



Hello ##[Name | First]##,

Happy New Year and a warm, hearty welcome to 2023. It is January, the time to dig deeper into planning, place carefully curated seed orders, reflect on the year just passed and ponder the big hopes for the one ahead.

Winter is also the best time for learning and community connection! Have you registered for the 12th Annual OAK Conference in Frankfort on January 26-28, 2023? Everyone is looking forward to sharing three January days of deep learning and connection. Read on for details of the new for 2023 Pre-Conference half day workshops in addition to the full Conference. Don't forget, if you don't have time, you can register for single day attendance OR just a half day workshop. There are so many options! [Register today](#).

OAK Members, don't forget you receive **discounted registration** for this Conference and ALL OAK events. In addition to other Member benefits, you will not want to let your Membership lapse in the new year.

As you read about all of these opportunities, don't forget to check out the resources at the end of this newsletter where you can find new funding programs and an array of both virtual and in-person events.

Finally, please continue to support your local farmers and artisans in the new year. Local, organic foods and products keep us healthy and our communities thriving. Try searching the [OAK Find-a-Farm Directory](#) to find your farmer and source locally all year long!

Warmly,
Robin Verson
Membership and Communications Coordinator

REGISTER NOW FOR #OAK2023!
JANUARY 26-28, 2023
FRANKFORT, KY

Register Now

Organic Association of Kentucky

ANNUAL FARMING CONFERENCE



New for #OAK2023: SIX Pre-Conference Workshops!

You asked for it! We know you are looking for deeper learning on the topics that are critical to your farming operation. Ready to take you and your farming operation to the next level?

OAK is offering you just that opportunity with 6 immersive, exciting workshops offered on **January 26**. Check out these amazing half day workshops:

Growing and Selling Profitable Greens Year-Round *with Farmer/Farm Consultant Ray Tyler*

Join this half-day workshop with well-known master grower Ray Tyler as he teaches the art of growing diverse crops and selling 52 weeks a year in zone 7b. His unique growing system of growing on 1 acre of vegetables under a mix of low-tech caterpillar tunnels and high tunnels makes him a whopping \$500,000 a year.

Beyond Compost: Nutrient Budgeting for Small Organic Farms *with UK's Krista Jacobsen, and Grow Appalachia's Chris McKenzie*

Come learn how to develop your own nutrient budget for your farm and how to factor in cover crops, manure, compost, and other amendments into your nutrient plan.

Introduction to Forest Farming: Almost Everything You Wanted to Know but Were Afraid to Ask *with Appalachian Sustainable Development's Robin Suggs and Rural Action's Andrea Miller*

Imagine growing a profitable crop underneath a forest canopy! This workshop offers an introductory overview of forest farming in the Appalachian region.

Optimizing Your Farm Sales Funnel - Marketing Success! *with Farm Marketing Guru Corinna Bench*

Are customers and leads getting lost in your business? Do you have a repeatable marketing strategy that turns browsers into paying customers and repeat buyers? By the end of the workshop, you'll have a clear roadmap of what you need to improve to optimize your sales funnel this winter.

Is There a Grant for That? Focus On Your Farm Funding *Myrisa Christy and Cara Stewart - KCARD; Jamie Ponder - NRCS; Christopher McKenzie - Grow Appalachia; Joni Nelson - Kentucky State University; Melanie McPartlin - KY Dept of Agriculture; Bryce Baumann - Lazy Eight Stock Farm*

Funding opportunities can breathe life into a farm, whether at the start-up phase or in scaling-up systems and infrastructure. Working with funding providers and other farmers, you'll have a chance to determine the next steps to create the funding success your farm needs.

High Tunnelling to Profit: Managing Your Crops, Soils, and Structures *with OSU's Matt Kleinhenz, UT's Annette Wszelaki, and Kentucky Farm Consultant Paul Wiediger*

High tunnels provide an extension to the growing season that can boost income to year-round profits; raise crop yields and quality; and help support local food systems in every month of the year. This information-rich workshop will provide information, tools, and resources you need to grow for market, especially Fall through Spring.

[Register Here](#)

#OAK2023 is a not-to-miss event featuring Kentucky farmers, production deep dives, research highlights, food system innovations, market opportunities, and the expanding OAK network for 3 days of learning and growing together. This event is open to everyone. Register today and join the OAK Community in January 2023 at KSU's [Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm](#).

Registration is open and scholarships are available.

Scholarship requests for OAK's 2023 Conference will be reviewed and awarded by the middle of each month up until the event and as funds allow. Scholarships are only applied to the regular conference and Pre-Conference Workshops are not included at this time. We share gratitude with partners who make it possible to offer scholarships: Grow Appalachia, Kentucky State University and Johnny's Selected Seeds.

[Apply for a Scholarship Here](#)

#OAK2023 is packed with learning opportunities

Take a look at this incredible line up of speakers gathering for OAK's 12th Annual Conference in Frankfort, KY on January 26-28, 2023. Folks from near and far will come together to deliver relevant, timely and inspirational information for the greater community.

[Check out These Inspiring Voices in Sustainable Agriculture](#)

Join us for OAK Conference 2023: Rooted in Resilience: Growing Healthy Soils and Opportunities for Kentucky Organics. The Conference includes a growing audience of hundreds of Kentuckians and neighbors active in community food systems: farmers, researchers, nonprofit professionals, federal and state agency partners, allied service providers and conscious consumers working collectively to build a local, resilient and healthy food system. Enjoy keynotes, farm tours, 30+ sessions and 6 half day pre-conference workshops.

2023 Conference Sponsors, Partners & Funders



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Bringing the Good



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FARMING with your FEET on The EARTH
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We are grateful for the strong support from these 2023 partners and sponsors!

Is your OAK Membership about to expire?

Don't let that happen. In Fall of 2022 OAK transitioned to a new CRM and website. The shift has offered increased opportunity for community engagement, flawless interface between your OAK Membership and event registration (don't forget current OAK members get discounted registration to all OAK events).

If you had set up for auto-renewal on OAK's old site, you will have re-enter your details on the new site. Check your inbox, join or renew with OAK for 2023 and enjoy the new and easy way to connect with the greater OAK Community. If you have any questions about your membership, are struggling to navigate the new site, or just want to touch base, please email Robin@oak-ky.org.

Don't forget, the OAK community is an engaging group of farmers, eaters, ag professionals, entrepreneurs and more! From farmers who are using regenerative practices to those whose

farms have been certified organic for decades, we are folks committed to creating a healthier, more nourishing food landscape.

With Member Benefits from partnering businesses and organizations, like AcresUSA, [Ohio Earth Food](#), [Johnny's Seeds](#), [Chelsea Green Publishing](#), [Earth Tools](#), [Felco](#), and more, OAK Members receive product discounts and more! Active Members can now easily access those member discount codes on a newly published [Members Only Access page here](#).

Current OAK Members, don't forget to update your member profile, create new log in information and connect easily and fluidly with each other. If you have let your Membership lapse or have never taken the plunge to join OAK, now is the time! OAK is growing and working for an exciting future, join us. Be a part of the community working to nourish Kentucky.

[Join or Renew Today!](#)

Mark your calendars for OAK's Virtual Annual Meeting.

Join together with OAK Members, connect with the OAK Board and Staff and be inspired with guest speakers for this annual opportunity to gather virtually. Keep an eye on your inbox for the full event agenda and registration.



Board of Directors is Accepting Candidate Nominations

Are you interested to serve as a Board Member for the Organic Association of Kentucky? Do you know someone who is the perfect candidate for OAK's Board of Directors? OAK seeks candidates and is requesting your nominations. As a part of our community, you or someone you know may be the right person to bring their time and talent to serve in this important role. OAK's Board of Directors is selected by OAK membership each year and serves in 3-year terms. Nominations are still being accepted and OAK members vote for 3 candidates later in January and February.

[Read more about being a Board Member and make a nomination here](#)

CSA Farmers, Join Us for KY Proud CSA Week in 2023!

OAK is teaming up with fellow community partners to promote CSA (community supported agriculture) across Kentucky this coming February 20th-24th, 2023. We will be sharing all things local, seasonal, and CSA-related in the CSA in KY Facebook group that week. If you are offering a CSA share of some type and promoting it to Kentucky consumers consider taking part in this free promotion. Learn more and register by January 15th [HERE](#).



Interested to Go Organic?

We're here to help - for FREE! OAK's Transition Trainers will answer all your questions and work with you to refine techniques, implement best practices, demystify the regulations, develop recordkeeping systems and make a transition plan to help you apply for organic certification. Email us to learn more about process and how we help farmers have a successful certification experience.



Learn more about [OAK's Transition Trainer Program and apply to work with an Organic Transition Trainer today!](#) Questions? Contact brooke@oak-ky.org or 502-219-7378.

Opportunities, the Latest News & Calls to Action

Regional KY Water Testing Labs now available

Kentucky State University (KSU) has established regional water testing labs for farmers wishing to have their irrigation water sources tested. This is a voluntary program to help farmers become familiar with some of the water quality requirements that may be required under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The water tests are free to farmers, and results are available within 1 week of dropping off water samples at the regional testing lab. These results can supplement farmers' Farm Safety Plan, Agriculture Water Quality Plan (AWQP) and other relevant record keeping needs. Contact Kevin Gurtowski - kevin.gurtowski@ksu.edu or John Thomas - john.thomas1@ksu.edu for more information.

Want to scale up?

For direct market farmers, expanding your operation to capture local and regional wholesale markets can represent an opportunity. But such a shift brings with it many

changes to how you run your farm because the expectations that wholesale buyers have is much different than your direct market customers. [Scaling Up Your Vegetable Farm for Wholesale Markets](#), a free SARE publication, guides you through the likely changes you'll need to take into consideration when planning to branch out into wholesale markets. These include business planning, working with wholesale buyers, and areas of production that range from increasing yield and produce quality, to harvest and postharvest handling, food safety and more.

Financial and Tax Support

With the new year comes tax time, many farmers and small businesses are already starting to crunch numbers. Here are some useful links:

[Does the IRS consider my operation a Hobby Farm?](#)
[Rural Tax Education](#)
[Can I qualify for Kentucky Small Business Tax Credit?](#)

New Organic Food and Farming Report Details Policy Opportunities for Upcoming Farm Bill and Beyond

NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council), the Swette Center at Arizona State University (ASU) and Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) published a new report, featuring over a dozen organic farmers and ranchers across the nation and detailing the climate, economic and public health benefits of organic food and farming.

The report, [Grow Organic: The Climate, Health, and Economic Case for Expanding Organic Agriculture](#), provides a roadmap for lawmakers to unlock the potential of organic agriculture in the 2023 Farm Bill and beyond,

Educational & Farming Support

In-person Events Throughout the Region

Ohio Organic Grains Conference

January 4-5, 2023

Archbold, OH

Are you a current, transitioning, new-to organic grain farmer, or a crop consultant?

Register or view the conference agenda at www.go.osu.edu/organicgrainsreg or [read more details here](#).

Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference

January 2-4, 2023

Bowling Green, KY

OAK staff invite you to join this event. We'll see you in the Organic Production track.

[More details and registration here.](#)

International Grassland Conference

Save the Date: May 14-19, 2023

Covington, KY

Scholarships available and due by December 30, 2022

[More details and registration here.](#)

Virtual Events

Webinar Series: Small-Scale Growing and Marketing for Beginning Farmers

January 10, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Innovative Marketing Techniques

January 24, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Crop Production Systems

February 14, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Food Safety Practices

February 28, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Grains and Specialty Crops

March 7, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Producing and Marketing Cut Flowers

This is a five-part webinar series designed for beginner farmers that will provide education around small scale production and marketing. NCAT is one of the partners producing this series. [Find out more and register here.](#)

KY Food Action Network Upcoming Trainings

January 11, 2023 at 3:00pm EST **Advocacy 201** Register [Here](#)

January 25, 2023 at 3:00pm EST **Media Training** Register [Here](#)

Crunching Numbers on Agrivoltaics: Context and Costs of Agrivoltaics in the U.S.

January 18, 2023

This free webinar is the first in the AgriSolar Clearinghouse Webinar Series. In this episode, NREL's Jordan Macknick and James McCall will discuss the context and costs of agrivoltaics in the United States. [Register here.](#)

Vegetable Farms Becoming the Employer of Choice

Motivating and managing employees is essential to most diversified vegetable farms, and rare is the farmer who comes to farming with those labor management skills. Whether you have worked with employees for many years or are in the early stages of hiring staff, this series will give you practical tools to make your farm an employer of choice. Please note that this program is for all vegetable farm owners and for hired managers with at least 10 years of experience.

Be prepared to attend online sessions with your camera on and ready to engage in discussions with your farmer peers. [Space is limited - register here.](#)

5 January from 9-11 AM CT: Strategic Leadership

9 January from 4-6 PM CT: Developing a Motivated Workforce

12 January from 9-11 AM CT: Hiring the Right People

16 January from 4-6 PM CT: Employee Onboarding and Training

19 January from 9-11 AM CT: Farm Business Culture

23 January from 4-6 PM CT: Reviews and Feedback

30 January from 4-6 PM CT: Becoming an Ethical H-2A Employer

2 February from 9-11 AM CT: Developing Intercultural Competence for Farm Employers

6 February from 4-6 PM CT: Managing Conflict

Resources and Funding for Farmers

Largest REAP funding ever now available

Rural Energy for America Program - Grants and Guaranteed Loans

Eligible Entities: Farmers and rural businesses

Link: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-energy-audit-renewable-energy-development-assistance>

Overview: The REAP program helps agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and helps meet the Nation's critical energy needs. This program strengthens American energy independence by increasing the private sector supply of renewable energy and decreasing the demand for energy through energy efficiency improvements. Over time, these investments can also help lower energy costs for small businesses and agricultural producers.

Here are key highlights from the 2023 funding notice

The cost-share for grants for all technologies is raised to 40%.

Maximum grant levels have been increased:

Renewable energy: \$1,000,000

Energy efficiency: \$500,000

Maximum of all grants to any one entity: \$1,500,000

State Rural Development office allocations are being increased about five-fold.

Deadline to apply January 31, 2023

USDA announces assistance for on-farm food safety expenses for specialty crop growers

Application period closes: January 31, 2023

Apply at your local FSA office: <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.
- Food safety certification.
- Certification upload fees.
- Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.
- Training.

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>

USDA Offers Assistance to Protect Privately-Owned Agricultural Lands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages people and groups wanting to protect agricultural lands to consider enrolling their property into conservation easements.

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP - ALE) focuses on protecting and conserving productive agricultural lands. Landowners are compensated for enrolling their land in easements. Partners include state or local agencies and certain non-profits. Eligible lands include privately owned cropland, pastureland and forestlands. Landowners do not apply directly to NRCS for funding under this program. Applications from eligible entities for 2023 ACEP-ALE funding must be received by December 1, 2022 to be considered for the current funding cycle. Landowners who wish to be considered for ACEP-ALE must make application to an eligible entity.

Entities interested in agricultural easements should contact their [local USDA service center](#) or visit the [Kentucky NRCS ACEP-ALE website](#).

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: <http://kysu.edu/academics/cafsss/research-extension/small-scale-farm-grant-program/>

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

Link: <https://agpolicy.ky.gov/energy/Pages/default.aspx>

Overview: The Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund offers an On-Farm Energy Efficiency Program to help Kentucky farmers with energy projects. These cost share funds are available to increase on farm 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.

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?
resources



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