



Hello ##[Name | First]##,

Hello March. February blew in and out with high winds and now here we are. The OAK Team is thrilled for what lies ahead. OAK's Executive Director is headed to DC this month to amplify the voice of Kentucky farmers, cheer her on and continue reading to learn more about how your voice can be heard.

OAK Members. [Register](#) now for **tomorrow's Virtual Annual Membership Meeting** at 5:30pm ET. Plan to join the OAK Community for organizational updates and opportunities to connect with each other all from your own home via Zoom. Continue reading below for more details about using your OAK Member Benefits including an all new [Classifieds Page](#). Don't forget to update your profile page on [OAK's Find-a-Farm Directory](#).

With OAK's 12th Annual Conference behind us, the final touches are being made to the 2023 [Farmer Field Day Schedule](#). You will not want to miss these opportunities to gather at Kentucky Farms across the state and learn together. #OAK2023 Conference Attendees, check your inbox. Recorded content is now available and instructions to access it has been sent to you.

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. 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



Spotlight On Coleman Crest Farm: Kentucky's First African American Owned Certified Organic Vegetable Farm

In July 2022, Coleman Crest Farm became the first African American owned certified organic vegetable farm in Kentucky.* As an organization that recognizes how our country has held long-standing policies that marginalize, displace and oppress Black, Indigenous and immigrant communities and people of color, OAK honors Jim Coleman's commitment to achieving this certification and upholding the organic practices for current and future goals.

Jim was raised in Fayette County on his family's farm, Coleman Crest, which was originally purchased by his great grandfather, James Coleman, on March 27, 1888 after he and his family had tilled the farm under enslavement. After the passing of his wife of 37 years, Cathy, in April 2020, Jim relocated to Lexington to restore Coleman Crest Farm and his heart. Jim rapidly restored the Farm to achieve three primary functions: achieve certified organic crop production, serve as an incubator farm for aspiring farmers and welcome visitors as an agritourism site. Jim's long-term vision for Coleman Crest is to preserve the farm for future generations of his family, for the health of the ecosystem and for aspiring farmers.

[Coleman Crest Farm](#) currently has 3 acres of certified organic vegetables and flowers in production, serving markets and restaurants throughout Fayette County. OAK was honored to work with Coleman Crest Farm through the Organic Transition Trainer Program (read more below). **Mark your calendars for July 25**, when we'll visit the Farm for an OAK Farmer Field Day. Registration opens later this month at oak-ky.org/field-days

Congratulations again, Jim and Coleman Crest Farm staff, for your organic certification! We know you achieved it with lots of hard work and a deep love for your farm.

**Based on OAK's experience, narrative feedback from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) and USDA's Organic Integrity Database (which do not collect demographic data).*

OAK 2023 Farmer Field Days Start This Month!



**Developing a Farm Food Safety Plan:
Stop Running the Risk!**
March 21, 2023, 10-11am ET | March 28, 2023, 6-7:30pm ET

Join this two-part virtual workshop to learn the basics of developing a farm Food Safety Plan to reduce risks, minimize costs, and improve efficiency in your farm's operation.

- Learn the content and structure of a farm Food Safety Plan from Bryan Brady (UK's Food Connection),
- Hear from two KY farmers on developing and implementing their Plans,
- Work with food safety plan templates and log sheets to build a Plan that fits your unique operation.

Registration is required and covers both virtual events.
\$5 OAK Members; \$10 Non-Members; FREE scholarship option available.
oak-ky.org/field-days or (502) 218-7378 to register



The Organic Association of Kentucky's (OAK) Field Days are on-farm and virtual learning opportunities for farmers, ag professionals and local food system advocates. OAK welcomes farmers from all types and scales of farms - large and small scale, organic and conventional, urban and rural.

We're launching this year's schedule of monthly on-farm and farmer-focused field day events with you in mind! From low-cost infrastructure to Food Safety to pastured livestock and more to come, we'll bring topics into the field and gather farmers and ag professionals to build skills, community, and success for our Kentucky farms and farmers. Join us!

Developing a Farm Food Safety Plan - Stop Running the Risk!

w/ Bryan Brady, The Food Connection at UK

Virtual Events on Zoom: March 21, 2023, 10-11am ET and March 28, 2023, 6-7:30pm ET

(see image above for details)

Growing Under Cover on a Market Vegetable Farm

Pavel's Garden -- Crestwood, KY -- April 13, 2023, 1-4 pm ET

Pastured Livestock for Soil Health

Faul Family Riverside Farm -- Sulphur, KY -- May 9, 2023, 1-4pm ET

In development - save the date!

Cedar Ring Greens -- Frankfort -- June 20, 2023, 1-4pm ET

Coleman Crest Farm -- Lexington -- July 25, 2023, 9am-noon ET

Rains and Sun Farm -- Independence -- September 19, 2023, 1-4pm ET

More to come!

Farmers, meet up with other farmers and agricultural professionals on working farms to see organic systems in action. Share your successes and your challenges with peers and connect with useful resource providers. View

previous OAK virtual events on our [OAK YouTube](#) page for recordings, snapshots and lessons learned from host farmers. Have suggestions or ideas for future farms, practices or topics to highlight? Reach out to Jenny@oak-ky.org

Learn More and Register for 2023 Field Days

#OAK2023 Recordings Now Available!

Registered participants and attendees of our January 2023 conference can now access speaker presentations, recordings, handouts and related resources on the 2023 Conference Content website. Access to the content requires login to your OAK profile; watch your inbox for an email with all the details.

Thanks again to our entire #OAK2023 community of speakers, participants, volunteers, sponsors and exhibitors for a remarkable shared learning experience!

Current OAK Members: Don't Forget Your Member Perks and Tomorrow's Virtual Membership Meeting

OAK's new website offers incredible 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). Hot off the press: OAK has just unrolled another Member Only Benefit, **a classified page!** Do you need to advertise that piece of farm equipment that no longer serves you? Are you looking for employees for the season ahead? OAK Members can place any number of appropriate listings on the Classified Page - for free. Anyone can view listings! Use this submission form and let OAK help you spread the word.

OAK Members submit a Classified Ad here

Ordering seed? Need more soil amendments or tools? Don't forget OAK offers 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 any questions about your membership, are struggling to navigate the new site, or just want to touch base, please email Robin@oak-ky.org.

OAK Members, mark your calendars for **OAK's Annual Member Meeting: March 2, 2023, 5:30-7pm, online. Register [here](#).**

Join together with OAK Members, connect with the OAK Board and Staff and be inspired with the greater OAK Community at this annual opportunity to gather virtually.



[Register here for OAK's Virtual Membership Meeting](#)

Not a Member? Join OAK Today!

[Join or Renew Today!](#)

Join the OAK community! We are 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.

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.

Food and Farm Policy - Share Your Priorities

Every five years, Congress passes legislation that sets national agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry policy - and all the funding for these programs - commonly referred to as the "Farm Bill". 2023 is a Farm Bill year and the Senate and House Agriculture Committees are gearing up for many months of hearings, marker bills and drafting this historic piece of legislation. With mid-term elections, it is unlikely that full 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization will happen by the October 1st deadline.

If you are looking for an introduction to the Farm Bill or want to read up on sustainable and organic agriculture farming priorities, check out the resources on OAK's new Policy page. You can also share your ideas on Farm Bill priorities through a survey on the

website! Stay connected to updates and opportunities to get involved by signing up for OAK's Policy Newsletter.

Learn more about the Farm Bill and Share YOUR Priorities

OAK's Executive Director, Brooke Gentile, will be in Washington DC this month to share Farm Bill priorities with our representatives. She'll be discussing the need to fund organic and conservation practices, to invest in organic research and support local markets. Brooke will be participating in the Organic Farmers Association's meetings throughout the week and will be joining the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and farmers for the Climate Action Rally for Resilience in DC on March 7th to bring Kentucky stories to our lawmakers in Washington.

Use the OAK Find-a-Farm Directory

Spring is almost here. Now is the perfect time for community members to connect with local farms in their area. There are over 30+ CSA farms on the OAK Find-A-Farm Directory. Local eaters, please check out their offerings by selecting the "Find a CSA" box to browse options OR search OAK member farms in your area by simply typing in your zip code to get a full list of family farms near you!

OAK Member Farmers, **UPDATE** your profile page on the Directory. The OAK Staff is hard at work developing Spring Find-a-Farm Directory promotion. If you have any questions or need help updating your profile, please reach out to Robin@oak-ky.org.

Search the OAK Directory



Interested in Going 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

Farmers balancing children and work survey

The American Farm Bureau Federation has included the need to support rural childcare access in its 2023 policy priorities for the Farm Bill. In addition, two U.S. senators have drafted a bill to support childcare through the Farm Bill with bi-partisan support. To help inform farm organizations and legislators in their activities, we are hoping to hear from as many farmers and ranchers as possible who are raising children 0 to 18 to participate in an online survey. The survey asks about your families' experiences of taking care of children (age 0 to 18) while also working on and off the farm/ranch. The survey is open to part time and full time farmers and their partners operating in rural, urban, or suburban areas.

Participants have the option to enter a raffle for one of fifty \$50 checks.

To fill out the 15 to 20 minute survey, visit this link:

https://redcap.link/Survey1_FarmersRaisingChildren

For questions or to request a paper survey, contact Florence Becot at 715-389-9379 or becot.florence@marshfieldresearch.org

The Healthy Farm and Food Innovation Fund has officially been introduced into the 2023 Kentucky General Assembly!

Community Farm Alliance announced some exciting news! The Healthy Farm and Food Innovation Fund has officially been introduced into the 2023 Kentucky General Assembly! House Bill 384 will build upon Kentucky's current momentum, creating stability and opportunities for direct farm impact food access programs— such as Kentucky Double Dollars, Farms to Food Banks, and Fresh RX for MOMs—and pave the way for additional new efforts that support the vitality of Kentucky agriculture and the health of Kentuckians.

Now CFA needs YOU! Take 5 minutes to call the legislative message line to leave a message for your state representative! Call 1-800-372-7181 to leave a message. You can

leave your own message, but feel free to use the script below.

HOUSE BILL 384

SUPPORT

Healthy Farm and Food Innovation Fund

Kentucky Grown for Kentucky Homes

House Bill 384 would create a structured state fund capable of receiving state, federal, and private philanthropy funds to help Kentucky address food and nutritional security.

Applicants to the fund are required to use KY grown products, helping put money back into the pockets of farmers and expanding their businesses.

HB 384

TAKE ACTION!

Contact your state representative! Call the legislative message line to leave a message!

1-800-372-7181

Tell your state representative to support House Bill 384 to help farmers and address food insecurity!

USDA Nationwide Survey for Prospective Farmers, Ranchers and Forest Managers

[Take this very important survey](#) by March 31, 2023! 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). All farmers, ranchers and forest managers are encouraged to take the survey. Existing customers and prospective customers both provide unique perspectives they'd like to hear. They'd especially like to hear from a new audience this year of prospective customers, those who don't know about USDA farm programs or have yet to work with them, and those who were unable to participate in the past.

Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award Seeks Nominees

Are you a Kentucky farmer or forester who improves soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on your working land? Apply for the 2023 Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award®.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 25 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. In Kentucky, the \$10,000 award is presented annually with the Kentucky Agricultural Council and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may apply themselves. The application can be found at www.sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA.

The application deadline date is April 1. The committee prefers application materials to be sent electronically. Applications can be emailed to colemansteve51@gmail.com or postmarked by April 1, and mailed to: Leopold Conservation Award c/o Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts P.O. Box 4027 Frankfort, KY 40604-4027 [Learn more here](#)

Educational & Farming Support

In-person Events Throughout the Region

Indiana Small Farm Conference

March 2-3

Danville, IN

[More information here.](#)

2023 Kentucky Black Farmers Conference

March 3-4, 2023

Knically Conference Center (Western Kentucky University)

[Registration is here.](#)

Come and say hi to Robin at the OAK booth!

Bluegrass Greensource Sustainability Summit

March 7-8, 2023

University of Kentucky - Lexington, KY

Join this 3rd annual Sustainability Summit, presented by Toyota Tsusho, at the University of Kentucky Gatton Student Center. This 2-day event will feature a variety of speakers focusing on the intersection of Climate Resiliency and Environmental Justice in Central Kentucky.

[Find out more and register here.](#)

Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA): PSA Grower Training Course

March 7, 2023 Louisville, KY

[Register Here](#)

Training materials, trainer fees, and certification through AFDO upon successful completion of the training are covered by University of Kentucky, Food Systems Innovation Center CAP grant in partnership with Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

NRCS Field Day Series

March 15, 2023, 8:30am - 2:30pm Central Time

Knob Hill Farm, Breckenridge County KY

Hosted by Keith McKenzie of Knob Hill Farm, this event is the first of three NRCS Field Days in this series and will offer farm demonstrations, local and state resources from USDA; soil test and rain simulator demonstrations and more. Morning coffee and donuts and lunch are provided. [Register here](#) for this free event.

Bringing the Farm to School: Producer Training Program at Morehead State

March 20, 2023 AT 2 PM – 6 PM

This training will teach farmers how to approach a food service director, the ins-and-outs of selling to schools, what products are generally most suitable for the school market, and more.

This event will take place at the Morehead State University Derrickson Agricultural Complex in the Arena Classrooms (25 MSU Dr., Morehead, KY 40351).

[Register here.](#)

Questions? Contact the KY Farm to School Network at KYF2Snetwork@gmail.com or Dr. Skidmore (MSU) at a.skidmore@moreheadstate.edu

Mental Health in the Ag and Farming Community

March 28, 2023 - 10 am to 4 pm. ET

Helen King Alumni Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington KY

This 5th annual Intercultural Awareness Day is centered on mental health in the agriculture and farming community.

The program will be keynoted by Dr. Cheryl Witt from the University of Louisville, host a farmer panel, and engage attendees in the agricultural community with QPR for farmers and farm families.

[Register here](#) for this free event.

Questions can be directed to Dr. Kendriana Price, kendriana.price@uky.edu

Kentucky Local Food Systems Summit

March 29, 2023

University of Kentucky

Join a full day of workshops, networking, and conversations designed to bring together local food professionals and advocates who work on the front lines of growing our local food and farm economy. The Summit will bring together local food systems practitioners from across Kentucky to share challenges, opportunities, best practices, and build capacity for our local/regional food economy.

[Find out more and register 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

Growing Hope: Practical Tools for a Changing Climate

Join NCAT's third annual national conference! This free virtual convening will feature renowned speakers and showcase farm stories that make the connection between our changing climate, healthy soils, and farm productivity and resilience.

Find all the details about speakers and topics for each session at their website:

<https://attra.ncat.org/annual-conference/>

Mar 2, 2023 12:00 PM

Mar 7, 2023 11:00 AM

Mar 9, 2023 12:00 PM

Mar 14, 2023 11:00 AM

Mar 16, 2023 12:00 PM

Discovering Resilience Online Workshop

Farmers: Ever wonder if your farm is at risk because of a lurking legal problem? Do you wish you knew where to turn for the answers?

Discovering Resilience is a legal workshop designed just for you. You'll walk away from this five-session, highly interactive, and producer-focused workshop ready to implement your own legal action plan and find legal answers with confidence.

March 2: Farm Law as Your Creative Power

March 9: Organize Your Farm Business for Legal Success

March 16: Growing a Legally Resilient Workforce

March 23: Access Farmland with Legal Confidence

March 30: Diversify Farm Enterprises Without Adding Legal Risk

Registration fee required; BIPOC scholarships available. More info here:

<https://farmcommons.org/product/dr-spring-2023/>

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

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

This is the last of 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.](#)

Third Annual Agriculture Direct Marketing Summit

March 13-14 6PM ET

[Get your free tickets here](#) and follow the [Facebook event here](#) to get the latest agenda updates.

Ramp Cultivation Webinar

Friday, March 17, 2023 11 AM | Virtual

Learn about the history, cultivation, and many uses of this important and delicious native plant. Ramps are typically harvested from wild populations, but can be sustainably cultivated in your forest!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ramp-cultivation-webinar-tickets-541136071557>

Sustainable Ag Webinar with No-Till Growers' Jackson Rolett

March 23, 2023 at 6:30pm ET/5:30pm CT

Join to learn about implicating appropriate or no-tillage, cover cropping, & mulching in small-scale market gardens.

[Find out more and register here.](#)

Resources and Funding for Farmers

[USDA Develops Simplified Direct Loan Application to Improve Customer Service](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed a simplified direct loan application to provide improved customer experience for producers applying for loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The simplified direct loan application enables producers to complete a more streamlined application. Producers will also have the option to complete an electronic fillable form or prepare a traditional, paper application for submission to their local FSA farm loan office. The paper and electronic versions of the form will be available starting March 1, 2023.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making available up to \$7.5 million for grants through its **Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP)**.

The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects.

[A pre-recorded webinar on Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants](#) | [USDA](#) provides an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application.

Deadline to apply March 27, 2023

Silvopasture and Forest Farming Support / Funds Available

The Catalyzing Agroforestry Grant Program is focused on implementing silvopastures and forest farming practices through direct support payments and will assist producers in designing appropriate projects using technical assistance and science-based planning strategies. The ultimate goal of the effort is to increase ecosystem sustainability and diversity by scaling up agroforestry practices. The Appalachian Beginning Forest Farming Coalition (ABFFC) project will provide up to \$1500/acre for silvopasture implementation and up to \$1000/quarter acre for forest farming implementation depending on project scale and scope. To enhance shared learning, producers who receive support will share successes and lessons-learned with their peers and other interested stakeholders. Minority, female, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and/or socially disadvantaged farmers are highly encouraged to apply.

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/emef>

Slow Food Bluegrass Garden Grant

Deadline: ongoing

Link: <http://www.slowfoodbluegrass.org/gardens>

Slow Food Bluegrass micro-grants support groups in Kentuckiana who foster education about and access to good, clean, fair food. Special priority is given to limited resource communities and to projects that demonstrate a strong buy-in from participants. Grants range from \$500 - \$1,000 and may be awarded throughout the year. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach us at slowfoodbluegrass@gmail.com.

KSU Small Scale Farm Grant

Deadline: The 1st day of every other month

Funding Amount: Up to \$5,000 for farmers, \$15,000 for groups benefiting multiple farmers

Eligible Entities: Kentucky farmers and Kentucky agriculture groups including farmers markets

Link: <http://ksu.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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