VSU College of Agriculture
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

small farm educational outreach program

# SFOP Quarterly NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024

## Is Tilapia a "Franken-Fish," and is it Unhealthy?

By: Nicholas Romano, Ph.D., associate professor/ Extension specialist & coordinator

Tilapia is currently the fourth most-consumed fish in the United States with tuna, salmon and Alaskan pollock taking the first, second and third spots. However, unlike these fish, memes emerged on social media around 2017 that tilapia is artificial and is as unhealthy as eating bacon. Some even claimed tilapia is full of cancer-causing toxins and lacks nutrients.

### Is tilapia a franken-fish?

No, tilapia is not a franken-fish. It is a freshwater fish that belongs to a group of cichlids that have hundreds of different species. The most commonly farmed and sold include Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), blue tilapia (*O. aureus*) and Mozambique tilapia

*–continued on page 2*

GIFT tilapia hybrid

## Dear Small-Scale Farmers, Ranchers and Veterans,

Soil health and maintenance are essential to good quality produce, healthy forage and livestock. To meet the needs of small, socially disadvantaged, limited-resourced, beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers, VSU has entered into several climate-smart partnerships with you in mind. We have partnered with Virginia Tech, the University of Tennessee, West Virginia University, and Plant Switch. Be alert and check our calendar of events at https://www.ext.vsu.edu/sfop-events for upcoming workshops, where you can learn more about climate-smart practices that you could implement on your farm operation.

If you are an urban ag producer, we also have great news. We are partnering with Virginia Tech on an FSA Urban and Innovative Agriculture Community-Based Project. We want to connect with you. Look at our territory Map on page 11 and find the State Program Assistant (PA) who covers your area. Reach out and schedule a meeting for them to visit your operation.

VSU is also a licensed vendor for the FSA Borrowers training. This training is one of the prerequisites when applying for an FSA loan. Upon successfully completing the Agribusiness Production and Financial Management online course, you will have met this requirement and will receive a certificate to include in your application packet.

Check out the Ag Tips and upcoming workshops section of this newsletter. You can find additional resources online at https://www.ext.vsu.edu/small-farm-outreach-program or on our Small Farm Resource Center at vsusmallfarms.com. Sign up for our text alerts at https://vsusmallfarms.com/sfop-text, or email us at smallfarms@vsu.edu.

William Crutchfield, SFOP Director

# "Franken-Fish" *continued from page 1*

(*O. mossambicus*). These tropical fish can only grow in water temperatures above 55˚F.

Tilapia originated in freshwater lakes in Africa. Because they reproduce easily, grow fast, survive in adverse conditions and have a mild flavor, they quickly became one of the most farmed fish in the world. The belief that tilapia is somehow manufactured is likely based on some selective breeding programs, such as the "Genetically Improved Farmed Tilapia" (GIFT) strains by WorldFish in Malaysia. This program bred various strains of tilapia from around the world, and those that grew the fastest were used to produce more tilapia and so on for six generations. Eventually, the GIFT strain grew faster–up to 85% faster–than the initial strain. Other benefits included better feeding efficiency–from 15-33% better–and more disease resistance. Subsequently, WorldFish introduced GIFT tilapia to 16 countries on five continents. While scientists bred tilapia for faster growth, this is no different than the salmon-breeding program in Norway during the 1970s.

## Is tilapia the same as eating bacon?

No, but this is a softer no. The belief that tilapia is the same as eating bacon arose from the type of fats inside tilapia. However, this depends on the fatty acid composition of what tilapia eat. On farms, tilapia are fed specially formulated pellets that often contain high amounts of soy-based products, such as soybean meal and soybean oil. In the case of soybean oil, this is readily available, cheap and well accepted by the fish. However, it is high in omega-6 fatty acids, therefore causing tilapia to be high in these omega-6 fatty acids. So, can tilapia have more of the health-promoting omega-3 fatty acids? Yes, but oils that are high in these fatty acids, such as linseed oil, flaxseed oil and marine-based oils, are more expensive. Because fish are purchased based on their weight and not their fatty acid composition, there is little incentive for feed manufacturers or farmers to use the more costly feed. Ultimately, salmon, sardines, and other marine fish are better sources of omega-3 fatty acids than tilapia.

Although dietary oils greatly influence the types of oils in the fish, another consideration is how much fat is inside tilapia. Tilapia is known as lean protein. On average, a tilapia fillet has a 10 to 1 ratio of protein to fat, compared to bacon, with a 1 to 1 ratio of protein to fat. If you are trying to avoid excess fat in your diet, tilapia is a much better choice–although these ratios will also change depending on how you cook the fish.

## Is tilapia safe to eat?

The most common claim is that tilapia contains dioxins, cancer-causing pollutants that originate from the incineration of industrial by-products. However, there is no evidence for this claim.

Unfortunately, dioxins can accumulate in animals' fat if they consume contaminated feeds, such as grasses. The fast growth rate of tilapia and their low lipid content limit the accumulation of dioxins compared to longer-living animals or carnivorous fish. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lists tilapia as one of the best fish for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to eat because tilapia does not contain unsafe levels of mercury and other contaminants.

Tilapia are farmed throughout the world, and each country has different regulations for the use of chemicals. Moreover, each farm within each country can have its own practices. Although the United States has some of the strictest rules regarding chemicals in aquaculture, most tilapia are imported from Asia and Latin America. Therefore, you should choose tilapia certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council, BAP or Naturland, or grow tilapia yourself. Learn more about aquaculture from Extension associates and specialists at the Virginia Cooperative Extension at Virginia State University, or contact me at nromano@vsu.edu.

# Winter Ag Tips from our SFOP Program Assistants

## Livestock/Fish/Poultry

- Ensure livestock have access to clean water and shelter from winter weather.
- Check for signs of illness and provide necessary vaccinations or treatments.
- Plan breeding schedules for livestock and poultry.
- Inspect and repair fish tanks or ponds if needed. In March, recheck and maintain fish tanks or ponds to prepare for stocking.
- In March, start breeding season for poultry and livestock.

## Planning/Preparing/ Planting

- In January, review and update your farm business plan for the year and order seeds, fertilizers and other planting supplies. Rotate crops to prevent soil depletion.
- In February, prepare soil for spring planting by testing and amending as necessary. Start indoor seedlings for early-season crops.
- In March, begin planting cool-season crops suitable for your climate.
- Prune fruit trees and bushes before new growth begins.

## General Farming

- In January, repair and maintain farm equipment, and conduct soil tests to determine nutrient needs.
- In February, clean and organize farm storage areas.
- Evaluate last year's performance and make appropriate adjustments. If you need assistance, contact your local SFOP program assistant or Extension agent.
- In March, monitor for early signs of pests and implement control measures.

## Urban Farming

- In January, plan and design your urban garden layout.
- Check and repair raised beds or containers.
- In February, start indoor seedlings for urban crops.
- Consider composting kitchen waste to enrich soil.
- In March, begin planting urban crops suitable for your climate.
- Install or repair irrigation systems for efficient watering.

## Health and Safety

- In January, conduct safety inspections of farm equipment and structures.
- Ensure first-aid kits are well-stocked and accessible.
- In February, provide training on safe handling of livestock, machinery and chemicals.
- Develop an emergency response plan for your farm.
- In March, inspect and maintain fire prevention measures.
- Promote personal health and well-being among farm workers.
- Post information about stress-reduction techniques.
- ***Post the helpline numbers for free and confidential suicide crisis services.***

  ***The AgriStress Helpline:*** **833-897-2474**. Call or text 24/7/365. The AgriStress Helpline crisis specialists have extra training to understand the culture, values, stressors, and lived experiences of agriculture, forestry, and fishing workers. In addition, crisis specialists have access to a state-specific curated database of agricultural and health resources. Phone call interpretation is available in 160 languages, and text message services are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

  ***988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:*** Call or text **988** 24/7. The 988 Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers in the United States that provides emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Business Management

- In January, review financial records and budget for the year ahead.
- In February, secure necessary permits and licenses for your farm or urban agriculture project.
- In March, evaluate the success of marketing strategies and adjust as needed.

# Mosby Justice Garden Alleviates Richmond Food Desert

## *Richmond Food Justice Alliance empowers individuals and families in historically underserved areas.*

By Briana Stevenson, SFOP National Urban Agriculture coordinator

The importance of eating fresh produce is well documented, yet for those living in food deserts, access to healthy, affordable food is almost unobtainable. This is an injustice that needs to be addressed, and Richmond Food Justice Alliance, a resident-led organization, accepted the challenge in 2017.

This BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) organization's holistic approach not only shows residents how to grow food but also educates them about food systems, food policy, community organizing and advocacy. Once trained, Alliance members collaborate with partner organizations to achieve their goals. They also partner with the Richmond City Health District to ensure resident input factors into food-policy recommendations.

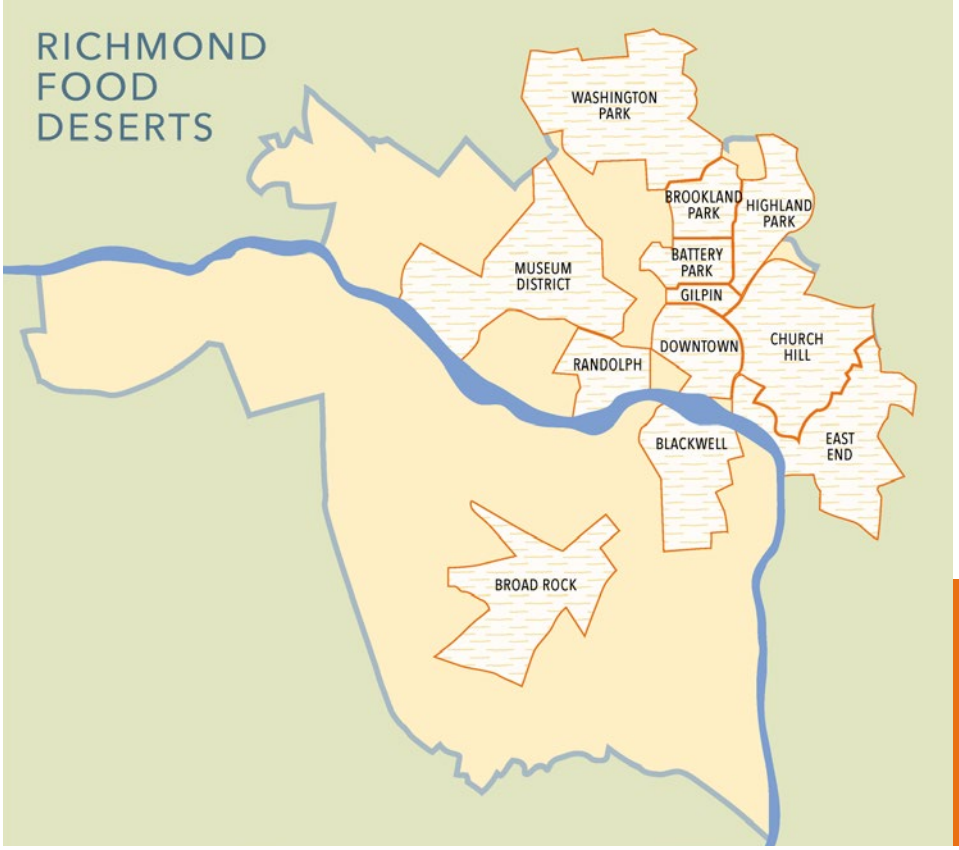
After several years of helping others cultivate their sites, the Alliance purchased its own land and developed the Mosby Justice Garden, which consists of raised beds, row crops, compost, a shed and a gathering space. Located within a public housing neighborhood at the corner of Redd and Coalter Streets, the Alliance transformed several blighted vacant lots into a vibrant, well-utilized community green space that empowers the surrounding community. The Alliance also conducts weekly youth programs such as gardening activities, site maintenance, infrastructure building, exercise and more. Furthermore, participating youth receive a stipend.

**The free library at Mosby Justice Garden receives countless book donations throughout the year giving the youth a reliable source of engaging reading material.**

One of the Alliance's many partners is Shalom Farms, which produces and sells organic produce through a mobile market at food desert sites across the city, including Redd Street. The mobile market is easily accessible, affordable and accepts SNAP benefits and other sliding-scale options.

During back-to-school week, hundreds of residents came to Redd Street not only to buy fresh produce, but also to receive free health supplies from Aetna, get haircuts, and do yoga in this one space. Efforts like this promote food justice, foster wellness, and build confidence and community.

For more information about the Richmond Food Justice Alliance, visit https://www.richmondfoodjustice.org or email richmondfja@gmail.com.




**The RVA Urban Ag Initiative is much needed throughout Richmond. Based on F.E.E.D. the Culture and Richmond Health District data, these are the areas in most need of urban agriculture initiatives to promote food security.**

# Farmers & Ranchers

**Have you experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending? You may be eligible for financial assistance.**

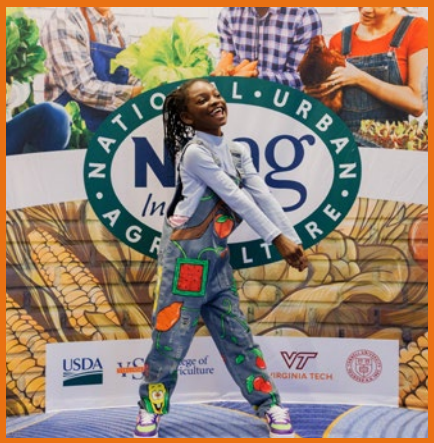
$2.2B in funding is available to farmers & ranchers who experienced discrimination in USDA Farm Loan Programs prior to January 1, 2021.

**For more information:**
1-800-721-0970 or www.22007apply.gov
@22007apply

Discrimination Financial Assistance Program

Filing an application is free. Technical assistance is free & available in-person & over the phone.

## Scenes from the National Urban Ag Kickoff in Atlanta


Clockwise, from top left: Kim Niewolny of Virginia Tech speaking to the assembled conference attendees; Bobby Wilson, speaking at the Metro Atlanta Urban Farm in College Park, Georgia; Kendall Rae Johnson of aGROWKulture is Georgia's youngest certified farmer introducing herself at the conference; Danielle Freeman Jefferson and Michael Carter Jr. attend the Atlanta kick off reception all the way from Virginia.

# Passing the Seeds of Knowledge:

## *National Seed Swap Day preserves agricultural heritage.*

By Amber R. Coles

January begins a fresh new year and offers farmers and urban gardeners the perfect opportunity to prepare for spring. To make the most of this ideal planning stage, in 2006, Kathy Jentz, Washington Gardener Magazine editor, established National Seed Swap Day on the last Saturday of January to encourage growers to gather for the ultimate seed exchange. While 2024 is its 18th year, exchanging seeds and goods is a tradition that spans centuries and has become increasingly important.

Swapping events usually have two primary goals: to educate the public on organic gardening and to help maintain or increase crop diversity, which is essential to biodiversity. In addition, with the increased effects of climate change, gardeners and farmers can rediscover regional plant varieties, preserve heirloom or heritage seeds during seed swaps, and further ensure sustainable agriculture. These events can also counter the effects of monoculture–the practice of growing the same crop at a specific time every year. Monocropping can lead to the spread of unwanted pests and disease in certain crops.

On a more personal level, borrowing, swapping, planting and harvesting new seeds is a rewarding adventure. Plant a new vegetable that expands your culinary enjoyment; learn a new method that aids you in the planting and harvesting of seeds you already have; and make new friends who share your passion for growing food. The possibilities from National Seed Swap Day and beyond are truly endless.

## Mark your calendars and visit one of the many seed swaps across Virginia in 2024:

***Master Gardener Association of the Central Rappahannock Area***
Saturday, January 27, 2024
9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
Rowser Building, 1739 Richmond Hwy, Stafford, VA
https://www.mgacra.org/seed-swap-event.html

***Northern Shenandoah Valley MG Association***
Saturday, January 27, 2024
10 a.m.–2 p.m.
The State Arboretum of Virginia, Blandy Experimental Farm, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Boyce, VA 22620
https://nsvmga.org/events/seed-exchange/

***Louisa Extension Master Gardeners***
Saturday, February 17, 2024
Donate seeds now at the Louisa Extension Office at 200 East Main Street, Louisa, VA
https://www.louisacvmg.org/events-calendar

***Chesapeake Master Gardeners***
Ongoing–distribution of seeds at various local events.
https://www.cmgv.org

***Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association***
Ongoing–Seed Lending Libraries in five libraries over five counties.
https://nsvmga.org/programs/seed-lending-library

### The following organizations also host seed swaps:

***Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association (RAMGA)***
Piovano Building, 350 Spotswood Drive, Lexington, VA
https://www.ramga.org/seed-home

***Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and the Henrico Master Gardeners***
https://www.henricomg.org

Learn more about the Virginia Extension Master Gardener program at https://ext.vt.edu/lawn-garden/master- gardener/Become-a-Master-Gardener.html.

# Nutrient Management Planning Optimizes Results

## *Treat your farm to a money-saving "superfood" diet.*

By Rebecca Jones, Department of Conservation and Recreation

Fertilizer is expensive. And when too much fertilizer or a less-effective type is applied to crops, nutrients not absorbed by plants flow into waterways. That's money down the drain.

A nutrient management plan is an easy, effective way to avoid this. Think of it as a specially formulated superfood diet that a farmer can spoon-feed to plants. The result? Reduced fertilizer usage and costs, improved crop quality and an optimum economic yield.

Virginia farmers can receive nutrient management planning support by contacting the nutrient management specialists in the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's regional offices across the Commonwealth. These specialists perform on-farm consultations and write nutrient management plans on request. Each of these professionally developed plans is tailored to a farm's specific needs and follows the "4 Rs of Nutrient Management":

**Right Source:** Selecting the nutrient type that best fits the crops' needs.
**Right Rate:** Providing the right amount of nutrients to keep crops thriving–without waste.
**Right Time:** Making nutrients available when crops need them.
**Right Place:** Keeping the nutrients where crops can use them.

In addition to writing plans, nutrient management specialists help farmers with manure testing, calibration of nutrient application equipment and coordination of soil nitrate testing in agricultural crop fields.

Like your farm, the plan is a living entity: It can be updated as the farm's needs change.

Developing and implementing a nutrient management plan improves water quality by decreasing the amount of nutrients from fertilizer or manure that enter local streams. Excessive levels of nitrogen deplete oxygen in surface water, impairing aquatic life.

**Nutrient management plans are especially important on mixed-crop farms because they take into account soil composition and plant needs throughout the acreage.**

**DCR Nutrient management specialists confer.**

Nutrient management practices can be implemented on any crop or pastureland, including anywhere corn and small grains are grown. These practices help producers reduce unnecessary nutrient applications by basing them on realistic yield expectations and matching nutrient sources to crop requirements.

You can find your local DCR nutrient management specialist here: https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/document/nm-planners-map.pdf.

**A nutrient management specialist uses a soil probe to collect samples across the farm to develop a plan tailored to specific soil and crop needs.**

Photos courtesy of DCR.

DCR
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

# Does Dexter beef have a space on the table?

By Neil Brown, Ph.D., assistant professor, VSU College of Agriculture

"We gotta eat 'em to save 'em!" was the title of an article published over ten years ago, arguing that we must eat endangered crops and livestock species to save them from extinction. Here at Virginia State University, we are doing our part to support conserving cattle species through a multi-year collaboration with Tennessee State (TSU) and Tuskegee University (TU). The goal of this research is to collect performance data on Dexter cattle, a breed that is showing promise and recovering in numbers. One big question on the table: "Does the Dexter breed have a role in our food system, and, if so, does that role include benefits to small-scale and part-time cattle producers in Virginia and other states?

The lead researcher on the project, Richard Browning, Ph.D., a professor at Tennessee State University and a member of the Livestock Conservancy, has been collecting performance data on Dexter cattle since 2016 while overseeing the only Dexter herd at a university. While Browning does not believe Dexter cattle will outcompete the more popular beef breeds, he believes there are significant benefits for small-scale producers.

However, we need data! Another critical question must be answered–do consumers have a taste for Dexter beef?

The Dexter steers that arrived at Randolph Farm in spring 2023 are heading south to Tuskegee University to be harvested along with other TSU-bred steers from the same batch of calves. To keep the project going, a new group of Dexter steers will arrive at Randolph Farm in the spring. SFOP hopes to collaborate with experts in food preparation, research, taste testing and related fields to present a cookout and taste test testing this summer. (Watch for details.) This event will build awareness of Dexter beef among producers and consumers, and collect data regarding Dexter beef's appeal.

Some Virginia producers are already showing interest in this breed, based on a Dexter 101 workshop hosted by SFOP at the George Washington Carver Agricultural Center in Rapidan, Virginia. While there is so much more to learn, some attendees were open to seeing Dexter cattle on their properties.

To hear more about the Dexter program at Tennessee State University, listen to this Livestock Conservancy webinar at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlfTfZkeLac.

**Dexter, Dexter x Mashona and Angus steers at Randolph Farm moments before being loaded onto the trailer to return to Tuskegee University.**

# SFOP Workshops: *January–March 2024**

| Date | Workshop | Time | Location | Program Assistant | Limit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1/5/24 | Central Virginia Grower Meeting | 10 am–2 pm | Central Virginia Produce Auction 18440 Anderson Highway Dillwyn, VA | Forrest Hobbs | 50 |
| 1/9/24 | Drought Designation Opportunities | 10 am–noon | VCE Nelson County Office 8445 Thomas Nelson Highway, Lovingston, VA | Forrest Hobbs | |
| 1/10/24 | High Tunnel Vegetable Production | 1–5 pm | Franklin, Virginia | Brent Noell & Grace Summers | |
| 1/10/24 | Grant Writing for Small-Scale Farmers | 6–8 pm | Virtual | Michael Carter, Sr. | 30 |
| 1/16/24 | Small Farm Orientation | 9–11 am | Virtual | Ben Dukes | 40 |
| 1/17/24 | What is Heirs Property 101 | 10 am–noon | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Clifford Somerville | |
| 1/17/24 | Precision Agriculture in Virginia | 9 am–noon | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Tim Sexton & Tammy Holler | 30 |
| 1/18/24 | Home Cannery Tour | 10:30 am–noon | Prince Edward Cannery 7916 Abilene Rd., Farmville, VA | Wanda Johnson | 25 |
| 1/30/24 | How to Plan and Purchase a Greenhouse or High Tunnel | 1–3 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | James Gibson | |
| 1/31/24 | Understanding Your Soils Using Web Soil Survey | 10 am–noon | Lake Country Advanced Learning Center 118 E. Danville Street, South Hill, VA | Marilyn Estes & Tammy Holler | 10 |
| 2/6/24 | Mushroom Cultivation | 9–11 am | Tidewater Mushroom Company LLC 4675 E. Princess Rd, Norfolk, VA | Ben Dukes | 10 |
| 2/8/24 | Overwintering Crop Selection and Techniques | 10 am–noon | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Grace Summers | |
| 2/8/24 | USDA Information Session | 1–3 pm | Virtual | James Gibson | |
| 2/8/24 | Woods and Wildlife Management | 6–8:30 pm | Catawba Community Center 4965 Catawba Creek Road, Catawba, VA | Brent Noell | |
| 2/9/24 | Mushroom Cultivation | 9–11 am | Tidewater Mushroom Company LLC 4675 E. Princess Rd, Norfolk, VA | Ben Dukes | 10 |
| 2/12/24 | Mushroom Cultivation | 9–11 am | Tidewater Mushroom Company LLC 4675 E. Princess Rd, Norfolk, VA | Ben Dukes | 10 |
| 2/12/24 | Basics of Biochar | noon–2 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Derrick Gooden | 25 |
| 2/14/24 | Environmental Management of Nutrients | 9 am–noon | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Tim Sexton & Ben Dukes | 30 |
| 2/15/24 | Eat Well–Live Well | 10 am–noon | Estes Community Center 316 North Main Street, Chase City, VA | Wanda Johnson | 35 |
| 2/15/24 | Four Season Carrot Production | 10 am–noon | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Grace Summers | |
| 2/20/23 | Aerial Imagery for Farmers | 9–11 am | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Tim Sexton | 30 |
| 2/20/24 | Small Farm Orientation | 9–11 am | Virtual | Ben Dukes | 40 |
| 2/20/24 | Filing Farm Taxes | 9 am–3 pm | Makers Market 100 W Danville Street, South Hill, VA | Marilyn Estes | |

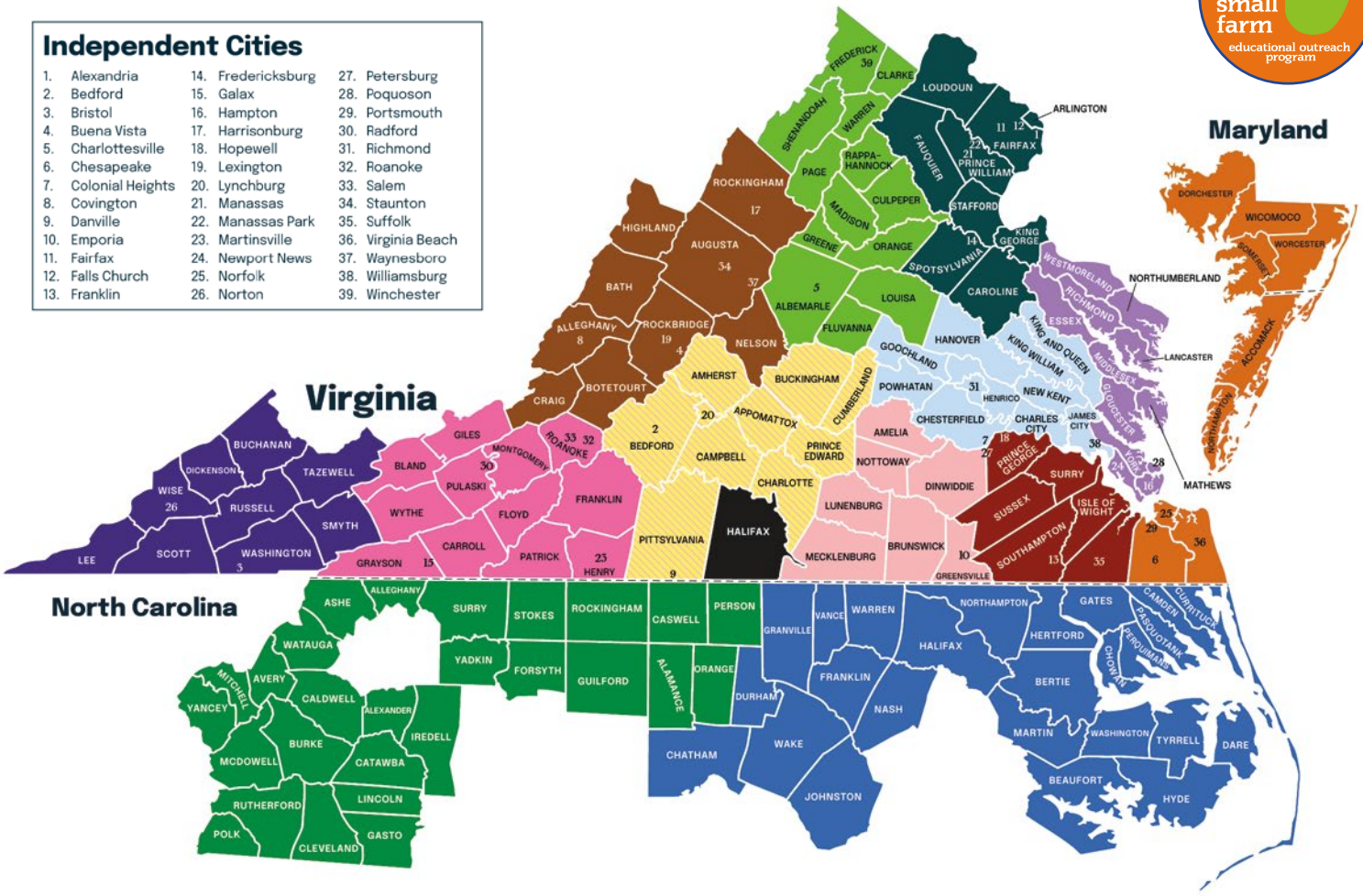
For more information and to register, visit www.ext.vsu.edu/calendar.

# SFOP Workshops: *January–March 2024**

| Date | Workshop | Time | Location | Program Assistant | Limit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2/21/24 | Recordkeeping on Your Computer or Smart Phone | 10 am–noon | Virtual | Michael Carter, Sr. | |
| 2/21/24 | Whole Farm Planning | 9 am–1 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Derrick Cladd & Dennis Hatch | |
| 2/22/24 | Data Driven Decision Making: What Farm Data to Gather and How to Use It | 10 am–noon | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Grace Summers | |
| 2/22/24 | Filing Farm Taxes | 2–4 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | James Gibson | |
| 2/22/24 | Diversifying Streams of Revenue on Your Farm | 6–8 pm | Virtual | Michael Carter, Sr. | |
| 2/22/24 | Small Ruminants: Wisdom for Weaning | 6:30–8:30 pm | Southwest VA Agricultural Research & Extension Center 12326 VPI Farm Road, Glade Spring, VA | Mandy Fletcher | 75 |
| 2/27/24 | Urban Agriculture Definition and Production Tips | 1–3 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | James Gibson | |
| 2/28/24 | Waynesboro Community Garden Workshop | 1–4 pm | Waynesboro, Virginia | Forrest Hobbs | |
| 3/2/24 | Growing Herbs for the Beginner | 10 am–noon | Carver Center 9432 N. James Madison Highway, Rapidan, VA | Roland Terrell | |
| 3/5/24 | Woods and Wildlife Management | 6–8:30 pm | Patrick, VA | Brent Noell | |
| 3/6/24 | Informational Session for the Beginning Small Farmer | 10 am–noon | Carver Center 9432 N. James Madison Highway, Rapidan, VA | Roland Terrell | |
| 3/6/24 | Pruning Fruit Trees for Beginners | 10 am–noon | King George, Virginia | Michael Carter, Sr. | 25 |
| 3/7/24 | Farm Business Planning: Start to Finish Strong! | noon–1 pm | Virtual | Mandy Fletcher | |
| 3/9/24 | Understanding the Function of Small Engine Parts | 10 am–noon | VSU Agriculture Engineering Building, 101 Myster Macklin Street, Ettrick, VA | Roland Terrell | |
| 3/11/24 | How to Create Worm Castings | noon–2 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Derrick Gooden | 25 |
| 3/13/24 | Native Plant Species as a High-Value Crop | 9–11 am | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Tim Sexton | 30 |
| 3/13/24 | Forest Bathing | 1–3:30 pm | VCE Greensville Office, 105 Oak Street, Emporia, VA | Marilyn Estes | 20 |
| 3/16/24 | Basic Beekeeping | 1–5 pm | Salem, Virginia | Brent Noell | 10 |
| 3/19/24 | Small Farm Orientation | 9–11 am | Virtual | Ben Dukes | 40 |
| 3/21/24 | Soil Health and Nutrient Management for Spring Production | 9 am–1:30 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Derrick Cladd & Tammy Holler | |
| 3/27/23 | Risk Management for Poultry and Rabbit Farming | 10 am–noon | Lake Country Advanced Learning Center, 118 E. Danville Street, South Hill, VA | Tammy Holler & Marilyn Estes | |
| 3/27/24 | Jamaican Sorrel Workshop | 10 am–12:30 pm | VSU Randolph Farm Pavilion 4415 River Road, Petersburg, VA | Forrest Hobbs | |
| 3/30/24 | High Tunnel Maintenance and Repair | 10 am–noon | Carver Center 9432 N. James Madison Highway, Rapidan, VA | Roland Terrell | |

For more information and to register, visit www.ext.vsu.edu/calendar.

# Contact Our Program Assistants




## Regional Program Assistants*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Michael Carter Sr** | 804-481-1163 | mcarter@vsu.edu |
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**Tammy Holler** | 804-229-2730 | tholler@vsu.edu
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**Wanda Johnson** | 434-632-9701 | wjohnson@vsu.edu
Community Gardens, Food Services

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

Small Farm Outreach Program Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 8 am–5 pm, Friday, 8 am–noon. 95% of SFOP is out in the field.

*If you have any difficulty figuring out which region is yours, please call 804-524-3292 for clarification.

small farm educational outreach program

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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 · Diverse Models of Farm Production & Operation · Ag-Related News & Events · Federal, State & Local Agency Contacts Agro-Equipment Rental Programs · 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.

Virginia Cooperative Extension — Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

VSU College of Agriculture

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Farm Credit

USDA

Farm Bureau Virginia

Southern SARE — Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

Farmer Veteran Coalition

Minority & Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont MVFP — Educating Communities

Agua Fund, Inc.

Brunswick Farms to Families

Arcadia — Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture

Virginia Soil Health Coalition

James River Equipment

Southern Extension Risk Management Education

AgrAbility Virginia

Virginia Cattle Industry Board

DCR — Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact the Small Farm Outreach Program office at smallfarm@vsu.edu or call 804-524-3292/TDD 800-828-1120 during business hours of 8 am. and 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations five days prior to the event.



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