



Hello ##[Name | First]##,

November is here, and with it, the region's first hard frost and decidedly the end to the lingering summer season. If you haven't had your fill of tomatoes and basil, let out a deep sigh and start getting excited for those first delightful tastes in the summer of 2024. OAK is filled to the brim with new staff, new programs and such excitement for what lies ahead for the organization and the OAK community.

Team OAK looks forward to the winter months because they come our annual opportunity to gather and learn together. [#OAK2024](#), OAK's annual conference, registration is **NOW OPEN**. Read on for more details and links for scholarship applications, early bird registration and the exciting agenda. Plan now for the chance to meet and be inspired together on January 25-27, 2024 in Frankfort, Kentucky.

In case you missed it - OAK has added [new membership levels](#)! Read on for details about OAK's Equity Individual Grower and Equity Farm Memberships. These new membership levels offer access to OAK's member benefits, including discounted registrations to OAK's conference, and to participatory opportunities for members to mold OAK's future work.

[The Organic Farmer Mentorship Program is Now Open](#). The OAK Team, especially new staff working in this program area, are delighted to announced applications are being accepted to the new Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) Mentorship Program. OAK can't wait to support these mentor/mentee partnerships across the State. Read below for more details and links to apply.

As you read about of all of these opportunities, don't forget to check out the resources at the end of this newsletter where you can find new funding programs and an array of both virtual and in-person events. Winter is near, and with it, a season of learning and planning. Now is the time to connect with the OAK community!

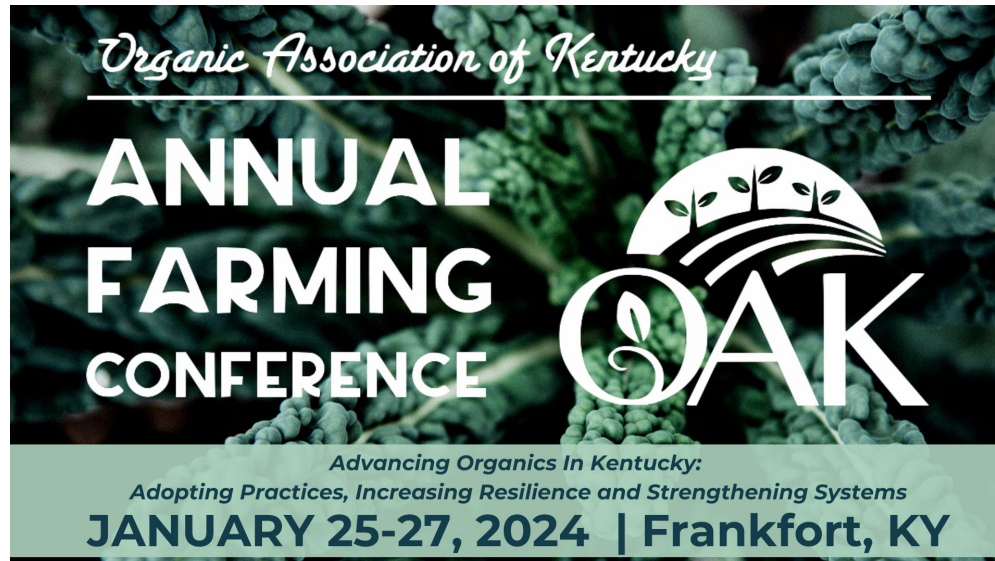
Warmly,
Robin Verson
Membership and Communications Coordinator

Register today for #OAK2024

Join us for OAK's 13th Annual Farming Conference: *Advancing Organics in Kentucky: Adopting Practices, Increasing Resilience and Strengthening Systems*! This January 2024 gathering is a not-to-miss event featuring Kentucky farmers, production deep dives, research highlights, food system innovations, market opportunities and the expanding OAK network for three days of amazing learning and growing together.

[View the Agenda here](#)

This event is open to everyone. Take advantage of early bird pricing, register today and join the OAK Community in January 2024 at [KSU's Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm](#).



[Register today and grab early bird pricing](#)

OAK Offers Conference Scholarships Thanks to Partner Support

Scholarship requests for OAK's 2024 Conference will be reviewed and awarded on the business day nearest to the 1st and 15th of each month, up until the event and as funds allow. Scholarship awardees will receive a discount code via email to use in the conference registration form. Scholarships are applied to the regular conference session days, January 26 and 27. Pre-Conference Workshops are not included in scholarships at this time. We share gratitude to our partners that make it possible to offer scholarships: Charlie's Compost, Grow Appalachia, Kentucky Horticulture Council and Kentucky State University.

[Apply Now for a Scholarship](#)

OAK Offers New Equity Membership Opportunities

In case you missed it - OAK has added new membership levels!

In celebration of Kentucky's rich agricultural community, OAK invites you to join in these **free**, three-year memberships: the ***equity individual grower membership*** and ***equity farm membership***. These new membership levels offer access to OAK's member benefits, including discounted registrations to OAK's conference, and to participatory opportunities for members to mold OAK's future work.

In a step towards equity and abundant inclusion, within an industry that has and continues to disenfranchise underserved, marginalized groups, OAK now offers these free membership levels to **farmers, market gardeners, beginning farmers and aspiring growers who self-identify with one or more of the below:**

- is a member of a historically marginalized group – Black, Indigenous or people of color (BIPOC); persons with a disability; etc.
- is experiencing food or housing insecurity
- has immigration-related expenses
- has medical expenses not covered by insurance

And never forget, **all OAK Members receive discounted registration to the annual conference!**

[Join OAK via Free Equity Membership](#)

2024 Conference Sponsors, Partners & Funders



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



The Organic Farmer Mentorship Program is Now Open -

Apply Today



Attention all owners, managers, employees or retired producers of certified organic operations: mentors are needed! Calling all farmers interested in organic transition and certification: apply now to be a mentee!



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Greenhouse Systems



This fall, OAK launches a new organic farmer mentorship program in collaboration with the Midwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). The program actively seeks mentors who are experienced and knowledgeable certified organic producers, passionate about organic production and helping others succeed in organics. Enrollment is also open for mentees interested in pursuing organic transition and certification for their operation.

Sharing a huge THANK YOU to our sponsors, funders, scholarship and program partners! The sessions, tours, workshops, amazing speakers, delicious food and abundant farmer scholarships OAK is able to offer over the 3 days of the conference are all possible with the thoughtful support and collaboration from these businesses and organizations. Mentors are paired with a farmer mentee with a similar farm operation who is in the process of transitioning to organic production. As a mentor, you will be able to guide and support the transitioning producers, providing them with valuable insights, practical advice and industry best practices. Your expertise and experience is highly valued and will be compensated by the program! It will help others to succeed and contribute to the growth of the organic movement in our region.

Mentorship is a year-long paid opportunity for mentor farmers, including payment for training, mentorship time and travel time. Mentees will receive an education and travel stipend.

The benefits of this program go beyond paid development of professional and interpersonal skills, organic regulations, organic production practices and the development of teaching and facilitation skills. They include building relationships, networking and cultivating a bright farming future and growing network of organic producers in Kentucky. If you are in another state, there are options for you, too.

All certified organic crop and livestock producers are welcome to apply to be a **mentor**. All farmers interested in pursuing organic transition to certify their operation can apply to become a **mentee**.

Mentorship pairing will happen this fall and winter, with programming starting in 2024. Learn more and apply at the button above, or contact Kenya Abraham, OAK's Organic Transition Program Manager, for more information. kenya@oak-ky.org.



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program
Transition to Organic Partnership Program



Questions about Preparing for Organic Certification?

Over the past seven years OAK has supported over 200 farmers in learning about the National Organic Program regulations or working to complete the required paperwork, develop farm maps and create recordkeeping systems to pursue organic certification. OAK is here to support your certification journey and to prepare you for success. If you have a few questions, give us a call or send us [an email](#). If you are ready for a farm visit and want to dive into the paperwork, fill out the short application below and we'll follow up with you to schedule a meeting.

In October, we welcomed Kenya Abraham to the OAK Team as the new Organic Transition Program Manager! As a farmer, trained organic inspector and someone who cares deeply about Kentucky's farming community, Kenya brings incredible experience to the program. We encourage you to connect with Kenya on all your certification inquiries and say "Hi!" to her at the next OAK event.



[Apply for Organic Certification Technical Assistance Here](#)

OAK Launches a New Organic Production Assistance Program

OAK is launching a dedicated organic technical assistance program for Kentucky farmers who are currently using or interested in using organic practices!

Sarah Geurkink joined OAK's staff as an Organic Production Specialist in October. Sarah has 13 years of experience managing organic, diversified vegetable farms—from market-garden, hand-scale operations to larger, more mechanized systems. She also owned a small farm where she and her husband raised sheep, hogs, laying hens, turkeys and bees. Sarah especially enjoys being on farms and thinking about production challenges. She is looking forward to digging into those challenges with and for growers at OAK.

As OAK's Organic Production Specialist, Sarah is available to respond to production-related inquiries and meets with farmers one-on-one via phone, virtual meetings and on-farm consultations. This service is for commercial farms and market gardens that are currently or are planning to sell their products. It is accessible to experienced or beginning farmers across certified organic and conventional crop and livestock operations and OAK Membership is not required to receive assistance.



Organic production support can include: crop and cover crop planning; managing weeds, pests and diseases; soil testing assistance and interpretation; nutrient budgeting; recommendation on inputs, equipment, infrastructure and tools; high tunnel management; integrated crop livestock systems; livestock and grazing management and more.

Sarah will collaboratively develop plans, help track progress and provide necessary follow-ups and referrals to help a farm reach desired production goals.

[Request an Organic Production Consultation](#)

The Organic Production Assistance Program aims to:

- Reduce barriers to adoption of organic farming practices
- Improve farm efficiencies, production capacity, product quality and farm resilience
- Improve profitability by helping farmers start earning organic premiums with greater efficiency
- Support farmer needs and the success of the growing organic industry in Kentucky

To request an Organic Production Consultation, fill [out this form](#).

Just have a quick question? Send an email to Sarah Geurkink at sarah@oak-ky.org

This program is supported by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (KADF)

KADF

KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL

What a year! 2023 Farmer Field Days



The OAK community gathers at Coleman Crest certified organic farm in Fayette County in July 2023.

Please visit our [Farmer Field Days website](#) to access summaries and resources from all eight Farmer Field Days from 2023!

Ideas for OAK's Field Days in 2024?

Have suggestions or ideas for future farms, practices or topics to highlight? Reach out to Jenny@oak-ky.org. View previous OAK virtual events on our [OAK YouTube](#) page for recordings, snapshots and lessons learned from host farmers.

Become an OAK Board Member

Interested in serving as a Board Member for the Organic Association of Kentucky? OAK is currently looking for future board members and is requesting your nominations! As a part of our community, you or someone you know may be the right person to bring their time and talent to serve in this important role.

The Board of Directors actively supports OAK and promotes its mission, vision, programs and fundraising efforts. We are looking for individuals who are interested in helping OAK grow the sustainable and organic farming movement in Kentucky. We especially need Board Members who have experience in the areas of fundraising, finance, law and organic farming.

Help OAK flourish! Learn more and nominate yourself or someone else.

[Share your interest here](#)

Not a OAK Member? You Really Should Be! Join OAK Today!

Do you participate in OAK's programs? Are you looking for a way to support organic and regenerative agriculture in Kentucky? Join the OAK community! OAK is an engaging group of farmers, eaters, ag professionals, entrepreneurs and more. OAK's farmer network includes farmers who are interested in or using regenerative practices to those whose farms have been certified organic for decades. Together, we are folks committed to creating a healthier, more nourishing food landscape in Kentucky.

If you have let your Membership lapse or have never taken the plunge to join OAK, now is the time! Members will receive discounted pricing for OAK's January conference!

OAK is growing and working for an exciting future, join us. Be a part of the community working to nourish Kentucky.

[Join or Renew Your OAK Membership](#)

Save the Date for the Good Giving Challenge!

SUPPORT OAK DURING THE

GOOD
GIVING

USDA Farm Loan Borrowers Who Have Faced Discrimination: Financial Assistance Application Process Now Open!

NOV 28 - DEC 1, 2023

The application period for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) has been extended through January 13, 2024. Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are eligible to apply if they encountered discrimination by USDA in its farm loan programs before January 1, 2021, and/or currently hold assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was subject to discrimination prior to January 1, 2021. Applications for this program are free and do not require a lawyer. All applications that are received by the deadline will be reviewed. Save the date for the Bluegrass Community Foundation Good Giving Challenge happening November 28-December 1, 2023. If you are eager to make a gift, the Challenge will open early this year on November 14th. Support the Organic Association of Kentucky in growing a thriving food future during this week of giving!

The Windsor Group LLC has opened a local office in Lexington, Kentucky. Anyone interested in applying or finding out more can visit the office in Lexington, KY, between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. ET, Monday - Friday (except for Federal holidays).

USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program – Kentucky Office

107 W Loudon Ave., Ste 101

Lexington, Ky. 40508

Producers also have the option to file applications online at 22007apply.gov, by mail, or by turning in applications at the brick-and-mortar offices. The program call center number is 1-800-721-0970. Further information can be found at Farmers.gov/22007.

Understanding the NEW Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule - What Farmers Need to Know

Details abound when it comes to organic certification and OAK is here to help!

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) published the Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) [final rule](#) to amend the USDA organic regulations to strengthen oversight and enforcement of the production, handling and sale of

organic agricultural products. **The implementation date is March 19, 2024.** This means all operations in the supply chain must be in compliance by March 19, 2024 at the latest.

OAK is collaborating with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to co-host an informational webinar on what the new Strengthening Organic Enforcement rule means for certified operations. [Register here](#) and join us on **Friday, November 3, from 1-2 pm ET.**

If you are eager to explore the details before then, check out these [four informative webinars](#) that Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) recently published. You can also take the quiz “[Are You SOE Ready?](#)” to explore exemptions and requirements under SOE.

Support CFA’s Mattie Mack Farmer Fund* (*Previously the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund)

The Mattie Mack Farmer Fund, organized by Community Farm Alliance (CFA) supports BIPOC farmers across Kentucky. If you would like to donate to assist with this fund, please [click here!](#) Applications for interested farmers open in Fall 2023. Those eligible to apply must satisfy all of the following:

- BIPOC-operated, family farms in Kentucky with fewer than ten employees;
- Farms who are actively part of the local food system, including produce, livestock, edible herbs, honey, maple syrup;
- Currently farming; and
- Selling products through local markets (i.e. farmers market, roadside market, Community Supported Agriculture, farm share, local restaurants, etc.)

Please contact CFA staff members Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin at tiffany@cfaky.org and Laurie White at laurie@cfaky.org for assistance.

OFA Celebrates Finalization of OLPS

From [Organic Farmers Association \(OFA\)](#):

“OFA celebrates the finalization of the OLPS rule,” says Kate Mendenhall, Executive Director, Organic Farmers Association. “These new standards will close loopholes in poultry production, laying important steps towards a more level playing field for organic poultry producers and improving animal welfare. We encourage the USDA to keep working towards high organic integrity. This is a step in that direction and there’s more work to do.”

While celebrating this important step for animal welfare, OFA recognizes that some important details were not included in the final rule. Notably, the rule allows five years for both layer and broiler producers to comply with the new rule, rather than three years as OFA recommended. Additionally, the rule failed to provide clarity around animal welfare standards for organic swine production. OFA will conduct an in-depth analysis of the rule in the coming days.

[Find the final rule on the federal register and an OLPS fact sheet on the rule from the USDA.](#)

In-person Events Throughout the Region

KY Forage and Grassland Council Events

Nov. 1 – Eastern KY Grazing Conf., Lexington, KY - <https://2032-KY-Grazing-Conference-Fayette.eventbrite.com?aff=oddtcreator>

Nov. 7 - Fall Fencing School, Scott County. - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-kentucky-fencing-school-georgetown-tickets-675570899747?aff=oddtcreator>

Nov. 9—Fall Fencing School, Caldwell County. - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-kentucky-fencing-school-princeton-tickets-675571220707?aff=oddtcreator>

2024 - Jan. 7-10 - AFGC National Conference, Mobile, AL - <https://www.afgc.org/annual-conference/>

2024 - Feb. 8 –Alfalfa/Stored Forage Conf, Bowling Green, KY

2024 - Feb. 19-20 - Heart of America Grazing Conf., Cincinnati, OH

Navigating Kentucky's Heirs Property

November 1, 8:30am - 4pm ET, Hardin County

November 2, 8:30am - 4pm ET, Boone County

December 8, 8:30am - 4pm ET, Breathitt County

Kentucky State University's Community Resource Development team presents a series of Train the Trainer events on Navigating Kentucky's Heirs Property.

For more information, contact Irma Johnson at (502) 545-3423 or (502) 597-5845 or by email at irma.johnson@kysu.edu. [Register here](#)

Sustainable Mountain Ag Center Annual Seed Swap

Nov. 4 , 9am-1pm ET

100 Churchill Court, Berea, KY

Contact Barbara Toti with questions: smac@heirlooms.org <https://www.heirlooms.org/>

Kentucky Maple School

November 4, 2023, 9am - 4pm ET

Berea Forestry Outreach Center

[Register today](#) for updates and further details.

Northern Kentucky Grower Buyer Meetup

November 9, 2023 9:30-12:00 ET

Boone Co. Extension Office (6028 Camp Ernst Road, Burlington, KY 41005).

Hosted by the Kentucky Horticulture Council, [MarketReady](#), [KY Center for Ag & Rural Development](#), [Kentucky Proud](#), and [UK Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment](#).

Agricultural producers of "retail ready" food products (such as fruits & veggies, value-added products, and meats & dairy) will have a chance to meet one-on-one in a “speed date” format to exchange contact information and match up products and needs with key buyers including school food service directors, chefs, retail, and distribution representatives.

Preregistration is requested: <https://forms.gle/gfWNqLL5AoPXwjgb6>

Organic Farming Conference

November 9 & 10, 2023

Mt. Hope, Ohio

Registration for the two-day event is \$25 per person per day or \$40 per person for both days, including meals. Call 330.641.2918 for more information or visit www.organicfarmingconf.com

Kentucky Small, Limited-Resource, Minority Farmers Conference

November 16-18, 2023 - Frankfort KY

Join Kentucky State University's 25th Annual Small, Limited-Resource, Minority Farmers Conference. This year's theme is "Planting Ideas, Harvesting Success."

Registration for this conference is required and costs \$50. That fee covers your attendance at all three days of the conference as well as four meals. For more information and to register, [click here](#)

Growing your Farm and Food Business Workshops hosted by KCARD

Topics include essentials of business planning, qualities of a good grant proposal, and key grant programs across the state. Representatives from USDA, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky State University, and the Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy will discuss their programs. Registration for the in-person workshops is \$20 and includes lunch.

Register in the links below!

Caldwell County on November 9th at 9:30 am - 4 pm at the Caldwell County Extension Office:

<https://tinyurl.com/caldwell-gyffb>

Clay County on November 14th at 9:30 am - 4 pm at the Clay County Cooperative Extension EXCEL Center: <https://tinyurl.com/clayco-gyffb>

Virtual on December 5th and 7th at 5:30pm - 8pm Central/6:30pm - 9pm Eastern on both nights: <https://tinyurl.com/virtualgyffb>

Be sure to check out KCARD's [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) as they share answers to frequently asked questions, upcoming events, grant deadlines, and more!

First Friday, presented by The Food Connection at UK

First Friday is a dynamic local food systems networking opportunity featuring a delicious locally sourced breakfast and a short presentation from a standout food system professional(s). We welcome on and off campus local food practitioners, advocates, and community members. Attendance is free but we do ask that folks pre-register.

<https://www.facebook.com/ukfoodconnect>

November 3rd, 2023— SaraDay Evans & La'Shae Robinson, [Accelerating Appalachia](#)

February 2nd, 2024— Brandi Button Johnson, Faye Kuosman, & Heather Graham (The Food Connection) – [Kentucky Value Chain Collaborative](#)

March 1st, 2024— Barbara Hurt ([DendriFund](#)), Sarah Halcomb ([Walnut Grove Farm](#)), & Dr. Dave VanSanford ([UK Plant and Soil Sciences](#)) – Ohio Valley Grain Exchange

On-Farm Composting Workshop

December 6-8

Join us to learn best practices for composting and commercial composting certifications.

Farmers, ranchers, and others interested will learn about marketing, compost quality, and more! Primary speakers will be Jean Bonhotal of Cornell Waste Management Institute and Dr. Shawn Lucas, Assistant Professor of Organic Agriculture, Kentucky State University.

Day 1 will be held at the Kentucky State University Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm and Days 2 & 3 will be at the Cooperative Extension Building at Kentucky State University Main Campus. \$10 registration fee. Reserve your spot now <https://tinyurl.com/compost-workshop>

2023 Tennessee Local Food Summit

December 1-3, 2023 at Cumberland University in Lebanon, TN.

<https://www.tnlocalfood.org/>

ACRES USA Eco-Ag Conference & Trade Show

Dec 4-7, 2023

Covington, Kentucky

<https://www.acresusa.com/eco-ag>

Third Thursday

Don't forget, the monthly Third Thursday workshops can be viewed in-person at the [Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm](#) or streamed live at www.youtube.com/kysuag/live.

Virtual Events

How will the SOE (Strengthening Organic Enforcement) rule impact my farm?

Friday November 3, 2023 1-2 ET

Join OAK and KDA for this free, information packed webinar. [Register and find out more here](#).

KY Horticulture Council Cujt Flower Short Course: Budgeting for Profit Webinar

November 6, 6:30pm ET

Registration for this free, virtual event: bit.ly/floralbudget

Mini Virtual Retreat for Women Farmers on Body Mechanics: Protect & Preserve Your Most Important Tool

November 7, 8 & 9, 2023, 1-2:30pm ET

This time of year gives us an opportunity to step back, reflect and learn how to better care for our physical and mental health. Join this unique, virtual series for woman-identifying farmers to connect and learn together on key elements of body mechanics. This peer learning series will start with three back-to-back daily 90-minute sessions in November. Led by and for women farmers, these sessions serve up a combination of practical information, movement and connection with other women sharing similar experiences. All women-identifying farmers are welcome, wherever you are on your agriculture journey. [Learn more and register here](#)

Farmers Are Researchers: Conducting your own on-farm research

November 8, 2023, 3-4:30pm ET

Organic Farming Research Foundation presents this free workshop as part of the new OFRF Farmer-led Trials Program (FLT) and the accompanying publication Farmers Guide to On Farm Research. This workshop is the official launch of OFRF's new program that will promote farmer-led innovations in organic farming. If you are an organic farmer or rancher, or are in transition to organic and have a production question you'd like to test, join this informative webinar and learn more about how this program can support farmers and ranchers like you in conducting practical, on-farm research. [Reserve your spot here](#).

KY Food Action Network's Advocacy Training Series

The [KY Food Action Network](#) (KFAN) is a collective of individuals and organizations united under the common purpose of creating accessible and resilient food systems that prioritize the health of Kentuckians. At the end of each year, before the General Assembly begins in Frankfort, KFAN offers a series of Advocacy trainings to get folks prepared to talk about KFAN's policy priorities. These are a great opportunity to learn more about KFAN's upcoming work with legislators and get involved in lobbying with KFAN. One of the most effective ways to change policy is to share your stories; put a human face and lived experience to the bill numbers our Senators and Representatives deal with during session.

Registration is required at the zoom links below.

Nov 9, 3pm ET [#1: Healthy Farm and Food Innovation Fund \(HFFIF\)](#)

Nov 16, 3pm ET [#2: School Meals for All](#)

Nov 30, 3pm ET [#3: Defend the Safety Net](#)

Dec 7, 3pm ET [#4: Building Power in Advocacy](#)

Vegetable Farms Becoming the Employer of Choice

Motivating and managing employees is essential to most diversified vegetable farms, and rare is the farmer who comes to farming with those labor management skills. Whether you have worked with employees for many years or are in the early stages of hiring staff, this series will give you practical tools to make your farm an employer of choice. Research-based approaches and real world examples make this series practical and useful for any vegetable farm employer or experienced manager. Farmer trainers center peer-to-peer connection and learning, and attendees also receive a carefully curated set of resources to accompany each session. From example position descriptions and check-in templates to a catalog of interview questions and so much more, these resources will help you leave each session ready to take those next concrete steps.

Please plan to attend online sessions with your camera on and ready to engage in discussions with your farmer peers. Space is limited - [register here](#).

Sessions are on Mondays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:00am Central Standard Time.

Dates and Topics:

- 9 November: Farm Business Culture
- 13 November: Strategic Leadership
- 16 November: Hiring the Right People
- 20 November: Developing a Motivated Workforce
- 27 November: Employee Onboarding
- 30 November: Reviews and Feedback
- 7 December: Developing Intercultural Competence as Farm Employers
- 11 December: Managing Conflict on the Farm

Register [here](#), and visit this [webpage](#) to learn more.

Integrating tree, vegetables and perennial staple crops into the orchard

November 9, five to 6:30 PM Eastern

Learn how to expand your edible orchard beyond fruit and nuts by integrating other trees and plant species that can serve as vegetables, medicine, fuel, fodder, and help build healthy soil. Author and farmer Eric Toensmeier will share his permaculture-based approach to the creation of perennial farming systems and solutions for orchards and gardens of all sizes.

This interactive webinar is part of the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX) 2023 Virtual Conference for fruit growers of all experience levels.

To see the full line up of speakers/sessions and to learn more about NAFEX, visit nafex.org.

<https://facebook.com/events/s/integrating-tree-vegetables-an/741479668021068/>

OFRF Seeds of Success: Strategies for Identifying and Navigating Organic Markets

Friday, November 10th at 1pm ET/10am PT

This event will be an engaging opportunity for farmers to come together, ask questions and share strategies for overcoming their most pressing market-related challenges. This session will feature three women farmers that have creatively grown their markets for organic products: Amy Van Scoik – Frog Song Organics, FL; Pam Mack, L Marie LTD, OH; and Anna Jones-Crabtree, Vilicus Farms, MT.

The farmer-presenters will each give a brief presentation sharing their experiences and providing insights into their approach and process, followed by a facilitated Q&A session and breakout sessions to share ideas and opportunities.

<https://ofrf.org/event/seeds-of-success-strategies-for-identifying-and-navigating-organic-markets/>

Organic Advisor Call Series

The Organic Agronomy Training Service's (OATS) Organic Advisor Call Series offers monthly Zoom discussions and Q&A for organic advisors with farmers and experts, facilitated by Nate Powell-Palm.

- November 15, 8 am CT - "Bringing The Elevator Back to Life: Organic Offtake"
- December 13, 8 am CT - "Biannual Promise: Utilizing clover to minimize tillage, build fertility, and increase crop diversity"

<https://www.organicagronomy.org/organic-advisor-call-series>

Grant Writing Workshops for Producers and Young Professionals

Part 3 - November 17, 2023, 12-2pm

Use real examples and audience input to go through a grant writing exercise, and learn about grant review process and review components.

<https://ncat.zoom.us/j/96664623251?pwd=Y2Vjdml4RmZ4bEdQall0TUhZWIE3dz09>

FACT has weekly, relevant free webinars.

Check out the [full schedule here](#).

Rodale Institute weekly, relevant free webinars.

Check out the [full schedule here](#).

Resources and Funding for Farmers

SARE Grants – Preparing a Proposal

Wednesday, October 11

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. EDT

USDA SARE is a national program that has various due dates for specific grant proposals. SARE grants are farmer-directed research and education projects that are based on real problems farmers have and the solutions they want to try out or share with others. A general logic model, while not specific, is a nice roadmap to get the proposal written with objectives, outputs and activities that help in writing the proposal. Sharing the general grants and their due dates and resources available will also be part of the presentation.

To participate in this free, one-hour webinar, [click here to access the online registration form](#). Registration closes Monday, October 9.

USDA Commits Greater Conservation Assistance for Producers Transitioning to Organic Production

On April 10, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced details about its \$75 million investment in conservation assistance for producers transitioning to organic production. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is dedicating financial and technical assistance to a new organic management standard and partnering with new organic technical experts to increase staff capacity and expertise. NRCS will dedicate \$70 million to assist producers with a new organic management standard under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This program is for farmers who are beginning or in the process of transitioning to organic certification. OAK is in conversation with NRCS Kentucky and will work to communicate with farmers about the opportunity to apply for this new Organic Management Practice when it is available. Stay tuned for more info in upcoming e-newsletters and a webinar this fall! Click here to access a factsheet on certified organic production created by NRCS-Kentucky <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lomJSqOY20m0YKQWrLXblSef9e7HPcZT/view>

\$1 Billion Available to Help Farmers Invest in Renewable Energy

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is accepting applications starting on April 1 for \$1 billion in grants to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses invest in renewable energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. USDA is making the \$1 billion in grants available under the [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#), with funding from President Biden's landmark Inflation Reduction Act, the nation's largest-ever investment in combating the climate crisis. For additional information on application deadlines and submission details, see page 19239 of the March 31 [Federal Register](#).

USDA Announces Sign-up for Cost-Share Assistance for On-Farm Grain Storage in Areas with Limited Commercial Capacity Due to Severe Storms

Last week USDA announced that Kentucky producers in counties affected by the December 2021 tornadoes, among other states affected by eligible disaster events, can apply for cost-share assistance through the Emergency Grain Storage Facility Assistance Program (EGSFP). An initial allocation of \$20 million in cost-share assistance is available to agricultural producers in affected counties impacted by the damage to or destruction of large commercial grain elevators as a result of natural disasters from Dec. 1, 2021, to Aug. 1, 2022. The **application period closes Dec. 29, 2023**. For more information visit the [program webpage](#) or the [EGSFP fact sheet](#). USDA also has an existing [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program](#) that can immediately provide low-interest financing for eligible producers who may not be eligible for EGSFP but are in need of on-farm storage capacity.

Silvopasture and Forest Farming Support / Funds Available

The Catalyzing Agroforestry Grant Program is focused on implementing silvopastures and forest farming practices through direct support payments and will assist producers in designing appropriate projects using technical assistance and science-based planning strategies. The ultimate goal of the effort is to increase ecosystem sustainability and diversity by scaling up agroforestry practices. The Appalachian Beginning Forest Farming Coalition (ABFFC) project will provide up to \$1500/acre for silvopasture implementation and up to \$1000/quarter acre for forest farming implementation depending on project scale and scope. To enhance shared learning, producers who receive support will share successes and lessons-learned with their peers and other interested stakeholders. Minority, female, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and/or socially disadvantaged farmers are highly encouraged to apply.

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/emef>

Slow Food Bluegrass Garden Grant

Deadline: ongoing

Link: <http://www.slowfoodbluegrass.org/gardens>

Slow Food Bluegrass micro-grants support groups in Kentuckiana who foster education about and access to good, clean, fair food. Special priority is given to limited resource communities and to projects that demonstrate a strong buy-in from participants. Grants range from \$500 - \$1,000 and may be awarded throughout the year. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach us at slowfoodbluegrass@gmail.com.

KSU Small Scale Farm Grant

Deadline: The 1st day of every other month

Funding Amount: Up to \$5,000 for farmers, \$15,000 for groups benefiting multiple farmers

Eligible Entities: Kentucky farmers and Kentucky agriculture groups including farmers markets

Link: <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/college-ac/school-of-ace/co-op/small-scale-farm-grant-program.php>

Overview: The KSU Small Scale Farm Grant is designed with the small operation farmer in

mind. This grant application is relatively simple to complete and the funds can be used to purchase needed equipment related to the proposed project. To qualify, applicants must be producing a value-added product, be an organic farmer, and/or be an aquatic farmer. Farmers markets are often eligible. Previously approved projects have included canning equipment, a walk-in cooler, a water line to a hoop house, a root cellar, a cool-bot for vegetables, and a trailer for keeping meat cool and recently added farmer education assistance with a maximum of \$500.

Kentucky Proud Promotional Grant

Deadline: On-going

Funding Amount: Up to 10% annual gross farm income, max at \$8,000 per year; \$1 for \$1 match

Eligible Entities: Kentucky farmers and agribusinesses

Link: <http://www.kyagr.com/marketing/grants.html>

Overview: The Kentucky Proud Promotional Grant is a cost share program to help Kentucky farmers and agribusinesses pay for advertising and marketing expenses. The award amount is based on 10% of direct farm impact; for a farmer it would be 10% of their total farm gross sales. The applicant must be a registered member of Kentucky Proud to apply and use the Kentucky Proud logo/brand in marketing efforts paid for with program funds. Examples of fundable items include TV ads, radio ads, web expenses, hats, t-shirts, demos, sampling, labels, packaging, tradeshow, UPC, and bar codes. This is a great program that helps promote our local farms!

ON-Farm Energy Efficiency Incentives Program

Deadline: Applications are accepted year round

Funding Amounts: 50% cost share - up to a \$10,000 incentive, plus \$150 for an approved third party energy audit

Eligible Entities: Kentucky farmers with a gross farm income of at least \$25,000

Find out more here: <https://mtassociation.org/energy/funding-farm-energy-projects/>

Overview: The Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund offers an On-Farm Energy Efficiency Program to help Kentucky farmers with energy projects. These cost share funds are available to increase on farm energy efficiency and to support renewable fuel production projects. The applicant is required to have a third party energy audit completed. This program can be combined with the USDA-NRCS Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to get up to 75% of a total project cost covered.

Many thanks to [KCARD](#) for promoting many of these grant opportunities. Did you know KCARD can also answer questions about funding programs and help you prepare an application?

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