



## Organic Association of Kentucky

Advancing Organic Agriculture in Kentucky

Hello ##[Name | First]##,

The season is shifting, September's arrival brought with it cooler temperatures and Kentuckians are exhaling a sigh of relief after a very hot and challenging August. The Fall months, some would claim, are the most delightful for local, seasonal eating. The heat-loving crops are still abundant and they are complimented by autumn's squashes and the return of greens. CSA shares and local Farmers Markets are packed with flavor! Don't forget, you can always use OAK's [Find-A-Farm Directory](#) to see which farmers sell at your local market or find a CSA offering a Fall Share. OAK is co-hosting the annual [KY Proud Fall CSA Week](#) (September 16-20) to help folks find the perfect CSA offering to extend the season of local eating, read on below for more details.

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.

Last call to register for this week's Field Day and lunch at [Barr Farms](#)! If you have not attended one of OAK's on-farm, immersive educational events, There are three opportunities to join the OAK community for on-farm learning and gathering across the state this month. Thursday's Field Day at [Barr Farms](#) in Rhodelia, Kentucky will be followed by a [Graze and Gather Lunch Social](#), find out more and register [here](#)! We would love to see you there on September 5th.

Warmly,  
Robin Verson  
Membership and Communications Coordinator

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## 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 Soil Health and Climate-Smart Farming 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 project, developing management plans based on NRCS practice standards to improve soil health.

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## Farmer Field Days in Meade/Breckenridge,

## Fayette and Henry Counties



### OAK Farmer Field Days September 2024



#### BARR FARMS

9/5 - RHODELIA

+ GRAZE AND GATHER  
LUNCH SOCIAL!



#### SEEDLEAF'S HEADWATER FARM

9/12 - LEXINGTON



#### VALLEY SPIRIT FARM

9/23 - CAMPBELLSBURG

Learn more and register at  
[oak-ky.org/field-days](https://oak-ky.org/field-days)

*OAK welcomes farmers from all types and scales of farms*

Join us for one or all of our on-farm Field Days in September for peer-to-peer conversations highlighting community farming, conservation efforts and support, perennial and annual organic farming practices, adaptive grazing principles and assistance available to support Kentucky farmers. OAK's farmer education events are open to all interested farmers, organic or conventional, urban or rural, large or small-scale - and the allied professionals who support them!

Register Now

### Farmer Profile: Joseph Monroe, Valley Spirit Farm

Joseph Monroe and Abbie Scott-Monroe live and farm on 118 acres in Henry County, where they raise three young kids, steward the land with respect and a light touch and integrate community throughout their work. Farming roots run deep for both of their families, and it's evident in the life they share with their children, farm crew and neighboring community. [Valley Spirit Farm](#) began with the merging of two farm families, the Monroes and Feichters, who worked together to develop the systems that Joseph and Abbie still manage: 100 acres of grass-fed cattle and seven acres of diverse vegetable production.



In 2023, the Monroes' farm partners Caleb and Kelly Feichter moved north to be closer to family, and Joseph and Abbie continued the farm, simplifying the enterprises (no more hogs or mushrooms) but maintaining their core practices. Joseph and Annie were among the first farmers to join The Berry Center's [Our Home Place Meat](#) cooperative. They also vend at the Douglass Loop Farmers Market in Louisville and contribute to the [Local Food Purchase Assistance \(LFPA\)](#) program and [New Roots' Fresh Stop Markets](#).

With an eye towards stewarding the land for their children and protecting the natural resources, Joseph and Abbie have worked to build and maintain healthy soil and incorporate conservation practices throughout their farm. They work to protect riparian areas around waterways with native vegetation, establish native pollinator habitat and grasslands and use organic practices in their vegetable production. Their cattle pastures are actively managed with adaptive grazing techniques including rotational grazing, improved forages and periods of rest or disturbance based on continual experimentation and observation of the animals and their pastures. As a farm participant in OAK's USDA-supported [Climate-Smart Farming Project](#), Valley Spirit Farm has committed to implementing climate-smart practices and assessing whole-farm sustainability.

Joseph and Abbie will share their farm, highlight their cattle and pasture management and explain their conservation practices at the upcoming OAK Farmer Field Day. OAK is grateful for their time and generosity in welcoming the farming community to Valley Spirit Farm on September 23rd.

[Register Here for the September 23rd Field Day at Valley Spirit Farm](#)

## Farm-Partner Profile: Seedleaf

Seedleaf is a community gardening organization that provides horticultural training and supports the practice of gardening and small-scale farming in the urban spaces of Lexington, Kentucky. Their mission supports development of a robust and healthy local food economy and a just and equitable system of urban land stewardship. Through the year-long Market Garden Program, Seedleaf guides participants through basic horticultural principles, food safety practices and general business planning. Once their instruction is complete, Seedleaf provides the Market Gardeners with land for their own vegetable production at Seedleaf's newly-acquired 30-acre farm, Headwater Farm. Through sharing land, skills and resources, Seedleaf helps new Market Gardeners take risks, build their brands and learn while minimizing financial barriers and social isolation. The Market Gardeners keep all proceeds they earn from their efforts.

Headwater Farm is located at the headwaters of the Elkhorn Creek in Northeast Lexington. Beyond graduated market gardeners and farmers in training, Headwater currently provides land access and shares resources with the Refugee Farmers Cooperative (Empucate) and the Nepalese farming organization, Anka. Headwater is also home to Seedleaf's new agroforestry program and a burgeoning food forest. Seedleaf is committed to nurturing the land, growing nutrient dense food and increasing biodiversity for and with the community it serves.



OAK is delighted to partner with Seedleaf on an **upcoming Farmer Field Day on September 12th**, to share Headwater Farm's conservation and community efforts.



Register here for the September 12th Field Day at Seedleaf's Headwater Farm

## Save the date for the 14th Annual OAK Conference



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**14TH ANNUAL**  
**OAK**  
**CONFERENCE**

Grounded in Organics:  
From Soil to Market

**JANUARY**  
**23-25, 2025**  
Frankfort, KY  
**[oak-ky.org](http://oak-ky.org)**

SAVE THE DATE for OAK's 14th Annual Organic Farming Conference, *Grounded in Organics: From Soil to Market*, January 23-25, 2025, at Kentucky State University's Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm in Frankfort, Kentucky. Registration will open in October.

Visit OAK's Website for Information & Updates

## Last Call for OAK 2025 Conference Sponsorships!

OAK's annual farming conference is expected to bring together over 400 participants, and revenue generated by conference sponsors is foundational for supporting the success of the event.

Become a Conference Sponsor

## 2024 OAK Conference Recordings: All Now Available!

All recordings from the 2024 conference are now available on OAK's website! The latest release includes:

- Five Steps to Your Regenerative Resilience Plan: A Workshop for Farmers

- Adaptation Options for Diversified Organic Farmers
- Introduction to Working with Livestock Guardian Dogs
- Over The Fence Rails: Farmer-to-Farmer Skillshare
- Agrivoltaics: Solar Grazing with a Regenerative Approach
- Introduction to Pawpaws

Watch All the 2024 OAK Conference Recordings

## Mark your calendars for Fall CSA Week 2024!

OAK is excited to co-host KY Proud Fall CSA Week, a virtual celebration of autumnal farm shares across the bluegrass, from September 16-20.

Join the [CSA in Kentucky Facebook Group](#) to follow long for exciting giveaways, farmer features, and fall food sourcing tips and share this event with a friend!

Share the Facebook Event



## Opportunities, the Latest News & Calls to Action

### Happy National Organic Month!

The Organic Transition Team wishes to champion and celebrate the organic transition and certification process and raise awareness of organic agriculture career opportunities. If you are interested in becoming an organic inspector, register for the International Organic Inspectors' Association (IOIA) Basic Organic Crop Inspection Training held in Kentucky this fall!

**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](http://www.ioia.net)



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

This training is one step in addressing diversity, equity and inclusion in the Kentucky Organic Agriculture sector. [Organic Crop Inspection work](#) is a great opportunity for a flexible career working with organic farmers and processors in the region!

Many opportunities are available in inspection work. The increasing number of certified organic products and certified organic operations brings the need for farm professionals to enter the organic industry. Furthermore, workforce opportunities in the certified organic industry have proven to benefit families and create long-lasting impacts on entire communities. That is something we should all celebrate! **The registration deadline is September 20th.**

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

[Apply Now](#)

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## 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.

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# 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.](#)

### **7th Annual Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day**

September 11, 2024, Lafayette, IN

Join this event on Wednesday, September 11 at Purdue University's MEIGS Research Farm in Lafayette. Hear from national experts on weeding tools and techniques! See weeding tools of all scales: from hand tools, two wheel tractors, horse-power, up to 12-row camera guided cultivators! Watch field demos of weeding machines and hear from company reps! Visit the trade show featuring industry-leading cultivation companies and cutting edge tools!

<https://www.thelandconnection.org/event/2024-mmwcf/>

### **Help For Landowners - US Fish & Wildlife Workshop**

September 13-14, 2024 - Prestonsburg, KY

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is committed to creating new opportunities to assist landowners and communities not traditionally reached. USFWS field staff have participated in a series of workshops aimed at increasing awareness of diverse land ownership and species conservation in the southeast. Join this free event to learn about recourses available to landowners in Appalachia.

<https://www.helpforlandowners.org/usfishwildlife>

### **Pine Mountain Farm Institute - An Evening with Agroforestry**

Monday, September 16, 2024, 3:30 PM 8:00 PM

Agroforestry is quickly regaining ground as a strategy for sustainable forest management in Eastern Kentucky. In this workshop, participants will join leaders in our region as they identify trees, provide guidance on land assessment, discuss riparian buffers, herbs, and resources for landowners interested in applying agroforestry techniques. The event includes a land assessment hike, a farm fresh meal, along with coffee and good conversation!

<https://www.pinemountainsettlementschool.com/events>

### **Orchard Field Walk**

September 18, 2024, 4 – 6 p.m. (EDT)

University of KY North Farm, 1925 Research Farm Road, Lexington, KY 40511

Join UK's new fruit extension specialist Brent Arnoldussen for an orchard walk at the new Modern Orchard Systems and Climate Resilience Research and Extension Orchard at the University of Kentucky's North Farm in Lexington. The event will begin with an open house/self-guided tour starting at 4 p.m. (EDT), then a guided tour and group discussion starting at 5 p.m. Participants will learn about new training systems and production techniques in apples, pears, and peaches as well as special considerations for pest and disease control in young orchards from UK extension faculty in horticulture, plant pathology, and entomology. This event will be useful for new growers interested in starting orchards and for existing producers who want to learn the most up-to-date techniques. Spanish translation will be provided for both written and oral materials; please bring a cell phone with head phone/ear bud capabilities.

Register Here: [Orchard Walk Registration](#)

The [Inaugural Kentucky Climate Symposium](#) will be held on September 26, 2024, at the University of Kentucky Gatton Student Center in Lexington, Kentucky.



The day-long symposium brings together students and experts from higher education, government, industry, media, and communities to share information and resources on climate change. OAK Executive Director Brooke Gentile will present on the Agriculture Panel, one of multiple moderated panel conversations on the Symposium agenda, which also includes networking opportunities and a student art competition. Attendees will join a multisector, interdisciplinary, statewide community that emphasizes climate change solutions.

Conference registration fees are kept low with the generous support of our sponsors, and include free registration for students and no-questions-asked fee waivers for any attendees.

If you have any questions or need assistance with your registration, please contact Gail Wallace with the Kentucky Climate Consortium [gailwallace@uky.edu](mailto:gailwallace@uky.edu).

### **2024 Southern Ohio Forest Farming Conference**

Sept 27-29, 2024 - Rutland, Ohio

Join Rural Action and the Sustainable Forestry team at the beautiful United Plant Savers Botanical Sanctuary to talk about all things forest farming! This weekend-long event will showcase topics such as site selection, forest botanical and mushroom cultivation and harvest, mulberry production, plant propagation and planting stock, the business of agroforestry and medicinal plant walks. Plus, in-depth information on opportunities for forest farmers such as access to the Rural Action Native Plant Nursery, free site assessment and management plans, technical and financial assistance through NRCS and forest farming mentorship.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-southern-ohio-forest-farming-conference-tickets-938628592387>

### **2024 Heart of America Grazing Conference: Regenerative grazing... Merging science and practice**

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. ET

Hardin County Extension Office

111 Opportunity Way, Elizabethtown, KY

Tickets and more information at <https://2024HeartofAmerica.eventbrite.com>

### **Greg Brann's Big Spring Pasture Walk (final day of Heart of America Grazing Conference)**

Thursday, October 17, 10 am to 4 pm CDT

683 Blankenship Rd, Adolphus, KY 42120

RSVP: [gregbrann5@gmail.com](mailto:gregbrann5@gmail.com)

### **Kentucky Composting Conference**

October 17-18, 2024 - Louisville, KY

Did you know that composting is one of the most powerful tools for soil health and sustainability? Join us to learn more at the Kentucky Composting Conference, October 17-18th! Designed for farmers, backyard composters, and large-scale compost operations, this conference will feature hands-on demonstrations and engaging speakers on a wide range of topics in composting and sustainability.

Register here <https://tinyurl.com/compost-conference>

### **FREE Planning for Farm Diversification Workshop**

October 22nd-Murray, KY

Join KCARD and partners to enhance your farm business planning, gain valuable information on production certifications, and connect with potential buyers.

Register here <https://tinyurl.com/DiverseFarmWorkshop>

### **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](http://www.youtube.com/kysuag/live).



## Virtual 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](#).

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## Resources and Funding for Farmers

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### **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/1lomJSqOY2Om0YKQWrLXblSef9e7HPcZT/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](mailto: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:** 30% 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 Rural Development Fund offers grants to help Kentucky farmers with energy projects. These cost share funds help farmers improve energy efficiency and to support renewable fuel production projects. The applicant is required to have a third party energy audit completed. This program can be combined with the USDA-NRCS Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to get up to 75% of a total project cost covered.

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e: [info@oak-ky.org](mailto:info@oak-ky.org) | p: 1.502.219.7378

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

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

Follow Along:

