

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

Register today for the last chance at early bird pricing



#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. Take advantage of **early bird pricing through December 15th**, 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

Conference Agenda is Now Available

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.

[Get the full AGENDA here](#)

New for #OAK2023: SIX Pre-Conference Workshops!

Want to dig deeper into a topic that will 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**.

Take advantage of this third day of learning with the OAK community and register for pre-conference workshops along with the main conference. Note upon registering, there is an additional cost for this extra day of learning!

Year-Round Salad Greens with Farmer/Farm Consultant Ray Tyler

Nutrient Budgeting with UK's Krista Jacobsen, and Grow Appalachia's Chris McKenzie

Forest Farming with Appalachian Sustainable Development's Robin Suggs and Rural Action's Andrea Miller

Marketing with Farm Marketing Guru Corinna Bench

Funding Opportunities for Kentucky Farms with KCARD, KSU, KDA, NRCS, and more!

Maximizing High Tunnels with OSU's Matt Kleinhenz, UT's Annette Wszelaki, and Kentucky Farm Consultant Paul Wiediger

[Register here](#)

2023 Conference Sponsors, Partners & Funders



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



We are grateful for the strong support from these 2023 partners and sponsors!

Give the Gift of OAK

Have you considered how you can have the biggest and best impact on your community with this season's purchases? Did you know that buying locally builds a closer and stronger community? OAK's goal to build a healthier environment and community of farmers and eaters can be enhanced with your support this holiday season. Here are a few ideas as the season of gratitude and gifting unfolds.

Give the gift of [OAK membership](#). An annual membership will ensure the farmer or food advocate or ag professional in YOUR life will have access to the highest quality programming and support from the OAK team.

Give the gift of #OAK2022 [Conference Registration](#). With 4 full days of programming, regional and national experts, and countless opportunities for community engagement OAK's Virtual Conference is an incredible opportunity and a perfect present.

Many of OAK's Member Farms offer holiday necessities and seasonal delights. Use the [OAK Find-a-Farm](#) Directory to locate your nearest farmer and source locally! Everything from food to crafts to stocking stuffers, Kentucky's Farmers have it all!

Current OAK Members, don't forget jump into OAK's new website, 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 OAK Today!

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](#).



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 accepted now through the beginning of November and OAK members vote for 3 candidates in January and February.

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

Soil Health Strategies for the Southern Region - Organic Farming Research Foundation

Check out OFRF'S new, free course! The goal of this new course is to help the region's current and aspiring organic producers develop effective, site-specific soil health management strategies that support successful, resilient enterprises. [Soil Health Strategies for the Southern Region](#) builds on OFRF's popular series of guidebooks and webinars focused on organic farming and soil health.

Vermont Compost Bulk Order Deadline is TODAY

Fresh Start Growers Supply (Louisville) is organizing a bulk order from Vermont Compost again this year. Order and pay for Vermont Compost products before December 1st and receive discounted pricing on bulk (2 cubic yards) bags. To take advantage of the offer, simply email Steve@freshstartgrowers.com or call 502-442-7883 with the quantity of product that you want with delivery specifics. More details and pricing can be [found here](#).

Nationwide Farmer, Rancher and Forest Manager Prospective Customer Survey

This voluntary, anonymous survey will take about 10 minutes to complete and asks about your general views and interactions with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies

delivered by farm programs: Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA). The [survey](#) deadline is March 31, 2023

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.

Become a Council Member at the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council

For Boone, Campbell, Grant, Kenton County (and Ohio) friends:

If you are interested or involved in growing, distributing, studying, or selling food in this area, you belong with the Council!

As a Council Member, you will:

- inform the way our regional food system grows
- collaborate with other resident leaders
- learn from experts in the field

Application Deadline is December 31, 2022

Learn more and apply here: <https://forms.gle/kqTFDWEjdLjsSNDg9>

Investment to advance organic agriculture & support equity in farming

[The Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR) announced a \$1 million award to Tuskegee University to create an endowment to advance organic agriculture and farming practices through the university's College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences (CAENS). This award matches the \$1 million investment by Clif Bar & Company, for a total Tuskegee University endowment of \$2 million. Clif Bar & Company chose Tuskegee University for this endowment because of their demonstrated commitment to, and leadership in, organic agriculture in the Southeastern U.S., including their partnerships with other Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to advance organic practices.

The growth of organic farming lacks regional and racial diversity, which is compounded by funding inequality. A 2022 [Forbes](#) article outlined significant funding disparities at the nation's Black land-grant universities compared to their predominantly white

counterparts over the last three decades. Furthermore, the latest [U.S. Census of Agriculture](#) indicates that of the 30,909 certified organic farms in the U.S., only 5% are Black-owned. Through financial inequality and a lack of representation, farmers in the Southeastern U.S. have lacked access to organic agriculture research that could increase production and improve soil health.

USDA Requests Public Input on Implementation of Inflation Reduction Act Funding

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will use the investments provided through IRA-funded conservation programs to support farmers and ranchers in adopting and expanding climate-smart activities and systems. NRCS asks for comments on how to target program benefits, quantify impact, and improve program delivery and outreach, especially for underserved producers. Comments are due Dec. 21, 2022. NRCS will identify immediate changes that can be made in fiscal year 2023 and will continue to identify and adopt additional changes in future years. [More details and links to comment are here.](#)

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.

Year End Financial and Tax Support

With the end of 2022 just around the corner, 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

Use Your Numbers to Assess Profitability and Full Cost of Production

December 19, 2022 at 9 am - 12 pm ET

Registration is now open for this three-part winter course from OEFFA with farm consultant Ellen Polishuk of [Plant to Profit](#)! This course will build on the material covered in the introductory sessions in January and March 2022 (available [here](#)). Take a deep dive into your numbers from the season to understand your farm's costs of production and calculate fair prices and wages. [Register here](#)

Guide to Entrepreneurship Online Coaching

December 15

Because farming is more than just growing crops / raising livestock... The Kentucky Small Business Development Center is offering free, online "Guide to Entrepreneurship" group coaching sessions. The curriculum covers the basic steps to starting a business - forming a marketable idea, assessing your competitors, writing a business plan, securing financing, and registering the business. Register at:
<https://www.louisvillesmallbusiness.com/workshops>

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](#)

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

OFRF New Spanish-language course coming in 2023!

OFRF's free online Spanish-language course, coming Summer 2023, will delve into the world of soil and explain how you can promote soil health as part of a healthy ecosystem for humans, plants and other organisms that live within the soil. This course is being developed with the help of partners at UC Davis's Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program (UC SAREP), the Agriculture and Land-based Training Association (ALBA), and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT).

A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

This new multi-agency guide for USDA assistance for underserved farmers and ranchers, is available online from USDA. If you are a farmer or rancher and are a minority, woman, veteran, beginning, or limited-resource producer, you can use this 40-page booklet to learn about assistance and targeted opportunities available to you. This includes programs offered through the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency. The guide is also available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, and Chinese.

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>

EKY Flood Damage Farm Equipment Program

A program for commercial farmers to repair/refurbish small-scale farm equipment damaged during the floods. If you would like to donate to this program, please send an email to info@kyhortcouncil.org. [Learn more and apply here](#)

Developing Shearer & Mentor Grant

Deadline: January 1, 2023

Link to Apply: <https://www.sheepusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2023-Developing-Shearer-Mentor-Grant-Application.pdf>

The American Sheep Industry Association's Wool Council has developed a grant program to incentivize the development of domestic shearers.

This grant program will support developing shearers – \$500 up front and \$1,000 at the conclusion – as they work to increase the quality of their shearing. Additionally, as the mentor provides the developing shearer with knowledge and an avenue to shear – thereby sharing their work and income and slowing the number of operations they can shear – mentors are also supplemented with \$1,500 at the conclusion of the grant.

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.

Rural Energy for America Program - Grants and Guaranteed Loans

Funding Amount: \$1,500 to \$500,000 (25% of the total project cost)

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: USDA Rural Development offers REAP grants and grant/loan combos to help agricultural producers and rural businesses install renewable energy systems and do efficiency upgrade projects. A grant only application can pay up to 25% of total project costs. A grant/loan combo can fund up to 75% of total project costs. Guaranteed loan only applications do not have an application or funding deadline to be processed. Some project examples include: lighting efficiency, heating efficiency, bio-energy, solar energy, and dairy ventilation upgrades. An energy assessment or audit is required as part of the application process. If you are interested, you need to inquire as soon as possible. The October 31 due date prioritizes "restricted" or smaller projects that have total project cost of \$80,000 or less (and are requesting \$20,000 or less in grant funds). Fall is the best time for small projects to apply!

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



Stay in touch:

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