



Organic Association of Kentucky

Advancing Organic Agriculture in Kentucky

Hello ##[Name | First]##,

Did you know that the first week of August is National Farmers Market Week? Celebrate local farms by visiting a market near you and chatting with your local farmer. It is a great way to support local food economies and find the freshest foods available! Check out OAK's [Find-A-Farm Directory](#) to see which farmers sell at your local market.

Are you interested in joining the OAK Team? [OAK IS HIRING](#) a Soil Health and Conservation Specialist. Learn more, share the opportunity and apply for this position today.

It is OAK's Field Day Season. If you have not attended one of OAK's on-farm, immersive educational events, now is a great time to register and share in the learning and community at events across the state. In early September, OAK will head to [Barr Farms](#) in Rhodelia, Kentucky. This Field Day will be followed by a [Graze and Gather Lunch Social](#), find out more and register below! We would love to see you there on September 5th.

Come find us at the State Fair! OAK is proud to present a local food cooking demonstration on the [Kentucky State Fair](#) Ag Cooking Stage in partnership with Chef Eneitra Beattie from [Greenz N Tingz](#). We will be onstage Friday, August 16, 4:30-5:30pm ET featuring seasonal recipes and cooking tips. Mark your calendars and join us to grab a delicious, local snack!

August is here friends! Students head back to school and the region's farmers plan for the fall and winter seasons that lie just ahead, these are the busiest of times. Let us all pause for a sweet slice of a local melon and a tasty summer treat, like a tomato sandwich. Enjoy.

Warmly,
Robin Verson
Membership and Communications Coordinator

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 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.**

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. Apply by 8/30/2024 for full consideration.

SOIL AND CONSERVATION SPECIALIST

Develop conservation management plans.
Provide climate-smart technical assistance.
Work one-on-one with farmers.



Learn more at oak-ky.org/careers

Farmer Profile: Adam Barr and Rae Strobel, Barr Farms

Adam Barr's family has stewarded their farm land on the border of Meade and Breckinridge counties since the early 19th century. Seven generations of the family have cared for the woods, fields, pastures and waters of the land while harvesting memories and food from the farm in Rhodelia, Kentucky. Today, Adam, Rae and their family continue this journey, raising organic produce, 100% grass-fed beef and pastured chicken on the 260-acre farm. As the current generation of land stewards, Adam and Rae strive to honor their family's legacy while maintaining the health of the land for the next seven generations to come. Barr Farms' commitment to organic farming practices, alternative energy implementation and carbon farming through biochar and perennial plantings are all part of Adam and Rae's whole-farm planning built upon these shared values.

The pair met while interning at Bugtussle Farm in south-central Kentucky. Their individual paths took the Kentuckians to other states and countries where they learned about environmental and food system challenges and strategies that led them back home to be a part of the local solution. Since 2007, [Barr Farms](#) has offered community supported agriculture (CSA) shares to their community, broadening their production and customer offerings to include the [Kentucky Farm Share Coalition](#), local farmers markets, New Roots Fresh Stop Markets and local restaurants. Dedicated to farming as an aspect of community-building and food justice, Rae and Adam also give their time and energy off of the farm to [Community Farm Alliance](#), [Sustainable Agriculture Louisville](#) and [Kentucky Foundation for Women](#), among others.

In 2015, Barr Farms chose to pursue organic certification to demonstrate a deep commitment to their family's values. As they made plans to double their farm's growth, they found they were no longer able to have conversations with every customer about their commitment to land stewardship and growing practices and regarded the USDA Organic label as a way to communicate these values to customers. Adam and Rae have also committed to data collection, on-farm research and whole-farm sustainability assessment as part of [OAK's Climate-Smart Project](#).



Adam and Rae will share about their climate-smart agriculture practices, organic vegetables in field and covered production, perennial plantings of fruits and nuts and whole-farm planning at OAK's Farmer Field Day on September 5. Learn more and register at oak-ky.org/field-days. Adam and Rae are also graciously hosting a [Graze and Gather Lunch Social](#) on their farm following this Field Day. If you are attending the Field Day, plan to stay for an opportunity to connect with the community. Food will be self pay and provided by a local food truck. If you are not attending the Field Day, you are more than welcome to join for the food and friendship at 12:30 PM.

Register Here

Attend the Graze and Gather Lunch Social

Field Day: Perennial Possibilities and Annual Rotations

Barr Farms, Rhodelia KY -- September 5, 2024 -- 9 am - 12 pm ET

Barr Farms is a seventh-generation family farm committed to stewarding the land for the next seven generations. Inspired by a lineage connected to the land, Adam Barr and Rae Strobel build community, soil and farming systems that center the flow of water, the energy of sunlight and the biodiversity of life below and above ground, growing and raising food for their family and community. On 260 acres in Meade County, [Barr Farms](#) raises organic produce, 100% grass-fed beef and pastured chicken for community supported agriculture (CSA) shares and local farmers markets.

Building on their long-term commitment, and with an eye towards whole-farm planning, Adam and Rae added perennial nut trees and berry brambles to diversify their crops, support and stabilize their living soils and enhance their farm's wildlife and pollinator habitats. Join this OAK Farmer Field Day to visit the orchards, fields, high tunnels and alley cropping of Barr Farms and to hear how the farm's practices of using cover crops, crop rotations, water and irrigation management and diversification are supporting their present and future farm goals.

As a Kentucky farm enrolled in OAK's USDA-supported Climate-Smart Project, Barr Farms has committed to implementing climate-smart practices and assessing whole-farm sustainability. Learn more about OAK's project at <https://www.oak-ky.org/climate-smart-project>.

Support for this project comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Partnership for Climate Smart Commodities under agreement number NR233A750004G092.

Reflections on July's Field Day

Building a Small-Scale Family Farm One Year at a Time - July 9 Field Day at Wolf Gap Gardens, Berea

It's easy for beginning farmers to find themselves in over their heads within a few seasons, as they try to launch into every venture that interests them. Melinda and Maggie Wilder, of [Wolf Gap Gardens](#) in Berea, demonstrated a more disciplined path to growing their farm during OAK's July Farmer Field Day. Intentional and consistent, the mother-daughter pair are building their infrastructure and markets a little each year,

responding to needs and opportunities as they arise, while always ensuring that new ventures fit the available time, shared values and practical realities of their lives - on and off the farm. Learn more about the Wilders' stepwise process, efficient systems, funding resources and more in the Event Summary and Resources on OAK's website: <https://www.oak-ky.org/field-days>



Find Event Resources and Summaries [HERE](#)

Conservation Chats

Conservation Chat sessions went live for the first time on July 23 and 24 with great success. Long time farmers, community garden leaders and conservation professionals joined in a gathering of learning and peer discussion. OAK staff presented information and invited participation in assessing on-site natural resources, finding appropriate conservation practices for managing those resources and exploring Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs that provide technical and financial assistance. The resources from this session are available for viewing at [oak-ky.org/conservation](https://www.oak-ky.org/conservation).

OAK Conference 2024 Recordings

The fourth batch of recordings from the 2024 OAK Conference is now available on OAK's website:

- Raising Goats in Kentucky, From Soil to Fork: The Importance of Microbes in Agriculture
- Using Ecological Practices and Appalachian Ingenuity to Grow Year-Round in a Challenging Environment
- Growing Community Through Seeds: Stories of Grassroots Organizing & Growing Shared Resources
- Alley Cropping for Climate Resiliency, Farm Diversification and Cropping System Services (Part 1)
- Alley Cropping for Climate Resiliency, Farm Diversification and Crop Health: The "Why" and The "How" (Part 2)

Watch the 2024 OAK Conference Recordings



14th Annual OAK Conference: Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship powers farmer-to-farmer education! Revenue generated by conference sponsors is foundational to supporting the success of the event. The early and significant support from sponsors, partners and funders allows OAK to offer scholarships, keep registration affordable, provide delicious, locally-sourced meals and support expert farmers to speak at the conference.

[Become a Sponsor](#)

OAK's Climate-Smart Project is fully underway, with 50 farms currently participating in Year 1!



CLIMATE-SMART PROJECT

by the numbers

- 50** PARTICIPATING FARMS
- 31** COUNTIES REPRESENTED
- 19** FARM VISITS CONDUCTED
- 6** FARMER EVENTS PLANNED
- 43** PERSONALIZED GFM FARM ASSESSMENTS DISTRIBUTED



...as of July 2024

OAK's project is divided into seven distinct phases for participating farmers, who are moving through these phases on varying timelines. The first step farmers take is to complete their personalized Global Farm Metric-Farm Sustainability Tool (GFM-FSAT). The GFM-FSAT measures social, economic and environmental indicators on farms to assess sustainability across 12 categories. The data from the GFM-FSAT helps inform each farm's climate-smart management plan, supporting farmers in making informed decisions about what acres to enroll in the project and what climate-smart practices to implement. Currently, 43 of the Year 1 farms are working on or have completed their GFM-FSAT. Following this step, farm visits are held and management plans are developed. Stay tuned!

At the inaugural Climate-Smart Field Day, held on [June 4 at Lazy Eight Farm](#), 16 participating Climate-Smart farms were among the 60+ registrants, and many joined the social meetup afterwards in Berea. [Two more Climate-Smart Field Days are coming up soon](#) (September 5 at Barr Farms and September 23 at Valley Spirit Farm), and we welcome all to join us!

Learn more and follow along with this five-year project by signing up for the [Climate-Smart newsletter](#). Interested in participating in Year 2? [Applications are being accepted now](#) for enrollment in early 2025.

Organic Production Technical Assistance Highlight

Larry and Beth Brandenburg own and operate Harmony Fields Farm, a certified organic farm in Shelby County that grows vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers. The Brandenburs have been invested in organic and sustainable agriculture in Kentucky for a long time and their farm has been certified organic since 2006. In fact, they were founding members of OAK. Now looking ahead, they are planning for the succession of their farm, bringing their children into the planning process for production, marketing and new enterprises within the business.

We are excited to offer a seasonal food demonstration on the [Kentucky State Fair Ag Cooking Stage](#) in partnership with Chef Eneitra Beattie from [Greenz N Things!](#) The demonstration will be on **Friday, August 16, 4:30-5:30pm ET** and will feature seasonal recipes and tips from our Kentucky Farm Share Coalition (workplace CSA) program. Mark your calendars and join us to grab a sample of a delicious local, organic snack!



Celebrating KY Proud Fall CSA Week

Save the date for **Kentucky Proud Fall CSA Week, September 16-20!** During this week, Kentucky consumers can explore fall CSA signup opportunities across the state on social media and in the [CSA in Kentucky Facebook Group](#). If you are a CSA farmer offering a Fall CSA, Year-round CSA, or taking signups in your Main Season CSA this September - December join as a partner farm by Sunday August 11 [HERE](#).



Opportunities, the Latest News & Calls to Action

IOIA Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training
Frankfort, Kentucky | November 4-8, 2024

IOIA Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training

Kentucky State University
November 4 - 8, 2024

Funding is available to support participation by minority and socially disadvantaged stakeholders.

www.ioia.net



KENTUCKY
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

Addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Kentucky Organic Agriculture sector.

Watch this short video clip and get inspired to [Become an Organic Inspector!](#)

[Registration and application deadline for the IOIA training is September 20th.](#)

“Organic farming represents an opportunity for minority farmers to participate in a growing market while garnering higher farm profits. Organic inspection is an overlooked career path and bringing diversity into the ranks of inspectors may help bring more diversity into the ranks of organic farmers.”
- Dr. Shawn Lucas of KSU

This training is funded by the USDA through a Kentucky Specialty Crop Block Grant, administered by the KY Department of Agriculture.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) is available for operations submitting applications or renewing certification. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the [National Organic Program](#) (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid during the program year, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope. The deadline to apply is October 31, 2024. Some certifiers process cost share requests through the certification application, others do not. If your certifier does not process certification cost share then you can apply for cost share through your local USDA Farm Services Agency office. Learn more [here](#), and contact your certifier or [local FSA office](#) for details.

Educational & Farming Support

In-person Events Throughout the Region

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.](#)

Loretto Motherhouse Ag Bash

August 3, 2024

Nerinx, KY

Find out more here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1620728315395565>

Eastern Kentucky KFGC Field Day

Tuesday, August 13 · 4:30 - 8pm EDT

Star Hill Provisions at Maker's Mark Distillery

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eastern-kentucky-kfgc-field-day-tickets-950045841687?aff=odeimcmailchimp&mc_eid=a23cad799a&mc_cid=e57fb7f9a0

Black Soil KY inaugural conference, "The State of The Soil"

Appalachian Rose Farm in Rogers, Kentucky

September 8-11, 2024

Registration will close on Monday, July 1, or when capacity is met.

This conference will be an opportunity to hear from industry professionals to learn more about how we can build an intersectional and equitable food system. We have a highly curated lineup of experts who are bringing their skills, experience, and passion for moving our food system on a local, national, and global scale forward.

You can find the link to register here: <https://www.blacksoilky.com/product/the-state-of-the-soil/453>

2024 Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day

September 11, 2024

MEIGS Horticultural Research Farm 9101 S 100 E Lafayette, IN 47909

[Purdue University's MEIGS Horticultural Research Farm](#) in Lafayette, Indiana will be the host site for the 2024 Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day (MMWCFD). MMWCFD connects farmers, machinery manufacturers, and the allied trades for a single day event that draws farmers from all over the Midwest. MMWCFD is THE place to see weeding tools. The morning features a trade-show where companies can connect one-on-one with farmers, and educational sessions, and the afternoon features field demonstrations in vegetable and row crops. [Find out more and register here.](#)

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

Good Idea Shop Talks

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 second season of these weekly, virtual meet-ups will take place on Thursdays, August 1st, 8th, and 15th at 11:30am CT / 12:30 ET via Zoom. Learn more and register here: <https://goodideafarm.org/shop-talks/>

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

Grow Appalachia is now accepting 2025 Garden Grant Proposals! Draft proposals are due by September 1st, and FINAL proposals are due October 1st. Click the link for more information [Garden Grants - Grow Appalachia \(berea.edu\)](#)

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) is available for operations submitting applications or renewing certification. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the [National Organic Program](#) (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid during the program year, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope. The deadline to apply is October 31, 2024. Some certifiers process cost share requests through the certification application, others do not. If your certifier does not process certification cost share then you can apply for cost share through your local USDA Farm Services Agency office. Learn more [here](#), and contact your certifier or [local FSA office](#) for details.

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/1lomJSqOY2OmOYKQWrLXblSef9e7HPcZT/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](#).

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-acs/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 The On-Farm Energy Efficiency Program to help Kentucky farmers with energy projects. These cost sharing funds are available to increase on-farm energy efficiency and to support renewable fuel production projects. The application 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 [Donate](#) promoting many of these grant opportunities. [Become an OAK Member](#) can also answer questions about funding programs and help you prepare an application? resources

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