



Thank You for An Uplifting OAK Conference 2024!

OAK is honored to have shared multiple days with 400 of our closest friends: YOU, our farming community. Our generous scholarship sponsors and partners made it possible for 150 attendees to participate with a scholarship.

Thanks to those who joined for one or more of the three late January days of OAK's 13th Annual Conference. Every participant, speaker, volunteer, moderator, staff or Board member, sponsor, exhibitor, and KYSU host staff helped to create an enriching, memorable learning opportunity that will continue to support our shared food and farming efforts throughout 2024. **Thank you!**

For those who attended, please share your feedback in the **Attendee Survey** you received via email and keep an eye on your inbox for **resources and recordings coming soon.**

OAK Members: Register for Annual Meeting and Vote for Board Members

OAK Members, register and join the upcoming Annual Membership Meeting. Team OAK will bring the party, hold the space for inspiration and you'll bring all the great conversation and contribute to the shared vision for the future. OAK's 13th Annual Membership Meeting will be online via Zoom on March 7th at 5:30 pm ET.

Members, Register [here](#).

There will be giveaways (yes, enticing), introductions to OAK's new staff and programs and opportunities for breakout sessions for deeper conversations!



Current OAK members, you are invited to vote for three Board Candidates to serve on OAK's nine-member Board of Directors. Each OAK membership comes with one voting member and a Family Farmer Membership comes with voting rights for two individuals. Contact Robin (robin@oak-ky.org) if you would like to add another person to your Family Farmer membership. **Please vote by February 20th** and register for the Annual Meeting when we will introduce the new OAK Board of Directors.

Members VOTE Here

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 this community working to nourish Kentucky.

Join or Renew Your OAK Membership

OAK IS HIRING

The Organic Association of Kentucky is seeking candidates for one new position. This position is full-time and will be working on OAK's new Climate-Smart Project. Anyone who is interested in learning more about this role is encouraged to visit the [OAK Careers](#) web page and **apply today - position will remain open until filled.**

Soil Health and Conservation Specialist - delivers on-farm technical assistance to farmers enrolled in OAK's Climate-Smart Project and develops management plans based on NRCS practice standards to improve soil health. OAK is hiring for two of these positions.

View Job Opening and Apply Here

Climate-Smart and Soil Health Project: Farm Enrollment Application NOW OPEN

Farmers with commercial operations, interested in soil health, climate-solutions and building on farm resilience - OAK has a new program for you! OAK announced the launch of the Climate-Smart Project during the OAK Conference at the end of January, and the enrollment application for Kentucky farmers is now open.

Along with our partners, OAK is accepting applications to enroll acres in this new incentive program on a rolling basis, with the goal of enrolling 75 farms each year. Farms will be invited to stay with the project for multiple years and the first cohort will be enrolled this spring. This project can support cover crops, crop rotations, pollinator habitat, grazing plans, forage management, agroforestry practices and more!

Visit the project webpage (via the button below) to learn more about the details on the range of climate-smart practices that are available through this project. OAK works with farmers to collect data on reduced greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, soil health indicators, water quality, market development, animal welfare, biodiversity and more to capture and tell the full story of climate-smart practices on their farms in Kentucky.

Project partners include Bullhorn Creative, Fom Hills Farm, Kentucky Center for Rural and Agricultural Development, Kentucky State University, Sustainable Food Alliance, The Berry Center, and The Food Connection at the University of Kentucky.

If you have questions about the project, please [contact us](#). We would love to discuss the details with you. **OAK officially began the new organic farmer mentorship program in collaboration with the Midwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP).**

The program launched with a successful virtual kick-off event on January 18 with nine farmer mentors who are knowledgeable, certified organic producers and passionate about organic production. They are helping nine Kentucky farmers succeed in the organic transition process. That's 18 farmers working together in pairs, all of whom were in attendance at the 13th Annual OAK conference last month so they could meet face-to-face for some well-spent one-on-one time networking and learning together. The conference had plenty of farmers interested in transitioning to become certified organic and farmers interested in technical assistance. Farmers who were curious about organic transition filled the room for Saturday's "Organic Transition: Resources for Success" session led by the OAK Organic Transition team in partnership with the NRCS and with support from MW TOPP. Tried and true resources, as well as new resources, were also shared during the session to support the success of these transitioning producers. The attendees' end-of-session questions were invigorating; some even followed up by submitting applications to receive technical assistance with organic certification or to learn more about the mentorship program.

"It is now time for us to build up all of our farmers in Kentucky, to help them learn organic practices, and pass this rich knowledge and opportunity hand-in-hand."

Are you interested to learn more about this new organic mentorship program? Contact Kenya Abraham, Organic Transition Program Manager, at kenya@oak-ky.org.



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



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

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



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 Deukink, 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.

From job opportunities on organic farms to certified organic plant transplants to grass-fed wool sheep - if you need it, you might find it in the OAK Classifieds! 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.

[Take A Look at OAK Classifieds](#)

[Request an Organic Production Consultation](#)

OAK Members: 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!

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

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.

- **Infrastructure:** cost share for \$100,000 to \$3,000,000
- **Equipment only:** \$10,000 to \$100,000

Applicants can only apply for and receive funding through one of the funding categories (Infrastructure or Equipment-only). Recipients are required to contribute 50 percent of the total proposed project cost as a match to the federal funding. Some historically underserved farmers and other business may be eligible for a reduced match of 25 percent.

Applicants are **required** to have a federal "Unique Entity ID" (UEI) number, therefore interested entities without a UEI are encouraged to go ahead and make application for their UEI at SAM.gov, there is no cost to register in [SAM.gov](#).

The DEADLINE for applications is April 5, 2024. Find all the details and the application here: <https://www.kyagr.com/marketing/RFSI.html>

From The Kentucky Resources Council "SB16 Needs Your Consideration TODAY"

From KRC: "The Kentucky Resources Council (KRC) presented testimony on February 13 against SB 16, which would make criminal the taking of photos or collecting of evidence by neighbors and government inspectors, of possible violations at food factories and animal feedlots. While proponents described the committee substitute of the bill as only preventing drone overflights of food manufacturing plants and animal feeding operations, the overbroad language of the bill would also criminalize a neighbor documenting violations from his or her own property, or a government inspector documenting violations while conducting an inspection for health, worker safety, or environmental compliance. **Senate Bill 16 could be voted on by the Kentucky Senate as early as THIS afternoon, February 15, 2024.** To read KRC's testimony click [here](#). To watch the Committee discussion, including KRC staff attorney Audrey Ernstberger's testimony in opposition to the bill, click [here](#). For KRC's SB 16 Fact Sheet, click [here](#)."

[Learn More Here](#)

Are You a Forest Farmer or Interested to Learn About Agroforestry?

The Appalachian Regional Commission recently sponsored a project through its Appalachian Regional Initiatives for Stronger Economies (ARISE) program focused on improving services and infrastructure for forest farmers. **This short survey will help organizations learn about your needs and interests.** Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for general reporting purposes.

Take the Agroforestry survey

Let's grow
forest farming
in Central Appalachia!



Join OAK & Grow Appalachia at the
Eastern KY Farmer Conference
this Friday, February 16,
to share your voice
and learn more!

Join OAK at the Eastern Kentucky Farmer Conference

Grow Appalachia has organized a **Forest Farming Track for TOMORROW, Friday, February 16, at the [Eastern KY Farmer Conference](#)** - OAK will support Grow Appalachia to organize a listening session to hear from curious farmers, interested landowners, and experienced

practitioners of agroforestry on the markets, potential, challenges, and realities of forest farming, silvopasture, and other agroforestry practices. **We hope to see you in Morehead!**

Apply for March Forest Farming Conference Scholarship

The **Gather to Grow multiday Forest Farming conference** will be held in Roanoke, Virginia from March 22-24, 2024 and feature learning, networking, and strategic planning programs that will shape the future of forest farming of woodland crops such as botanicals, mushrooms, and decorative products in Appalachia and beyond. Keynote speakers, working group meetings and panels, field tours, expo, exhibitors, breakout presentations, flash talks, a youth program, poster presenters, great food, socials, and a classic hotel in Appalachia are included.

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/2024-conference>

Scholarships for the 2024 Gather to Grow Conference are available to **beginning forest farmers in the [Appalachian counties](#) of Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee.**

Learn More and Apply TODAY

Kentucky Climate-Smart Cereal Rye Cover Crop Initiative

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is looking ahead to the 2024-2025 growing season and would like to share with you the opportunity to participate in AFT's Kentucky Climate-Smart Cereal Rye Cover Crop Initiative. Through funding provided by a USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant, the Kentucky Climate-Smart Cereal Rye Cover Crop Initiative aims to increase the adoption of winter cereal rye. Rye, as either a cover crop or double crop in rotation with corn and soybean cash crop systems, increases farm economic viability and environmental resilience. Simultaneously, rapidly scaling on-farm conservation practices achieves climate change mitigation and increases water conservation and air quality.

As part of this project, farms are eligible to receive \$550 per acre, up to \$13,750, for growing rye on up to 25 acres of land in Kentucky. Funding for this project is limited, and application decisions will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. Click [this link to apply now](#).

To learn more, visit [Kentucky Climate-Smart Cereal Rye Cover Crop Initiative](#) or contact Ag Conservation Innovations Director, Brian Brandt, at agconservation@farmland.org.

Upcoming Partner Opportunities

Register today for Kentucky Black Farmers Conference

March 1-2, 2024

Lexington KY

Join this fantastic gathering of BIPOC farmers from across Kentucky! The [Kentucky Black Farmers Association](#), [Black Soil KY](#), and Community Farm Alliance are excited to bring you a comprehensive deep-dive into the Kentucky food system complete with dynamic materials, research, and simulations designed to activate and accelerate your path in agriculture! Explore Sponsorship Opportunities [here](#).

Learn More and Register TODAY

Friday, March 1st

EMBASSY SUITES LEXINGTON GREEN

245 LEXINGTON GREEN CIRCLE, LEXINGTON KY 40503

Kentucky Black Farmers Association New Membership Meeting **5PM**

AfriKentucky Diaspora Roundtable, Host CJ Dunford **7PM**

Farmer Kick-Back Hour **9PM**

Saturday, March 2nd

THE ORIGIN HOTEL LEXINGTON

4174 ROWAN LEXINGTON KY 40517

9AM- 6PM

“Establishing Our Baseline”

Registration & Welcome

Research Panel with Dr. Lauren Whitehurst and Briana Bazile

Keynote Speaker Lynsey Crumby, KDA

Local Food System Simulation: Guided Technical Assistance

MATTIE MACK FARMER FUND RECEPTION



BLACK SOIL KY
OUR BETTER NATURE



Organic Agriculture at KYSU Third Thursday Thing - Livestream TODAY



KSU Third
Thursday,
February 15
10 a.m. EST



ORGANIC AGRICULTURE SESSION

Harold R. Benson Research and
Demonstration Farm

1525 Mills Ln, Frankfort, KY 40601



February 16-17, 2024
Registration begins at noon **TOMORROW**, Friday, February 16.
Morehead Conference Center, Morehead KY

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

March Regenerative Flower Farming Conference in Frankfort

March 2, 2024, 9 am - 4:30 pm ET

Harold R. Benson Research & Demonstration Farm, Kentucky State University, Frankfort, KY

TODAY, February 15, 2024, 10am ET
The Kentucky Horticulture Council invite you to a full day of learning from Jennie Leve of Love & Fresh Flowers and Life & Soil Flower Podcast!!!

Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm, Frankfort KY
If you're unable to join today's event in person, the event will be available at [Ways to Add More Life to Your Soil](#) Regenerative Approaches to Pest Management, and Best Practices for Veggies & Herbs. [Learn more and register here.](#)

For more information, email Dakota Moore at dakota@kyhortcouncil.org.

Eastern Kentucky Farmer Conference - THIS WEEKEND

Upcoming In-Person Events

Mastering Your Capital Workshop

TOMORROW, February 16, 2024

Frankfort, Kentucky

This is a conference specifically for Kentucky's young, beginning, and small agricultural farmers and producers. At this conference, you'll be exposed to agricultural experts, traditional/non-traditional farming best practices, and local/regional organizations who provide an infinite number of resources which help enhance your technical skills, financial planning, and resources through multiple outlets such as:

- Various educational topics on Taxation Planning & Legal Entities, Financial Statements and Ag Financing Preparation Practices, Succession & Estate Planning, and more.

- Ability to connect with financial planners, business development managers, fellow peers, etc.
- Enhancing managerial and operational skills and developing your personal brand.
- Registration costs, breakfast, and lunch will be completely covered on behalf of anyone who registers. Please register at the link below:
<https://forms.monday.com/forms/87cb62375327c899a0b2c0faadb568a7?r=use1>

If you have any questions please contact Marcus Tyler at Farm Credit Mid-America
Marcus.Tyler@fcma.com 502 420 3912

First Friday, presented by The Food Connection at UK

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

University of Kentucky, Lexington

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>

Kentucky Local Food Systems Summit (KYLSS)

March 20, 2024

Lexington KY

Registration for the sixth annual Kentucky Local Food Systems Summit (KYLSS) is now open. The [KYLSS](#) event allows participants to engage in a full day of workshops, networking and critical conversations about local food systems development.

Registration is 8 – 9 a.m. ET. Morning sessions begin at 10:45 with afternoon sessions from 2:15 – 3:45, concluding with networking reception. Registration is \$95 per person.

Scholarships are available as needed.

The Gather to Grow multiday Forest Farming conference

March 22-24, 2024

Roanoke, Virginia

This event will feature learning, networking, and strategic planning programs that will shape the future of forest farming of woodland crops such as botanicals, mushrooms, and decorative products in Appalachia and beyond. Keynote speakers, working group meetings and panels, field tours, expo, exhibitors, breakout presentations, flash talks, a youth program, poster presenters, great food, socials, and a classic hotel in Appalachia are included.

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/2024-conference>

Scholarships are available [here](#).

Develop Hands-On SKILLS at Salamander Springs Workshop with Susana Lein

These on-farm workshops are for anyone wanting to get firsthand experience with permaculture principles and methods on the ground, will include hands-on practicums and intensive education in principles, methods and materials, timing, hard lessons learned...not to be missed!

- Create fertile, living soil, hugelkultur, no-till veggie and staple crops, contour swales & ponds. Manage and cycle water, solar energy and nutrients.
- Grow diverse food crops, staples grains, dry beans and cover crops without tillage.
- Experience a passive solar tiny house, building with clay & straw, local lumber and salvage, earthen floor, solar shower, humanure compost toilet, solar food dehydrator...
- Enjoy a diversity of farm-grown staple proteins, fresh produce, preserved, foraged and fermented foods.

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Upcoming Virtual Events

Webinar: Things Your Organic Certifier Wants You to Know

TODAY, February 15, 2024, 3-4pm ET

Join NCAT's Audrey Kolde and Meredith Morgan from Quality Certification Services for this free webinar. The talk will be a practical walk-through of how to apply to become USDA organic certified and how to maintain that certification. They will discuss Organic System Plan documents, some tips for success, and call out key regulations to maximize success. They will also go over resources that will help you and/or your clients gain a full understanding of USDA regulations. [Register here.](#)

Webinar - From Forage to Livestock: Managing Animals in a Silvopasture system February 20, 2024, 1 PM ET

Animals in silvopasture systems are managed a little differently than traditional fields. In this webinar, presenters will discuss different aspects of managing animals in a silvopasture system from determining which animals, how much land they need, to introducing them to the silvopasture. [Learn more here.](#) View the full Woodland Stewards webinar series [here.](#)

Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation: Selecting the Right Carbon Source and Application Rate. February 20, 2024, 2 PM ET

Register now at https://oregonstate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xtK1Lyl2Sn-jL1tpSLTqVg#/registration

This webinar will provide the principles and practical insights on how to select suitable sources of carbon (organic amendment) and their application rate to implement Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation (ASD) as a biological solution for the management of soilborne pests and pathogens affecting specialty crops.

Webinars from Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)

February 21, 2024, 3pm ET: [A Beginners Guide to Poultry Incubation](#)

February 29, 2024, 1pm ET: [Getting Started with Turkeys](#)

March 4, 2024, 1pm ET : [How Soil Health and Plant Diversity Influences Animal and Human Health](#)

FACT has weekly, relevant free webinars. Check out the [full schedule here.](#) Find all past webinars on FACT's [website.](#)

Rodale Institute weekly, relevant free webinars.

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

Educational and Farming Support

Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program—Produce Prescription

DEADLINE: February 28, 2024

This program funds projects that demonstrate and evaluate the impact of fresh fruit and vegetable prescriptions to (1) increase procurement and consumption of fruits and vegetables;

(2) reduce individual and household food insecurity; and (3) reduce healthcare usage and associated costs.
[Learn more here.](#)

High Tunnel Survey Guides Future Research and Extension Education for Growers

You are invited to participate in this study if you are a vegetable grower (age 18 or older) using high tunnels in your operation. The survey aims to help researchers at the University of Tennessee Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics and the University of Kentucky Department of Horticulture to assess production and management practices used in high tunnel vegetable production, challenges faced when growing vegetables in high tunnels, and better understand the use and willingness to use soil solarization as an alternative to manage soilborne pests, pathogens, and weeds in high tunnels. The University of Tennessee and the University of Kentucky are receiving funding from Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) to conduct this study.

The survey includes questions about your use of high tunnels, management and production practices, your farm, and you, and should take 15 to 25 minutes to complete, depending on the crops you are growing on your farm. By participating, you can enter into a drawing for a \$250 gift card. Use this link: tiny.utk.edu/T5CQ7 to complete the survey.

Resource: Best Practices for the Sustainable Urban Farm

SARE Outreach's newest bulletin, Best Practices for the Sustainable Urban Farm, highlights strategies, opportunities, and challenges unique to urban production. [Download or order a free print copy here.](#)

Soil Testing to Understand Soil Health

In this [90-minute recorded webinar](#), Lance Gunderson, President and co-owner of Regen Ag Lab, introduces the different kinds of soil test options that are available to farmers. Lance explains how tests like the PLFA test, the Haney Test, the Aggregate Stability Test, and more can help farmers make informed management decisions and improve their soil health.

Report Provides Overview of Farms Operated by Socially Disadvantaged, Women, and Limited Resource Farmers

USDA Economic Research Service has published [An Overview of Farms Operated by Socially Disadvantaged, Women, and Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers in the United States](#). The report utilizes data from the 2017-20 annual Agricultural Resource Management Survey to provides an overview of differences in the financial characteristics of farms operated by socially disadvantaged individuals, women, and limited resource farmers.

**Your tax-deductible gift helps germinate,
cultivate and activate a resilient food and
farming network.**

**Join us! The organic farming network in
Kentucky is growing. Together we are
creating a more regenerative and organic
food system.**

Donate

Become an OAK Member

Organic Association of Kentucky
PO Box 22244, Lexington, KY 40522
e: info@oak-ky.org | p: 1.502.219.7378

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