOP Virginia Small Farmer of the Year award in 2015.



Eugene F. Triplett Jr. joined the advisory board in 2020. Triplett is a

fourth generation farmer in Brandy Station, Virginia, where he owns Shared Blessings Farm Inc. He raises cattle and grows hay and vegetables. Triplett is a member of the Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont, a non-profit organization that educates communities on sustainable and scalable agricultural practices. He serves as MVFP's secretary/treasurer. Triplett received his associate's degree in science from Germanna Community College, a bachelor's degree in pharmacy from Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy and a bachelor's degree in theology from Bethlehem School of Theology. He is married with three adult children and six grandchildren.



Dr. Kim Niewolny joined the advisory board in 2020 and serves as an ex-officio member. Niewolny is an associate professor in the Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education at Virginia Tech and serves as founding Director of the Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation. Her

current research and outreach initiatives emphasize regional food justice; new agrarian sustainability; and the intersection of technology, farmers and disability. Niewolny serves as Director of the AgrAbility Virginia Program and the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition. She also teaches Civic Agriculture and Food Systems courses and provides co-leadership for the Community, Local and Regional Food Systems Program Team through the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

MVFP Helps Educate Farmers in the Piedmont

Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont (MVFP) is a volunteer-led, non-profit organization that educates communities on sustainable and scalable agricultural practices. This grassroots organization pioneers educational sessions that promote environmental stewardship, rural preservation, local food access and security to foster strong healthy families. Their innovative training and seminars engage, educate and empower youth, adults, families, farmers and communities about food access and security.

MVFP's work impacts families and communities in Rappahannock, Culpeper, Madison and Fauquier Counties. MVFP partners with Virginia State University and George Washington Carver Agricultural Research Center to lead,

train and educate socially disadvantaged, veteran and minority farmers in the Piedmont Region on agricultural diversification, niche markets and sustainability. This collaborative effort activated a passion to mitigate food inequities, food security and raise awareness while bridging the nutritional divide and promoting economic equity for socially disadvantaged, veteran and minority farmers.

MVFP actively engages and collaborates with community-based organizations across the Piedmont Region to ensure voices are heard, promote divergent programs and seek opportunities to promote equity, growth, cultural competence and equal access. MVFP works effortlessly to bring awareness to inequities and practices across agricultural sectors.

Partnership Inspires Students to Pursue Agriculture at VSU

The Seed Retreat Education Mentorship Program provides “hands-on” farming experiences to minority high school students and educates them about the diverse job opportunities that a college degree in agribusiness can provide them.

The program is a collaboration between Brunswick Farms To Families (BFF), the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Brunswick County and the Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP) at Virginia State University (VSU). Five high school juniors, who were college bound, were selected for the program based on their desire and commitment to working in an agricultural setting during their summer school break.

At Seed Retreat Farm, Bernard Jones, chairman of BFF, gave the students opportunities to learn about economic issues associated with raising vegetables for income. Jones showed students how to grow sweet potatoes, starting from slips that are grown from a mature sweet potato. The students planted the sweet potato slips using a variety of methods, including manually setting them with a peg, planting with an old tobacco plant setter and riding behind a tractor on a two-row planter. The students planted over 40,000 sweet potato slips. During the hot, dry months that preceded the slip plantings, they returned to the farm to learn the importance of water and irrigation for plant growth and participated in setting up a pump and pipe irrigation system from the farm pond. Overall, the students enjoyed themselves and learned a lot along the way!

As Jones and the students bonded during these activities, he introduced them to Herbert Brown Jr., County Executive Director for the USDA FSA in Brunswick County. Brown

and his father, Herbert Brown Sr., own Browntown Farms in Warfield, Virginia. Herbert Brown Jr., who grew up in Brunswick, is an excellent role model and successful businessman with a degree in agribusiness. The Browns were SFOP Farmers of the Year in 2017.

Jones and Brown took students on a field trip to VSU's Randolph Farm, a 416-acre farm that is home to a multitude of agricultural related research, demonstration and instruction activities. In addition to producing the region's traditional row crops, the farm is used for research and education in areas of new and niche crops, alternative cropping methods, horticultural crops, nutrient management, water quality, animal production and aquaculture production.

During the field trip, students had the opportunity to engage with SFOP staff and learn about job opportunities and experiences that an agribusiness degree offers. The students built relationships with the VSU staff, meet local Brunswick County farmers and assisted in hands-on training of local farmers using VSU's new sweet potato harvesting equipment.

The mentorship program produced very positive outcomes among the five participants. Four of the students indicated they were seriously considering majoring in agribusiness at VSU. They had never considered VSU or this occupational path before their experiences with the mentorship program. We are very pleased that all four students: Dwayne Taylor, Joshua McIntosh, Maximillian Bruce and Norea Wheeler received VSU scholarships and are attending as full time students this fall.....all because a conscientious mentor opened a door for them and expanded their horizons!



Fall Ag Tips from our Small Farm Program Assistants

- Plan in advance for fall and spring crops. Evaluate this year's production for next year's planning. Identify the enterprises you are going to plant in the upcoming season and order seeds and other supplies early.
- As the USDA fiscal year comes to a close on September 30, producers should check in with their local USDA personnel to find out what programs are available for the incoming year. This will give them the opportunity to be aware of deadlines and to inquire about sign ups and rankings for the new funding cycles.
- Growers should make an inventory of supplies they will need for the spring growing season and look for vendors having inventory reduction or going out of business sales. Examples include seeds, grower supplies, equipment, etc.
- Make a list of the different resources you will need.
- Determine the labor force that you'll need and start recruiting now for the planting season.
- Plant a mixed variety of fall cover crops to protect and amend your soil for spring planting.
- If you are growing mushrooms on logs, check them periodically as many varieties flush this time of the year.
- Select and cut live hardwood trees while dormant (December to February) for spring mushroom inoculation.
- Plant your fall crops now so they reach maturity before the 1st frost (November 1-10 is generally the 1st frost for Central and Tidewater Virginia).
- Time to review crop yields and change varieties where yields are low.
- It's a good time to take soil samples of land in the fall for lime recommendations to raise the soil PH. Apply the needed lime as soon as possible. This should be done 3 or 4 months ahead of recommended planting date.



- Now is a good time to plant your cool season crops like collards, cabbage, kale, swish chard.
- Plan the rotation of crops in your field. Do not put the same crop in the same area.
- Remove stubble from old crops from field and plant cover crops.
- Now is a good time to visit the managers of farmers' markets to sign up to be a vendor.
- Marketing small farm crops for the Holiday Season- Now is a good time to establish a contact of who you would like to sell your products to during the holiday season.
- Compile your farm records for the upcoming tax preparation season, estate planning and future plans.
- Buy containers with warm colors and different shapes and sizes, washable for use for selling at farmer's market.
- Review the sign you use at the farmers' market to make sure they are readable from 3 feet away.
- Roadside signs should be comparable in size to the speed limit of the roadway/high way by your farm.
- Now is a good time to start looking for and attending local farm equipment auctions as people decide to get rid of older equipment because of retirement or getting out of farming all together.
- Fall is the time to prepare and plant for the Spring Strawberry harvest. Right now is the time to source strawberry plugs and/or bare root plants for planting. Land preparation should already be underway and supplies such as plastic mulch and drip irrigation should already be on hand.
- Small Farmer Graziers' Checklist: Winter is a great time to spot spray invasive woody brush using dormant season basal bark applications. Your local SFOP program assistant can help connect you to find herbicide recommendations and details for successful dormant season control.

- Small Farmer Financial Checklist: December is an excellent time to review financial information and set benchmarks for the coming year. Take time to summarize cost information and calculate breakeven prices. Explore ways to reduce cow/ewe/doe costs – such as extending grazing. A good measure of productivity is pounds of calf/lamb/kid sold – per cow/ewe/doe exposed to be bred – with 500 pounds being acceptable for beef operations; and a range of 45 – 80 pounds for sheep and goats.
- Small Farmer Small Ruminant Checklist: Minimize stressors for ewes/does – pasture and barn grouping, parasite control, etc. and provide excellent nutrition and adequate mineral supplementation to prepare for a successful lambing/kidding experience. Remember to give the ewe/doe a CD&T vaccine 4 -6 weeks prior to birth.
- Small Farmer Health Checklist: Farming can be demanding and stressful! According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, “A healthy farm or ranch is nothing without a healthy you.” Learn more and receive support from a Rural Resilience Training program at <https://farmcredit.com/rural-resilience> that assists farmers to:
 - Understand the sources of stress
 - Identify effective communication strategies
 - Reduce stigma related to mental health
 - Learn the warning signs of stress and suicide

Photos from VSU Field Day 2021



SFOP WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

(OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021)

Event Date	Workshop/Event	Start Time	End Time	Location	Contact Program Assistant	Limit	Cost
10/2/21	Small Engine - Storage, Maintenance and Repair	10:00AM	03:00PM	Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 5527 Sullivans Mill Road, Middleburg	Roland Terrell; Michael Carter Sr.	15	\$5.00
10/5/21	Weed Control with Goats	9:00AM	11:30AM	Slade Family Farm, Surry, VA	Tracy Porter	24	\$5.00
10/6/21	USDA/DCR Informational Meeting	6:30PM	8:30PM	The Crossroads Institute, 1117 East Stuart Drive, Galax	Brent Noell	15	\$5.00
10/7/21	Small Farm Spotlight Series: Preparing for Lambing/Kidding	4:00PM	6:00PM	Shepherd's Way Farm	Amanda Fletcher	25	\$5.00
10/8/21	Mapping with Drones for Precision Agriculture	1:00PM	3:00PM	Wedgewood Golf Center, 2131 Mountain Road, Halifax	Clifford Somerville; Leonel Castillo	15	\$5.00
10/13/21	USDA/DCR Informational Meeting	6:30PM	8:30PM	APEX Center, 200 Apex Drive, Wytheville	Brent Noell	15	\$5.00
10/14/21	VDACS Informational Session	1:00PM	3:00PM	Virtual	Michael Carter Jr.		
10/18/21	Sustainable Forestry Management	10:00AM	12:00PM	Wedgewood Golf Center, 2131 Mountain Road, Halifax	Clifford Somerville	15	\$5.00
10/19/21	USDA/DCR Informational Meeting	6:30PM	8:30PM	Patrick County Recreation Dept, 214 Johnson Street, Stuart	Brent Noell	15	\$5.00

SFOP WORKSHOPS/EVENTS (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021)

Event Date	Workshop/Event	Start Time	End Time	Location	Contact Program Assistant	Limit	Cost
10/27/21	Value Added Producer Grants	10:00AM	12:00PM	VCE Prince Edward Office, 100 Dominion Drive, Farmville, VA	Leonard Elam	15	\$5.00
10/27/21	Black Angus Cattle Operation Tour	5:00PM	7:30PM	Edgewood Angus, King William, VA	Tracy Porter	30	\$5.00
10/28/21	Forest Management Workshop	6:30PM	8:30PM	Catawba Community Center	Brent Noell	15	\$5.00
11/2/21	For Beginning Farmers: Becoming Debt-Free	3:00PM	4:30PM	Virtual	Michael Carter Sr.		
11/3/21	USDA/DCR Informational Meeting	6:30PM	8:30PM	Montgomery County Administration Office 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg	Brent Noell	15	\$5.00
11/5/21	Mapping with Drones for Precision Agriculture	1:00PM	3:00PM	Carver Agricultural Research Center, 9432 James Madison Hwy, Rapidan	Roland Terrell; Leonel Castillo; Michael Carter Sr.	15	\$5.00
11/6/21	Drip Irrigation Layout	12:00PM	2:00PM	Hillcrest Farm, Orange County	Roland Terrell	8	\$5.00
11/8/21	Small Farmer Orientation	9:00AM	11:00AM	Virtual	Vernon Heath		
11/9/21	VDACS Farmer/Farmland Match & Market Maker	1:00PM	2:30PM	Virtual	Michael Carter Jr.		
11/10/21	Estate Planning for Farmers	1:00PM	3:30PM	Lake County Advanced Knowledge Center; 118 E Danville St., South Hill	Marilyn Estes	20	\$5.00

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Event Date	Workshop/Event	Start Time	End Time	Location	Contact Program Assistant	Limit	Cost
11/13/21	Small Engine - Maintenance and Repair	10:00AM	2:00PM	Wedgewood Golf Center, 2131 Mountain Road, Halifax	Clifford Somerville	15	\$5.00
11/15/21	Filing Farm Taxes	9:00AM	12:00PM	Virtual	Vernon Heath		
11/16/21	Quickbooks for Farmers	6:30PM	8:00PM	Virginia Highlands Community College, 100 VHCC Drive, Abingdon	Amanda Fletcher	20	\$5.00
11/16/21	Alternative Ways to Improve Soil Health	9:30AM	12:00PM	Greensville/ Emporia Extension Office, 105 Oak Street, Emporia	Marilyn Estes	20	\$5.00
11/16/21	For Beginning Farmers: What Markets are the Best Fit for Me?	3:00PM	4:30PM	Virtual	Michael Carter Jr.		
11/17/21	Winterizing Beehives	9:00AM	11:30AM	Randolph Farm	Tracy Porter	24	\$5.00
11/19/21-11/20/21	SFOP Annual Small Farm Conference			Hotel Roanoke	SFOP	250	\$50.00
11/30/21	For Beginning Farmers: Step-by-Step Tutorial: Using Free Google forms to take Online Orders	3:00PM	4:30PM	Virtual	Vernon Heath		
12/2/21	Basic Computer Skills for Farmers	9:00AM	11:00AM	Lake County Advanced Knowledge Center; 118 E Danville St., South Hill	Marilyn Estes	10	\$5.00
12/7/21	For Beginning Farmers: Becoming Debt-Free	3:00PM	4:30PM	Virtual	Derrick Cladd		

SFOP WORKSHOPS/EVENTS (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021)							
Event Date	Workshop/Event	Start Time	End Time	Location	Contact Program Assistant	Limit	Cost
12/7/21	Growing Fall Crops in the High Tech Tunnel	10:00AM	12:00PM	Randolph Farm	Grace Summers	20	\$5.00
12/8/21	Farmer's Market - USDA (SNAP & EBT) Lunch & Learn Session	12:00PM	1:00PM	Virtual	Amanda Fletcher		
12/11/21	Improving Rotational Pastures and Pasture Walk	10:00AM	12:00PM	Beyond Blessed Farm, Abingdon, VA	Amanda Fletcher	20	\$5.00



2021 Small Farm Annual Conference

November 19 & 20, 2021 • Hotel Roanoke

Register online at www.ext.vsu.edu/calendar

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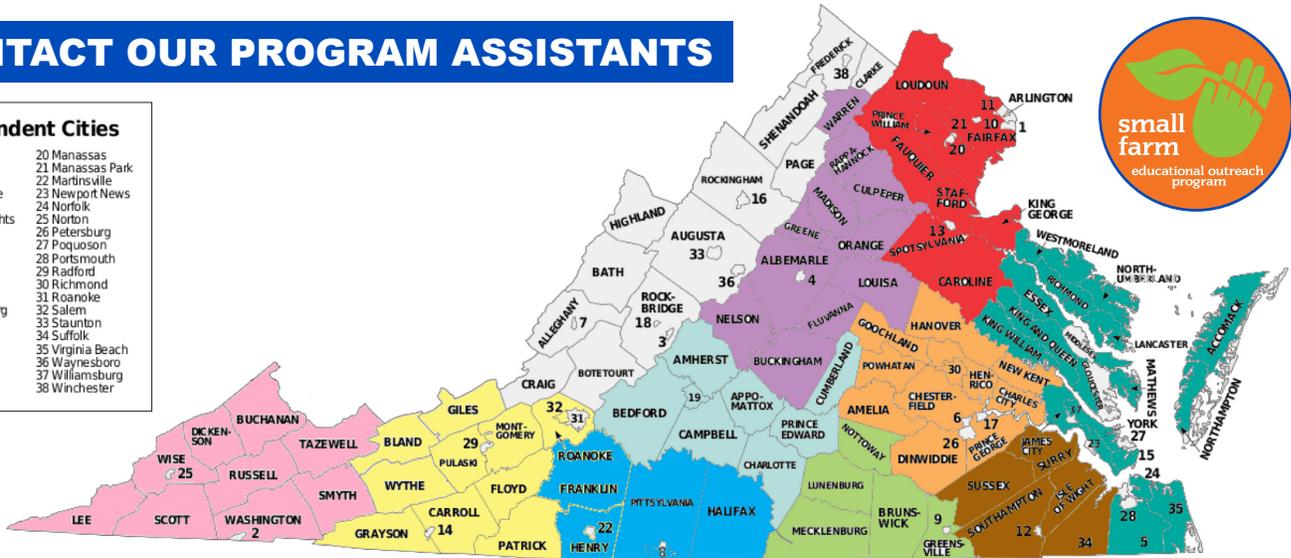
You can also sign up on our homepage (ext.vsu.edu) for our weekly eNewsletter and for email notifications of upcoming programming for Virginia small farmers.



CONTACT OUR PROGRAM ASSISTANTS



Independent Cities	
1 Alexandria	20 Manassas
2 Bristol	21 Manassas Park
3 Buena Vista	22 Martinsville
4 Charlottesville	23 Newport News
5 Chesapeake	24 Norfolk
6 Colonial Heights	25 Norton
7 Covington	26 Petersburg
8 Danville	27 Poquoson
9 Emporia	28 Portsmouth
10 Fairfax	29 Radford
11 Falls Church	30 Richmond
12 Franklin	31 Roanoke
13 Fredericksburg	32 Salem
14 Galax	33 Staunton
15 Hampton	34 Suffolk
16 Harrisonburg	35 Virginia Beach
17 Hopewell	36 Waynesboro
18 Lexington	37 Williamsburg
19 Lynchburg	38 Winchester



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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in these activities, please contact the Small Farm Outreach Program Office at (804) 524-3292/TDD (800) 828-1120 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations five days prior to the event.

6K 10/2021



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Where Virginia's small and beginning farmers
and ranchers access comprehensive resources to help make their farm
businesses profitable and sustainable.

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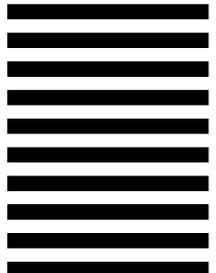
- Education & Training Resources
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- Ag-Related News & Events
- Federal, State & Local Agency Contacts
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- Expert Advice Online Or By Phone
- ...And More*

The Virginia Small Farm Resource Center is developed and supported by Virginia State University's Small Farm Outreach Program.

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Please rate each statement 1 to 5.

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Somewhat Disagree | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Agree | 5 - Strongly Agree

Thank you!

1. The SFOP Newsletter provided information that was beneficial to me during the COVID-19 pandemic.
1 2 3 4 5
2. The SFOP Newsletter helped me to be aware of resources that are available to small farmers and ranchers.
1 2 3 4 5
3. The information shared in the newsletter was helpful to me.
1 2 3 4 5
4. I plan to use some of the resourceful information shared in the newsletter.
1 2 3 4 5
5. Receiving this newsletter in the mail via the USPS was of value to me instead of receiving email.
1 2 3 4 5

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