

OAK Conference is Next Week!

We look forward to gather with so many from our farming and food system community next week at the Kentucky State University Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm in Frankfort for our annual conference!

For those already registered, thank you. Please check your email for registration confirmations sent last week and/or in the days ahead. You will receive a paper copy of the print program linked below.

View or Download the Print Program here

Pre-Conference Workshops and Saturday Registration Still Available

If you are not yet registered, do not delay! Online registration will close on January 19.

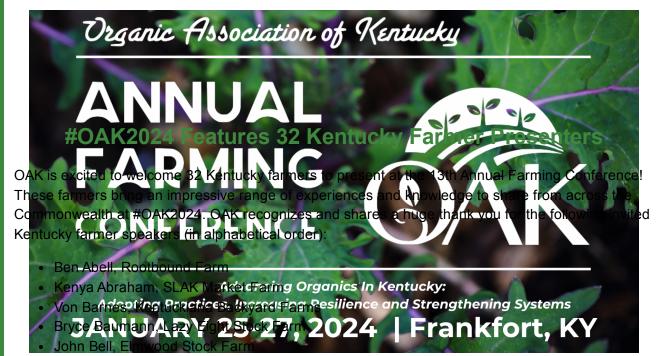
Thursday, January 25: Pre-Conference Workshop registration is still **open**.

Friday, January 26: Registration is **CLOSED**.

Saturday, January 27: Limited availability remains - registration is still open.

Reach out to conference@oak-ky.org with any questions.

Register Now for January 25 or January 27



- · Sid Brantly, 3-Cross Farms
- · Holly Chiantaretto, Hallow Springs Farm
- Blake Cothron, Peaceful Heritage Nursery
- Joel Dufour, Franklin County
- · Jesse Frost, Rough Draft Farmstead
- · Douglas Hines, Hines Farm
- · Fatima Jackson, Action Jackson Farms
- · Krista Jacobsen, Merry Hall Farm
- J. Dylan Kennedy, Ketelwood
- Jann Knappage, Fox and Hen Farm
- Susana Lein, Salamander Springs Farm
- J. Michael Moore, Shaker Village Farm
- · Bree Pearsall, Rootbound Farm
- Clint Quarles, Scott/Fayette Counties
- · Anna Raines, Rains and Sun Hilltop Farm
- · Oakes Routt, Grandview Farm
- Brian Shobe, Echo Hallow Farm
- · Tony Silvernail, Beyond the Bridge Organic Farm
- Randy Smallwood
- · Mac Stone, Elmwood Stock Farm
- · Sharon Stone, Two Suns Farm
- · McKinley Stonewall, KYSU Research and Demonstration Farm
- Rae Strobel, Barr Farms
- Robin Verson, Hill and Hollow Farm
- · Michael Wilson, Whispering Hills Farm
- · Annie Woods, Dark Wood Farm
- · Laurie Young, Anderson County

View the Full Speaker Lineup for #OAK2024

2024 Conference Sponsors, Partners & Funders



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













































Sharing a huge THANK YOU with these generous OAK Conference Sponsors, Funders, Scholarship and Program Partners! The sessions, tours, workshops, amazing speakers, delicious food and abundant scholarships of the conference are all possible with the thoughtful support and collaboration from these businesses and organizations.

The OAK's TOPP Organic Mentorship Matchmaker, Kenya, is seeking a few more Mentors!

Would you like to play a crucial role in helping new organic producers succeed and contribute to the growth of the organic movement in Kentucky? TOPP Mentors will have the opportunity to guide and support producers transitioning into organic certification, providing them with valuable insights, practical advice and industry best practices.

As a TOPP Mentor, you will be paired with a similar producer, have regular meetings and check-ins and provide your expertise on organic production and the certification process to help mentees succeed in their organic venture. This is a **paid mentorship opportunity**, including paid training, mentorship time and travel time. All crop and livestock producers are welcome and encouraged to apply now.

Mentorship is a year-long paid opportunity for mentor farmers (\$3,000), including payment for training, mentorship time and travel time. Mentees will receive an education and travel stipend (up to \$1,000).

The first cohort of mentors will start in early 2024. Learn more and apply for future cohorts at the button above or contact Kenya Abraham, OAK's Organic Transition Program Manager, for more information: kenya@oak-ky.org.





CSA Farmers, Join Us for the 2024 KY Proud CSA Week!

CSA farmers, if you are offering a CSA share of some type and promoting it to Kentucky consumers, consider taking part in this **free promotion**. Learn more and register by **THIS FRIDAY**, **January 19, 2024** <u>HERE</u>. Contact OAK's Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, Dee Owens, at <u>dee@oak-ky.org</u> if you have any questions.

OAK is teaming up with fellow community partners to promote CSA (community supported agriculture) across the state during KY Proud CSA Week happening March 4-8, 2024. During this week of CSA, partners will share all things local, seasonal and CSA-related in the <u>CSA in KY Facebook Group</u>.



Learn More & Register Today!

OAK Members: Watch your Inbox this week!

OAK Members, watch your inbox this week for an email offering you an opportunity to vote for new OAK Board Members, learn about updates to our Bylaws and read details on the OAK Annual Meeting scheduled for March 7, 2024.

Schedule an Organic Production Consultation TODAY

Kentucky farmers, start your 2024 production season off with organic technical assistance - intended for farmers currently using or interested in using organic practices. OAK's Organic Production Specialist, Sarah Geurkink, 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.

Request an Organic Production Consultation

Farmers: Share & Find New Resources & Sourcing

Where to get supplies, where to get help, where to find information? It takes farmers a long time to build this body of knowledge. This is a farmer-generated resource that aggregates producer insights and sourcing preferences.

Help OAK to improve our <u>Resources and Sourcing List!</u> Enter your preferred businesses, suppliers or resources into the catalog; give us feedback about something you see on the list or send the list to others to use or contribute to! The Resource and Source List will help growers:

- learn about multiple sources for supplies so they can shop smarter
- learn about specific items that are working for their peers (e.g. part numbers, item uses)
- read comments and feedback from other growers about how certain products or companies are working for them

Access OAK Resources and Sourcing List

Looking to Hire? Let OAK Help You Advertise

Are you looking for the perfect farm team members to make 2024 your best year ever? Do you have livestock, hay or equipment for sale?

OAK would like to help make these goals a reality. With our Classified Page gaining more and more

traction, OAK is ready to list your farm's opportunities. Please click the link below and fill out the form with basic, yet pertinent details and we post your ad asap!

OAK's Classified Page is another **Member Benefit** that we hope you take advantage of - OAK Members can place any number of appropriate listings on the **Classified Page** - for free. Anyone can view listings!

Please email robin@oak-ky.org with any questions or if you need assistance. Don't forget, submitting a Classified ad is a member-only benefit. Keep your OAK Membership active and renew today.

Submit an Ad Here

Not-To-Miss Opportunities and Updates

Farmers: Do You Grow or Have Interest in Growing Organic Grains?

Kentucky farmers... do you grow organic grain crops, or are you interested in incorporating organic grains into your farming systems? If so, researchers from the University of Kentucky invite you to participate in a survey about organic grains in Kentucky and the surrounding region. The survey will help inform regional organic grain research and education and will take 10-25 minutes of your time. Your responses to the research survey are anonymous. Email lauren.brzozowski@uky.edu with questions. The survey closes on February 9th, 2024.

Take the survey: <u>2024 UKY Organic Grains Survey</u>

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Program

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) was awarded \$8.6 million through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program. The money, which will be provided through a competitive grant process, is part of an overall \$420 million the USDA committed to states to build resilience in the middle of the supply chain and strengthen local and regional food systems by creating new revenue streams for producers.

Eligible projects include those that expand capacity for aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of food products, for specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry. KDA has submitted its state plan for the RFSI program to USDA for approval. Upon approval of the state plan, the application portal will open. **The anticipated date for the application portal is January 2024.** This KDA webpage will be updated as the process moves forward: https://www.kyagr.com/consumer/rfsi.html

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture is happy to announce a <u>pilot growers program for ginseng</u> has been filed and is awaiting the LRC review and rule making process.

While Kentucky and places inside the USA are blessed with abundant wild ginseng populations, worldwide the plant has been nearly hunted to extinction. The US federal government has entered an international treaty that recognizes the special status of the plant, and promises restrictions on possession and harvest that our state is subject to.

In Kentucky, harvest and possession of ginseng has been restricted to a harvest season and then a certification process. The pilot program makes no changes to the historic root harvest season and process. The pilot program is created to explore a pathway for live plant and root trade in the Commonwealth for the benefit of our citizens, but also to create a comfort level with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to show them we can do this in a sustainable way that conforms to US treaty obligations.

The pilot program is simple, it just requires grower registration and then a site visit prior to the first sale of live plants or seeds. The initial registration packet collects information for KDA reporting obligations in the aggregate, but will be confidential in submission and holding. The cost is free. Contact Clint Quarles with questions at Clint.Quarles@ky.gov

Certified Organic Farmers: Share Comments By January 22 on NOP Reporting and Recordkeeping

Organic growers have until Jan. 22 to comment on the burdens and costs of collecting the information required by organic regulations. According to the USDA, reporting and recordkeeping are essential to the integrity of the organic certification system. Information collected and maintained by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is the basis for evaluating certifier and operation compliance with the Organic Foods Production Act and USDA organic regulations.

On Nov. 21, USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) published a notice in the Federal Register announcing its intent to revise and extend three years the previously approved information collection renewal titled "National Organic Program" beyond its existing March 31 expiration date.

This notice proposes updates to forms included in the previously approved information collection package. It also requests changes to eliminate the collection of redundant information and to account for paperwork burden estimates related to the USDA Transition to Organic Partnership Program and public use of the NOP Online Complaint Portal. Submit a formal commendation

Upcoming Partner Opportunities

Good Idea Shop Talks - Virtual Farmer Meetups

January 18, January 25, February 1, 2024, 12:30 pm ET

This free meet-up series is for row crop and livestock producers who want to exchange ideas and advice for troubleshooting on-farm challenges related to improving soil and water resources. It will help producers connect with and learn from each other about how to be good stewards while protecting their profitability. The first season of these weekly, virtual meet-ups will take place on Thursdays, January 18th and 25th, and February 1st at 11:30am CT / 12:30 ET. Learn more and register here: https://goodideafarm.org/shop-talks/

Join the two-day Eastern Kentucky Farmer Conference focused on a variety of farm topics, including high tunnels, small ruminants, beekeeping, farm funding, marketing and more. February 16-17, 2024

Morehead Conference Center, Morehead KY

Registration closes January 31, 2024!

https://cfaky.org/2024-eastern-kentucky-farmers-conference/

Upcoming In-Person Events

Louisville Beekeeping and Research Conference by Apis Rescue

January 27, 2024 9:00 AM ET

University of Louisville Conference Center

KYSU Third Thursday: Resources and Funding for Farmers

January 18, 2024, 10am-3pm ET

Harold R Benson Research & Demonstration Farm, Frankfort KY

This first free Third Thursday gathering of 2024 features *Resources and Funding for Farmers* from Kentucky State University (KYSU), USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency Loans, USDA Rural Development Home Grant/Loan Program, Estate Planning to Prevent Heirs Property Issues, Resources from KY Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Water Quality Testing from KYSU. Don't forget, the monthly Third Thursday workshops offer free registration and lunch for in-person attendees, and they can also be viewed in-person at the <u>Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm</u> or streamed live at www.youtube.com/kysuag/live.

First Friday, presented by The Food Connection at UK

February 2, 2024 featuring Brandi Button Johnson, Faye Kuosman, & Heather Graham from The Food Connection's <u>Kentucky Value Chain Collaborative</u>

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 at facebook.com/ukfoodconnect

Annual OGRAIN Conference is an opportunity to learn from local organic grain growers, hear about the latest research, and connect with other organic, transitioning-to-organic, or inquisitive-about-organic grain growers and end-users.

February 2-3, 2024 in Madison, WI!

see the agenda here and REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE

KY Forage and Grassland Council Events

February 8 –Alfalfa/Stored Forage Conf, Bowling Green, KY February 19-20 - Heart of America Grazing Conf., Cincinnati, OH Learn more at https://kfgc.org/events

2024 Organic Grain Conference & Trade Show February 7-8, 2024 at the i-Hotel in Champaign, IL.

https://www.thelandconnection.org/attend/

Upcoming Virtual Events

Good Idea Shop Talks - Virtual Farmer Meetups January 18, January 25, February 1, 2024, 12:30 pm ET

This free meet-up series is for row crop and livestock producers who want to exchange ideas and advice for troubleshooting on-farm challenges related to improving soil and water resources. It will help producers connect with and learn from each other about how to be good stewards while protecting their profitability. The first season of these weekly, virtual meet-ups will take place on Thursdays, January 18th and 25th, and February 1st at 11:30am CT / 12:30 ET. Learn more and register here: https://goodideafarm.org/shop-talks/

Maple Episode of From the Woods Today January 17, 2024, 11 AM ET

Make sure to tune in to From the Woods Today (http://forestry.ca.uky.edu/woods-today) for an all-maple episode, discussing all things maple and promoting the producers who have signed up to participate in the 2024 Kentucky Maple Days. Hear from both experienced and new producers as well as representatives of the Kentucky Maple Syrup Association. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about maple syrup and get your questions addressed.

Organic Regulations for Livestock Production January 22, 2024 11:30am - 1:00pm ET

Are you interested in starting an organic farm, or transitioning to become certified organic? Join us for this webinar which will cover the basics of organic regulations for livestock production.

NCAT Sustainable Agriculture Specialist Ann Baier will be leading this webinar.

<u>CLICK HERE</u> to register on Zoom. Questions? Contact Felicia Bell at feliciab@ncat.org

On-Farm Solar Webinar

January 23 - January 24, 2024, 12:30pm - 1:30pm (EST)

NCAT Sustainable Agriculture Specialist Chris Lent is presenting this free webinar hosted by the Cheshire County Conservation District in New Hampshire. Join this webinar to learn about site assessment, compare ground mounted and roof mounted systems, and hear about incentives and funding available for solar projects. Chris will touch on leasing land for larger solar development and introduce resources available through the Agrisolar Clearinghouse.

XERCES webinar: In The Life Of Beetles: Superstars Of Soil Health, Pollination, And More!

January 25, 2024 1pm ET

Beetles are one of the most diverse groups of insects on the planet and are endlessly fascinating. Join Jennifer Hopwood to learn more about how beetles are helping us in myriad ways, by contributing to soil health, controlling crop and garden pests, pollinating plants; and learn more about steps we can take to help them.

This webinar will be recorded and available on XERCES Society's <u>YouTube channel</u>. Closed Captioning will be available during this webinar.

Learn more and register here today!

Preparations for the Lambing Season

January 30, 2024, 2pm ET

The lambing season is a critical time for sheep producers, marking the arrival of new life and the continuation of the flock. However, it can also be a challenging period, requiring careful management and intervention to ensure the health and well-being of both ewes and lambs.

In this informative webinar, Lydia Strand with Lydia's Flock, will delve into the intricacies of lambing, providing you with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully navigate this crucial phase of sheep production.

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN FTP-uc6LTcWCnvKyO2cshQ#/registration

Virtual Networking Event For Farmers: Demystifying the National Organic Standards Board

January 30, 2024, 1 - 2.30 pm ET

Organic producers and processors must follow strict standards as to what is required to become organically certified. Who decides what is and is not allowed on organic farms and in organic processing facilities? Not your certifier! Rather, it's the USDA National Organic Program, in consultation with the National Organic Standards Board.

In this interactive networking session for organic and transitioning farmers, a panel of farmers and advocates will demystify the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Panelists will explain the role of the NOSB in shaping organic standards and allowed materials, the process the Board uses to make decisions, and explain how your comments can make a difference in Board decisions. Your input matters! The NOSB makes decisions that determine what you can and can't do on your farm - this virtual session will explain how to provide input to the Board in a meaningful way, answer your questions, and share ideas about how to lift up farmer voices in the NOSB process.

https://www.nationalorganiccoalition.org/events

FACT has weekly, relevant free webinars.

Check out the full schedule here.

Rodale Institute weekly, relevant free webinars.

Check out the full schedule here.

Educational and Farming Support

USDA Reminds Specialty Crop Growers of Deadline to Apply for Assistance for 2023 On-Farm Food Safety Expenses

Deadline for Applications is January 31, 2024

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds specialty crop growers that assistance is available for producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification through the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program. FSCSC assists specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and related expenses pertaining to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar year 2023. FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing its certification, as well as a portion of related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must be a specialty crop operation; meet the definition of a small business or very small business; and have paid eligible expenses related to the 2023 certification. A higher payment rate has been set for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers. Details about the payment rates and limitations can be found at farmers.gov/food-safety.

Farmer Guidebook to Carbon Markets Published

American Farmland Trust has published *Top 10 Things You Wanted to Know About Ag Carbon Markets*, a guidebook for farmers, agricultural advisors, and conservation professionals seeking

in-depth information on agricultural carbon markets and climate-smart practices. Access it here: https://farmland.org/aft-releases-agriculture-carbon-markets-guidebook/

Women for the Land Launched State of Gender Equity in US Agriculture

American Farmland Trust's Women for the Land program recently published a report on the status of gender equity in U.S. agriculture conducted by the WFL team between 2021 and 2023. It shows that disparities persist in terms of access to financial and technical resources and key information networks for women in agriculture, especially for Black, Indigenous, Latina, Asian, and Queer women. The report details the nuanced ways barriers impact women in agriculture, the secondary issues that arise, and the implications for farm viability, climate resilience, and farmland protection. Finally, recommended actions are offered on how agricultural service providers, producers, and policy advocates can address these barriers and foster a more equitable, secure, and viable agricultural future. Read more here:

https://farmlandinfo.org/publications/gender-equity-report/

Kentucky Fruit Facts

The January-February issue of Kentucky Fruit Facts from UK's Dept of Horticulture is available on the internet at https://www.uky.edu/hort/documents-list-fruit-facts. In this issue:

- Fruit Crop News
- · Upcoming Meetings
- USDA NAP Pricing Survey Now Available for Grower Input
- KY Berry Grower Surveys
- New Pesticide Labeling and Endangered and Threatened Species
- Spotted Lanternfly Has Arrived in Kentucky
- New Grower Resource: 2023 Fruit IPM Webinar Video Series
- · 2023 Plant hardiness Zone Map Published
- Receiving Fruit Facts on the Internet
- Receiving Fruit Facts by Email

Subscribe to receive an email announcement when each new issue is posted on the web; learn more and view past issues at https://www.uky.edu/hort/documents-list-fruit-facts

New Pruning Videos Available from UK Fruit Extension

Apple pruning season will be in full swing soon. If you need a refresher, check out these two new pruning videos that have been posted to the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's YouTube channel! (https://www.youtube.com/user/UKAgriculture). Extension Associate Delia Scott and Emeritus Extension Professor Dr. John Strang discuss Pruning Tall Spindle Apple Trees (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRUVSkXeJ40) and Pruning Central Leader Apple Trees (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqGhPMWqGak). The tall spindle is a high-density supported training system with trees planted on dwarf rootstocks. Trees can produce a crop in as little as a year after planting. Central leader apple trees are pruned to a classic pyramid or oval shape, with a dominant shoot (or leader) in the center of the tree

UK Extension Surveys for Commercial Berry Growers

Do you grow blueberries, brambles, or strawberries commercially? If so, the University of Kentucky Extension Specialists need your help! To determine future priorities and grower needs for disease, insect, and weed management, more information about the current challenges that growers face is needed. Information can be submitted through a survey for blueberry, brambles, and strawberry, independently (Figure 1). Each survey is quick and takes approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. All submissions are anonymous. Responses to these surveys will assist in developing new resources and training for growers.

Blueberry Growers Survey – <u>here</u>

- Bramble Growers Survey <u>here</u>
- Strawberry Growers Survey here

New UK Horticulture Publication: Potential for Cultural Management of Lettuce Drop (Sclerotinia sclerotiorum) in High Tunnels through Modification of Soil Moisture, Planting Date, and Cultivar

Lettuce is a high-value crop commonly grown in high tunnels. However, the fungal disease lettuce drop, caused by Sclerotinia sclerotiorum, can significantly impact lettuce production and profitability. Crop loss from lettuce drop can be especially severe in high tunnels because of intensive cropping and limited options for non-host rotations. The aim of this study was to examine the potential for cultural management of lettuce drop by identifying more tolerant lettuce cultivars and by modifying planting date and soil moisture.

<u>This publication</u> is a summary of the <u>original research paper</u> published in Plant Health Progress, a scientific journal of the American Phytopathological Society, and is intended to make current research available to Kentucky growers and stakeholders.

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. 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 lever investment in combating the climate crisis of additional information on application deadlinest and submission details, see page 19259 of the March 31 received Wegister.

farming network.

Donate

Become an OAK Member

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