



Farmers, Apply Today: Climate-Smart and Soil Health Project

Farmers with commercial operations interested in soil health, climate solutions and building on farm resilience, now is the time to apply to participate in OAK's new Climate-Smart Project.

Along with our partners, OAK is accepting farm 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 start this spring. Farmers enrolled in the project will complete a whole farm self-assessment and then work one-on-one with a Soil Health Specialist to add or expand climate-smart practices to their farm. Farms will receive incentive payments for implementing practices such as cover crops, conservation cover, pollinator habitat, nutrient management, grazing, agroforestry and more!

[Farmers, Apply Now](#)

CLIMATE-SMART and SOIL HEALTH Project

Incentive funds for
implemented practices

Free soil testing and
technical assistance

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**. **The position will remain open until filled.**

Climate-smart market
development

The Soil Health and Conservation Specialist will work one-on-one with farmers to deliver on-farm technical assistance to farmers enrolled in OAK's Climate-Smart Project, developing management plans based on NRCS practice standards to improve soil health with a particular focus on agroforestry and forage.

Field Days, workshops,
farmer network

[View Job Opening and Apply Here](#)

FARMERS, APPLY TODAY!

We're delighted to announce that the OAK Conference will return to Kentucky State University's Harold R Benson Research and Demonstration Farm on January 23-25, 2025! Mark your calendar now and keep an eye on the [conference website](#) this summer for our call for session proposals, sponsorship opportunities and agenda updates for OAK's 14th Annual Farming Conference.

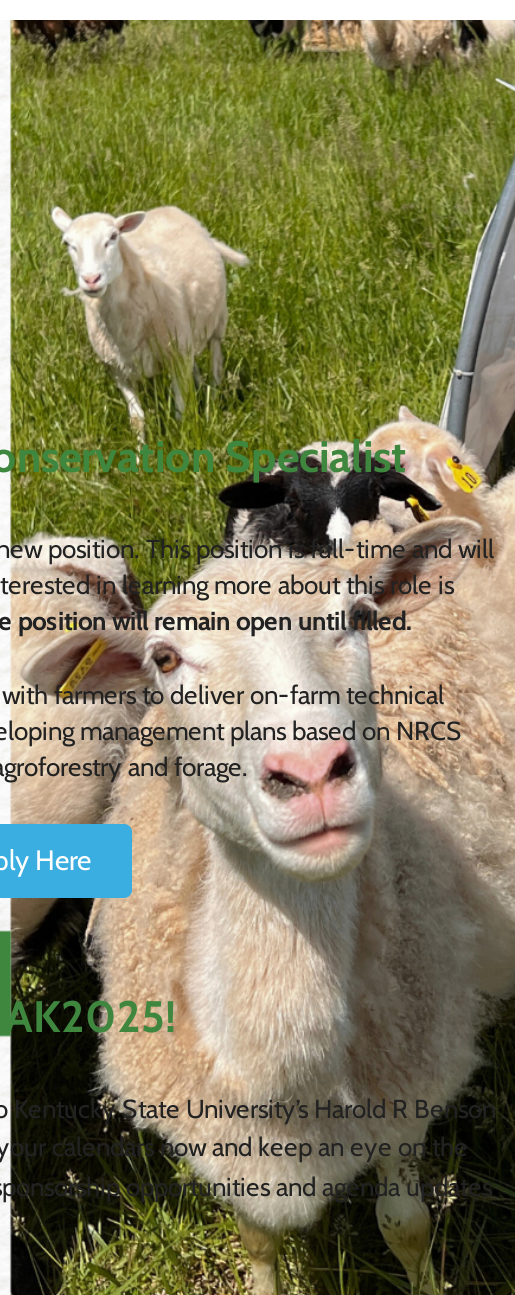


Schedule an Organic Production Consultation TODAY

Kentucky farmers, start your 2024 production season 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 consult with farmers one-on-one by phone, virtually and on the farm. This service is for commercial farms and market gardens that are currently selling or planning to sell their products. Organic technical assistance 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](#)



OAK2025!

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. Interested entities without a UEI are encouraged to go ahead and submit registration for their UEI at [SAM.gov](#). There is no cost to register at [SAM.gov](#).

The DEADLINE for applications is April 5, 2024. Find all the details and the application on the [RFSI program website](#).

Applications are now open for CFA's Mattie Mack Farmer Fund

[The Mattie Mack Farmer Fund](#), organized by Community Farm Alliance (CFA), supports BIPOC farmers across Kentucky. Applications are now open! **The deadline to apply is March 17, 12pm ET.** Grant amounts are up to \$10,000. Those eligible to apply must satisfy all of the following:

- Black, Indigenous or other person of color (BIPOC);
- Have fewer than ten employees;
- Farms that are actively part of the local food and farm system, including produce, livestock, edible herbs, honey, fiber, and maple syrup;
- Selling products through local markets (i.e. , roadside or on-farm market or stand, Community Supported Agriculture or other farm share, local restaurants or schools, farmers market, any of the LFPA tracks, etc.)
- Applying for Resilient Food System Infrastructure (RFSI) funds

[Learn more and apply by March 17!](#) Email cfaadmin@cfaky.org or call (502) 219-2576 for assistance filling out the application or with questions.

Are You a Forest Farmer or Interested in Learning 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. OAK is a partner on this new project. [This short survey](#) will help organizations learn about your needs and interests. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only to guide future planning to support Kentucky's non-timber forest product and agroforestry industry needs and opportunities, from production to market development.

[Take the Agroforestry Survey](#)

Upcoming Partner Opportunities

Regenerating Appalachia Conference

March 22, 2024, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm ET

Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm, Frankfort KY

Join several members of the OAK Team at Kentucky State University for [Regenerating Appalachia](#), a groundbreaking FREE conference dedicated to addressing the unique needs of underserved producers in the Appalachian region as they navigate the challenges posed by a changing climate. [Register here](#).

Cumberland Seed Commons Spring Convening

April 20-23, 2024

Berea College, Berea, KY

The Cumberland Seed Commons (CSC) is holding its [2024 Spring Convening](#) designed for farmers, seed savers, members, partners, researchers and supporters during four grand days, April 20-23, 2024, in Madison County, Kentucky. Everyone is welcome to attend regardless of county, state or country of residence. [Learn more and register here](#).

Our Convening is dedicated to Indigenous Women who cultivated seeds like *Three Sisters* for millennia and African Women who hid seeds like rice in their braids crossing the Atlantic.

CUMBERLAND SEED COMMONS SPRING CONVENING.

April 20-23, 2024

Berea College, Berea, KY



CUMBERLAND SEED COMMONS

Cumberlandseedcommons.org



Upcoming In-Person Events

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.

Grow Appalachia's Beginning Farmer Series

Registration is 8:00 - 9:00 am ET. Morning sessions begin at 10:45 am with afternoon sessions from 2:15 - 3:45 pm, concluding with networking reception. Registration is \$95 per person. Scholarships are available as needed.

Join this excellent FREE beginning farmer training series! Are you a beginning farmer with 0-9 years of experience? Would you like to hone your skills as a farmer and business owner? Join Grow Appalachia for a [FREE six-month training series](#) tailored to farming in eastern Kentucky.

March 21, 2024, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm ET

[APPLY FOR THE 2025 COHORT!](#)

Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm, Frankfort KY

If you're unable to join the event in-person, it will be available at youtube.com/kysuag/live.

Join Kentucky State University's monthly sustainable agriculture workshop

Free event; lunch included.

The Gather to Grow Forest Farming Conference

March 22-24, 2024

Roanoke, Virginia

The [Gather To Grow Forest Farming](#) multiday 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. Scholarships are available [here](#).

All About Kentucky Pawpaws

March 26, 2024, 6:00 pm CT

Warren County Extension Office, Bowling Green

At [this event](#), Kentucky State agents Lindsay Heyvaert and Megan Treadway will cover the basics of the native fruit tree.

Register for the 2024 National Farm Viability Conference!

Early Bird registration rate ends on March 29, 2024

April 29-May 2, 2024, Charleston, West Virginia

Secure your savings by [registering now](#). For questions or support regarding registrations, or to inquire about special accommodations, please contact info@farmviabilityconference.com.

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

Monthly Workshops, June - September, 2024 - Berea, KY

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! [Learn more and register here](#).

Upcoming Virtual Events

Implications of Managing Manure on a Nitrogen Basis

March 15, 2024 2:30pm ET

Meeting crop nitrogen needs with manure while overapplying other nutrients can save the crop farmer the cost of additional fertilizer, but every decision we make on a farm has consequences. Managing manure based on more than just one nutrient might be more complicated, but it may save our fields from implications that we may not have thought about initially. During this webinar, we will discuss using whole farm and field-based nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) balances to identify opportunities for improvements in nutrient use and monitor the impact of management changes over time. Presenters will also discuss the time necessary to reduce the soil phosphorus levels after phosphorus fertilization is halted in cropping fields. Additionally, we'll consider the issues with zinc accumulation in soils that have received repeated applications of poultry litter or swine manure and the challenges with managing zinc toxicity. [More information here](#) and [register here](#).

Webinars from Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)

March 20: [Silvopasture on a Shoestring](#)

March 26: [Farm Property Insurance Basics](#)

Recordings of 2023/24 season webinars are now archived! Find all past webinars on FACT's [website](#).

Webinar: Faith and Food Justice

March 20, 2024, 2:00-3:30pm ET

Join the USDA Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships to celebrate Women's History Month as they highlight the work of faith leaders carrying out food justice initiatives to address nutrition insecurity in their communities. The call features remarks from the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, a panel discussion, and presentations from subject matter experts at the Food and Nutrition Service and Agricultural Marketing Service, as they provide updates on programs that can be used to support food systems transformation. The webinar is virtual and takes place on Zoom.gov. [Register here](#).

Webinar: Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation with the Use of Cover Crops as Carbon Source

March 21, 2024, 2-3:30pm ET

This webinar will provide basic information on the opportunity to integrate the use of cover crops as a carbon source for the application of Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation (ASD) in organic vegetable production systems. Attendees will learn about i) the benefit of using cover crops as a carbon source; ii)

the principles to follow for selecting different cover crops or cover crop mixes; and iii) how cover crops should be incorporated in the soil as carbon sources for the application of ASD. Results of the research conducted in Pennsylvania on sustainable and organic specialty crops will be presented. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Irrigation Basics - Training Event for Beginning Farmers

Irrigation Basics Webinar, March 24, 2024, 12:00-1:30 pm ET

In-person Lexington, April 23, 1-3pm, or Elizabethtown, April 30, 10:00 am-12:00 pm ET

Join UK Extension Specialists for a webinar and workshop series this spring! This series will focus on irrigation basics for high tunnel, field, and orchard production. In-person workshops in April will follow the March 24 webinar. Pre-registration is required and **attendance at the webinar is required in order to attend one of the in-person workshops.** [Register here.](#)

Rodale Institute webinar: Organic Vegetable Production: Cover Crops And No-Till Techniques

March 27, 2024, 2:00 -3:00 pm ET

This webinar on “Organic Vegetable Production” features research cases and insights into the successful cultivation of organic vegetables, including pumpkins, cabbages, zucchinis, and eggplants, using conservative agricultural systems and cover crops. The session highlights the critical aspects of sustainable agriculture and regenerative practices. [Register here.](#)

Climate Change Impact on Urban Agriculture: Water Conservation & Usage

April 3, 1:00 pm ET

A webinar to discuss the impact of climate change on urban agriculture and strategies to help urban farmers adapt, especially in the areas of water conservation and usage.

Expert panelists include Brooke Salvaggio & Dan Heryer of Urbavore Urban Farm, Alana Henry of Young Family Farm, & Joseph Dorsey, Ph.D., with the University of South Florida. [Register here.](#)



IRRIGATION BASICS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS

Join UK Extension Specialists for a webinar and workshop series this spring! This series will focus on irrigation basics for high tunnel, field, and orchard production. The March webinar will be followed by in-person workshops in April. Pre-registration is required and attendance at the webinar is required in order to attend one of the in-person workshops.

Register here or scan the QR code below:

https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_oueeuQweUWBREGy

BEGINNING FARMER IRRIGATION BASICS

WEBINAR:
MARCH 26
12 - 1:30 P.M.

UK HORTICULTURE
RESEARCH FARM
IN-PERSON
WORKSHOP:
APRIL 23
1 - 3 P.M.

HINTON'S ORCHARD
IN-PERSON
WORKSHOP:
APRIL 30
10 A.M. - 12 P.M.

 Cooperative
Extension Service



Educational and Farming Support

Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award Seeks Nominees

Deadline: March 31, 2024

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may apply themselves. The [application](https://sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA) can be found at sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA.

ATTN Fayette County Farmers and Partners

Deadline: March 31, 2024

Apply now for the 5th Annual FCCD Conservation and Education Grant to receive up to \$2,000 for local conservation projects! Classroom supplies, field trip or field day costs, school or community gardens, outdoor classroom space, trash cleanup, invasive removal, conservation camp tuition, fees, and supplies. Other projects, materials, and events will be considered for funding on a case by case basis.

Priority funding is given to first-time applicants, applicants who were not funded in 2023, and projects that are located within undeserved areas of Lexington.

More details at www.kyfccd.com - click the education tab.

Kentucky Climate-Smart Cereal Rye Cover Crop Initiative

American Farmland Trust 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 the link below 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.

Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants

Deadline: April 9

USDA has announced approximately \$6 million for Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) competitive grants to initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access; education; business and start-up costs for new farmers; and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production. USDA's National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the grant program until April 9, 2024.

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/urban/grants>

Farmer Scholarships Available for Pre-NOSB & NOSB Meetings in Milwaukee, WI!

NOC is offering a limited number of travel scholarships to farmers who want to attend the [NOC Pre-NOSB meeting](#) (April 28, 2024) & [National Organic Standards Board \(NOSB\) Meeting](#) (April 28 - May 1, 2024) in Milwaukee, WI. Scholarships can cover any travel-related expenses (mileage, transportation, meals, accommodations if needed). Priority will be given to farmers who apply by April 1.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WMBKGGQ>

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.

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.**

New Guide: Zoning for Urban Agriculture (For) Healthy Food Production and Access

An updated guide offers a resource for local policymakers looking to develop urban agriculture policy, as well as for those hoping to advocate for urban agriculture in their municipalities.

The guide, [Zoning for Urban Agriculture: A Guide for Updating Your Community's Laws to Support Healthy Food Production and Access](#), addresses some of the challenges associated with

municipal zoning codes and offers policy examples and action steps to facilitate urban agriculture through sound zoning ordinances. The guide

- provides a general overview of urban agriculture
- explains how zoning can support urban agriculture
- considers action steps for advocates trying to facilitate urban agriculture through zoning, and
- explores emerging trends in zoning for urban agriculture

Organic Association of Kentucky
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info@oak-ky.org | 1502.219.7378

Alley Cropping: Central and Southern Appalachian Region

Alley cropping is an agroforestry practice that integrates trees with horticultural crops in a mutually beneficial arrangement. In a new publication, [Alley Cropping: Central and Southern Appalachian Region](#), Crocker explains how this sustainable farming technique offers a range of ecological and economic benefits. The publication also offers tips that can guide farmers in implementing alley cropping. It is part of NCAT's new Climate-Smart Farm Practices Fact Sheet Series.

Follow Along:



Spanish-Language Soil Health Course Now Available

The Organic Farming Research Foundation released a new, free online course in Spanish on the importance of improving soil health for agricultural production. [Los Fundamentos de la Salud del Suelo](#) (Fundamentals of Soil Health) was produced in partnership with the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, NCAT and the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association. The course focuses on the world of soil and explains how to promote soil health as part of a functioning ecosystem.