



Registration for the 14th Annual OAK Conference is now open!

OAK is excited to open registration for its 2025 annual farming conference, January 23-25 at Kentucky State University's Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm in Frankfort! Join fellow farmers, ag professionals and local food system advocates for three days of engagement around this year's theme, *Grounded in Organics: From Soil to Market*.

Register before December 13 for early-bird pricing. Scholarships are available; [apply now](#).

[Learn More and Register HERE](#)

14th Annual OAK Conference Registration Now Open



Register at oak-ky.org

Upcoming Partner Opportunities

Lighten Your Mental Load with OAK's Production Program Bulk Ordering Opportunity for Vermont Compost

Planning season is nearing, and OAK's Organic Production Program is a great resource for farmers who want assistance creating, dialing in or troubleshooting a crop, cover crop or system plan. This service is available to experienced or beginning farmers across certified organic and conventional crop and livestock operations. OAK's Organic Production Specialist is available via phone, virtual meeting and on-farm consultations. **Order by December 1, 2024.** Fresh Start Growers Supply in Louisville, KY, offers this bulk ordering opportunity for farmers and growers to purchase collectively and save costs. To learn more about Vermont Compost products, visit [their website](#). Fresh Start pricing is [here](#). Payment is due at time of order unless otherwise agreed upon with Fresh Start. Pickup is in early to mid-January 2025 at [Fresh Start Growers](#), unless local delivery is arranged (with additional cost). For more information, contact Steve Paradis at 502-741-4806 or 502-442-7883.

[Request an Organic Production Consultation](#)

2025 Farmer-Led Trial Applications Open

OAK's Organic Production Specialist will collaboratively develop plans, help track progress and provide necessary follow-ups and referrals to help a farm reach desired production goals.

Applications for the 2025 season are open until December 1, 2024. The program is supported by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (KADF).

Are you an organic or transitioning farmer or rancher who wants to test out a new agricultural practice on your farm? The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF)'s Farmer-Led Trials (FLT) program provides farmers with funding and technical assistance to investigate and learn about solutions to their most pressing production challenges.

Support OAK in the Good Giving Challenge

In order to address the challenges certified organic and transitioning-to-organic producers face, OFRF's FLT program will provide support for on-farm learning trials aimed at testing new practices, inputs, varieties or animal breeds that can improve profitability and environmental sustainability, leading to OAK's biggest organic farms and the Blue Grass Community Foundation's Good Giving Challenge just around the corner! By supporting OAK, you're investing in a resilient food and farming network that ensures access to healthy, local food and a more sustainable Kentucky. Mark your calendars for December 3-6, 2024, and look for special match opportunities to make your December 12, 2024

KSU's Harold R Benson Research and Demonstration Farm, Frankfort, KY

Kentucky State University (KSU) has partnered with the University of Kentucky (UK), Kentucky Association for Environmental Education (KAEE), Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves (OKNP), Division of Forestry and Seiler Geospatial to conduct a 2-day symposium that will highlight natural areas practices and demonstrations, case studies and recent conservation projects. The symposium will focus on forest and pollinator habitat, land management practices, technology and remote sensing in natural areas and wildlife management. Agenda and pesticide CEU's coming soon!

Light breakfast, lunch, coffee and registration for \$50 for both days. Proceeds generated from registration will fund a scholarship for a student planning to pursue an education in natural resources.

More information on this coming at the start of the 2024 Habitat Management Symposium. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Upcoming In-Person Events

Scaling of Agroforestry Practices in Kentucky

November 25, 6 - 8 pm ET

Lil Jumbo Cafe, Maysville KY

This free public meeting, organized by agroforestry developer Propagate, will bring together key voices from local organizations, farmers & technical service providers, agricultural leaders, policymakers, and other stakeholders to explore collaborative strategies for expanding agroforestry and maximizing its potential for sustainable land management and farmland resilience in the region.

<https://www.propagateag.com/events/scaling-agroforestry-mason-county>

Kentucky Farm to School Summit

December 3 - 4, 2024

Hardin County Extension Office, Elizabethtown, KY

This gathering is for stakeholders across sectors who are interested in or working on farm to school activities across Kentucky. Those activities may be centered in the cafeteria, on the farm or in the classroom. Sessions at the summit will encompass all aspects of farm to school. The morning's activities will break out into sectors for sessions specific to farmers, school food professionals and classroom educators. The afternoon's activities will be a series of cross-sector roundtable discussions, with an emphasis on problem solving related to some of the challenges in farm to school. All day long, the Getting Started Track will offer sessions for those who are exploring interests in farm to school and/or are just getting started. The day will conclude with time for teams of partners to get together to compare notes from the day and identify any action planning ideas for their school or district.

[Learn more and register here.](#)

2025 Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference

January 6-7, 2025 with pre-conference events on Sunday, January 5

Marriott Lexington Griffin Gate, Lexington, KY

This premier, state-wide event annually brings together approximately 600 growers, researchers, and technical support providers. The conference is devoted to fruit, vegetable and cut flower production, handling, harvesting, marketing, storage and related topics.

[Registration and more information is here.](#) Beginning Farmer Scholarships Available!

The online and mail-in early bird registration price of \$80 per attendee ends on December 20, 2024. For more information about the conference, registration, or scholarships, email dakota@kyhortcouncil.org.

2025 Ohio State Organic Grains Conference

January 9-10, 2025

Sandusky, Ohio

The 3rd annual Ohio State Organic Grains Conference will be January 9-10, 2025, at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in Sandusky, Ohio. This event is managed by Ohio State University Extension and the OFFER program. Attendance for 2024 exceeded 240 and included farmers, suppliers, researchers, and educators from Ohio, Indiana, New York, Illinois, Michigan, and beyond. Read more about the 2024 event [here](#).

Early bird rate of \$140 lasts until December 6. Registration includes all meals during the conference and two full days of focused conference programming. [Register online](#). Attendee registration is now open. Unless you are a sponsor, please select general registration.

Practical Farm Woodland Management

January 17-19, 2024

The Berry Center Farm, Turners Station, KY

A three-day course providing landowners a practical approach to working with their woodlands. Includes pre-course connection and information gathering as well as post-course consultation. **Registration closes Monday, December 9.** Limit: 8 participants. [Learn more and register here](#).

Upcoming Virtual Events

PFAS, Sewage Sludge, & Farmlands Webinar

November 19, 4-5pm ET

Is sewage sludge laced with 'forever chemicals' contaminating U.S. farmland? Join Virginia Conservation Network and Potomac Riverkeeper Network on an informational webinar on PFAs found in sewage sludge being applied to Virginia farmlands. Our speakers will discuss the emerging issue described here in this [Virginia Mercury article](#) and open up for a Q&A session for attendees. This webinar features MOFGA's Public Policy Organizer, Bill Pluecker and Adam Nordell from Defend Our Health. [Register here](#).

(For Kentucky farmers interested in PFAS and related impacts to farms, environment and human health, check out the [PFAS session at OAK's January conference](#).)

Community Farm Alliance Kentucky Double Dollars Training

November 19, 6pm ET

Kentucky Double Dollars staff will host a webinar about how to prepare for joining the 2025 KDD program. [Register here](#). Learn about Kentucky Double Dollars [here](#).

Ask an Agroforester Webinar Series

Nov 19, 1:30pm ET - Who's Who in National Agroforestry

Nov 21, 1:30pm ET - Centering Racial Justice in Agroforestry

Nov 26, 1:30pm ET - Honey Locusts

Appalachian Sustainable Development's ["Ask an Agroforester" Webinar Series](#) is an opportunity to come together for a deep dive into detailed information about specific Agroforestry topics. Host Emilie Tweardy stewards deep conversations on emerging topics and perennial favorites. Bring your questions for our regional Agroforestry heroes and have an opportunity to get real answers from real professionals.

(For those interested in Agroforestry practices, check out the [Agroforestry workshops and session at OAK's January conference.](#))

In the Field and Edge Beneficial Insect Habitat Webinar

November 20, 2pm ET

Wild Farm Alliance is pleased to offer a [free 12-lesson virtual course](#) for PCAs, CCA, scouts, growers and other agricultural professionals about whole farm pest management. Covering the latest research, the sessions are given by experts in entomology, plant health, plant pathology, microbial pest control, ecology, avian pest control and whole farm management.

Engaging Farm Safety and Manure Management: Innovative Teaching Methods in Action

November 22, 2:30pm ET

The agricultural industry consistently has the highest risk for occupational injuries and fatalities. This session will share some proven techniques for making changes to farm safety practices and manure management that could positively impact generations to come. We will explore dynamic and interactive teaching methodologies that could be adapted for use in at your facility and in your training programs. These methods employ activity-based learning, where participants have the opportunity to learn, apply and discuss real-world scenarios in a safe environment. [Learn more or register here.](#)

Educational and Farming Support

Grants Available to Advance Recycling Infrastructure and Prevent Wasted Food

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced \$117 million for three separate funding opportunities to advance recycling infrastructure and boost food waste prevention education across the country. Two of the notices are for Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling grants – one funding opportunity for Tribes and intertribal consortia and another for [communities \(such as cities, counties, and parishes\)](#) across the country. The third notice is for [EPA's Recycling Education and Outreach grant program, focused on food waste prevention and composting](#). Applications due by December 20, 2024.

KY Master Naturalist Volunteer Program

Registration is now open and will close Dec. 8.

The Kentucky Master Naturalist Volunteer Program invites nature enthusiasts and conservation-minded individuals to apply for its 2025 spring cohort, offering a unique blend of online and hands-on learning opportunities focused on Kentucky's natural landscapes. <https://naturalist.ca.uky.edu/about>

Engage with Local County Committee Elections with Farm Service Agency

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mailed ballots last week for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) [county committee elections](#) to all eligible agricultural producers and private landowners across the country. Elections are occurring in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these committee members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. **Producers and landowners must return ballots to their local FSA county office or have their ballots postmarked by Dec. 2, 2024, for those ballots to be counted.** <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/about-fsa/county-committee-elections>

Community-Based Garden Support Available

Approximately \$1 million in funding is available from the [People's Garden Initiative](#) through USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, in partnership with The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) 2025 Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration program. The program will

fund projects that support community-based gardens promoting sustainable agriculture practices that benefit people and wildlife. Applications will be accepted until January 30, 2025.

Project must meet the People's Garden criteria:

- Join the People's Garden community by registering a garden at usda.gov/peoples-garden
- Grow the garden using sustainable practices that benefit people and wildlife
- Teach about gardening and resilient, local food systems

Priority will be given to projects that

- Educate and train local citizens, build diverse partnerships, foster local food systems and provide other socio-economic benefits
- Provide measurable ecological, educational and community benefits
- Support the conservation of fish, wildlife, and habitat, especially at-risk species including migratory birds and pollinators

For more information and instructions on how to apply, please see the [Request for Proposals](#). For more information about the People's Garden Initiative please visit [The People's Garden website](#).

Farm to Food System Guide Features Louisville's Change Today, Change Tomorrow

[“Farm to Food Assistance: A Model for Values-Based, Equity Centered Approaches to Transforming the Food System”](#) makes the case for how Farm to Food Assistance can contribute to the transformation of a food system from one that produces commodities and derives wealth for a few to one that produces food, health and wellbeing for all. We explore how values-based, equity-centered Farm to Food Assistance reveals and works to overcome the contradictions inherent in the food banking economy and delineate the core values and strategies that move the food assistance system from charity to justice. We also enumerate the most pressing challenges and offer recommendations for practitioners and supporters to advance the goals and outcomes of Farm to Food Assistance efforts across the county.

Fund-a-Farmer Grant Applications

Each autumn FACT opens up another round of [Fund-A-Farmer grants](#) to support high welfare, humane, pasture-based livestock and poultry farmers. Eligible projects are awarded to farmers transitioning away from confinement, improving pastures and generally improving the well-being of their food animals.

Applications are now [OPEN](#) but keep an eye on the calendar because they close December 8, 2024.

Read all about this year's Find-a-Farmer grants on the [website](#).

As funding allows, FACT also awards [scholarships](#) of up to \$400 for livestock and poultry farmers to attend educational events, including virtual events, to learn knowledge, skills and best practices related to humane animal management, business and farm finance, and/or value-added production processes.

Have an event in mind? Tell them about it on your [application!](#)

Towards a Federal Policy Platform To Support Farmers Faced with PFAS Contamination

MOFGA met with American Farmland Trust along with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), Maine Farmland Trust, Defend Our Health and other groups active in Washington, D.C. to discuss a federal policy platform to support farmers faced with PFAS contamination. This diverse group, representing national industry groups, environmental groups and everyone in between, was able to come to a strong consensus in support of the Relief for Farmers Hit with PFAS Act, addressing PFAS contamination from sludge and needed areas of PFAS research. Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners is urging farmers to support the [Relief for Farmers Hit with PFAS act](#).

(For Kentucky farmers interested in PFAS and related impacts to farms, environment and human health, check out the [PFAS session at OAK's January conference](#).)

Agroforestry Network Supports Knowledge-Sharing, Crowdsourcing

[The Agroforestry Regional Knowledge \(ARKx\) Exchange Network](#) is a peer-to-peer learning network where land managers/farmers, technical service providers, agricultural educators, business owners, non-

governmental organizations and universities can generate and share knowledge with one another to help promote agroforestry throughout the United States.

Add your Agroforestry Farm Profile, Agroforestry Project, Demonstration Site, or Planting Stock Nursery for the CatalyzingAgroforestry.org website [here](#). The purpose of these profiles is to highlight local, regional and national agroforestry practices, allowing for current and potential farmers, groups and others to explore these profiles by region and by practice.

Seeking Feedback from Black, Hispanic, Tribal Producers in Wholesale Markets

This project aims to understand the distinct technical assistance needs of Black, Hispanic, and Tribal producers when accessing and scaling into wholesale markets. "Technical assistance" refers to a range of services that provide farmers and ranchers with expert guidance, resources, and support related to farming practices, market access, and regulatory compliance. Responses from this survey will support identifying best practices, challenges, gaps, and associated issues to inform technical assistance providers, along with programs, policies, and institutions.

If you are a farmer or rancher who identifies as Black, Hispanic, or Tribal, selling wholesale now or in the past, or plan to access wholesale markets, we would like to invite you to take this online survey. The project is being conducted jointly by a team of researchers from Virginia Tech and the Illinois Institute of Technology. [Take the survey here](#).

Non-profit Boot Camp: Organizational Wellness, Self-Care, and Healing Justice

Recorded in 2019, Food Systems Leadership Network member and trainer, Reverend Christina Garza, shares tips and strategies for making self-care a priority in your life, encouraging workplace changes that support self-care, and provides an open space for healing justice. A must watch for those looking to bring organizational (and personal) wellness and resiliency into your daily practices. Christina is Founder and President of Garza Consulting, Inc and Senior Capacity Builder, Social Change Institute, Community Health Councils. [Register for the Boot Camp here](#).

Hurricane Relief Continues

From Appalachian RC&D Council: As a hub for farm and food systems work in East Tennessee, ARC&D has established the Resilient Farmer Fund and are accepting donations that will go directly to support farmers impacted by the Helene storm damage and flooding. They are working to solicit donations from a number of foundations, businesses and individuals with a goal to raise at least \$100,000 for immediate relief needs. The fund will help farmers and food producers survive in the face of existing storm damages and position themselves to thrive and grow more resilient in their farming operations in the face of potential future extreme storm events. Donate [here](#).

From TN Local Food: TN Local Food's Farmer Relief Fund is open and accepting applications from TN farmers who incurred damage. Donate [here](#).

From RAFI: Want to help farmers affected by climate disaster hurricanes Helene and Milton? Contribute to RAFI's Hurricane Farmer Relief Fund to provide critical, on-the-ground assistance. 100% of donation goes directly into farmer hands. Find out more [here](#).

From VA Cooperative Extension: Donations for Farmers Affected by Helene in Virginia - Southwest Virginia has had significant damages for farmers with some farmers who have had catastrophic damages, especially along the New River and Holston River. If you are interested in donating specific supplies such as hay, fencing, etc., please fill out the [form](#) to let their staff know of any materials or

services that you are willing to donate. Extension agents are working to assess farmer needs and the availability of donations.

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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