



Hello ##[Name | First]##,

Hello April. Team OAK is thrilled with the spring eating, those first nibbles of radishes and fresh greens and the opening of seasonal local markets. For those of us that eat locally year round, these first tastes of the season unfurling are a true delight. Yummy.

April brings with it the opportunity for in person learning and gathering with OAK's [Farmer Field Days](#). Read on for registration details and a stellar calendar of events, including a chance to get together in Crestwood, KY following the Field Day on April 13 for a [OAK social meetup](#).

**OAK Members**, continue reading below for more details about using your OAK Member Benefits including an all new [Classifieds Page](#). **Add your Ad**. As the local market season really ramps up this month, OAK's Spring Directory promotion will unroll. Folks are going to be directed to [OAK's Find-a-Farm Directory](#) so plan to get your profile page updated.

OAK's Executive Director spent some early March days in D.C. Read on for details about Brooke's time on the Hill along with calls to action as this Farm Bill year unrolls.

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.

Team OAK is grateful for each of you and your contributions to our region's food and farming system. Spring is here, officially, and while the weather might still be unpredictable, we are excited to march ahead into the vibrant seasons ahead together.

Warmly,  
Robin Verson  
Membership and Communications Coordinator

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**Farmer Profile: Pavel Ovechkin**



Since 2007, Pavel's Ovechkin has farmed on leased acreage from Foxhollow Farm in Oldham County. In 2011, Katie joined Pavel, creating [Pavel's Garden](#) as it operates today, a 1.5-acre market garden serving the Louisville and Cincinnati communities through farmers markets, an online store and a limited number of Community Supported Agriculture Shares (CSA).

Pavel Ovechkin comes to his love of farming thanks to childhood tasks of berry picking, collecting potato beetles (for pest suppression) and double digging garden beds as a child in Russia at the country dacha. As a dedicated student of the land since those early life experiences, Pavel believes it is vital to never stop observing, learning and evolving. He finds every year of farming allows him improvement in soil management, crop rotation and efficiency. And you won't find him double-digging anymore... convinced that the farm is a living organism, he and Katie practice minimal tillage, natural growing methods such as crop rotations and cover cropping, biodynamic practices including herbal sprays and preparations, and organic practices that avoid conventional fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

Katie got her start in gardening by [WWOOFing](#) on a small organic farm in the South Island of New Zealand. Katie recently joined Pavel full-time on the farm and has plans for her own cut flower production in the near future. She also draws inspiration preparing family and farm community meals from the dozens of crops they produce at Pavel's Garden.

Together, Pavel and Katie produce year-round bounty from their market garden, making use of 5 caterpillar tunnels and a high tunnel to provide weather protection and crop protection. This covered production will be the



primary focus of OAK's April Field Day at Pavel's Garden, allowing participants to hear and see the creative ways Pavel is using, modifying and improving the low-cost infrastructure to increase the quality and profitability from his plants. He'll also share challenges and lessons learned, talk through tools and supplies and where he's sourcing them, and highlight his intercropping innovations and crop selection choices.

Spots are limited for this April 13 event, and registration is required.

Register Now for OAK's April Farmer Field Day at Pavel's Garden

## Join OAK's Social Meet up on April 13 in Crestwood, KY



Are you curious about OAK? We are an engaging group of farmers, eaters, ag professionals, entrepreneurs and more! If you are interested in mingling with folks who are committed to creating a healthier, more nourishing food landscape, then plan to join OAK Staff and community members for an informal social gathering at [3rd Turn Oldham Gardens](#) in Crestwood. It will be a perfect time to meet old friends and make new connections. Save the date and plan to meet us for an evening of fun and friendship.

**ALL ARE WELCOME.** There is no charge to attend, and food or drink is available for purchase from 3rd Turn Oldham Gardens. Already registered for OAK's "FARM FIELD DAY: Growing Under Cover on a Market Vegetable Farm" at Pavel's Garden in Crestwood, KY? Please plan to pop over and join us for a drink or dinner or just plain fun.

RSVP and Share with a Friend

## Register Now for a 2023 OAK Farmer Field Day



Check out this year's schedule of monthly on-farm and farmer-focused field day events! From low-cost infrastructure to pastured livestock and so much more, 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!

### **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

### **Integrating Sustainability in a Solar Farmhouse and Organic Market Garden**

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

### **Restoring the Family Farm with Organic Production**

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

### **CSA Production, Packing and Planning**

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](mailto:Jenny@oak-ky.org)

Learn More and Register for 2023 Field Days

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## Current OAK Members: There is a Brand New Classified Page

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

## Don't Forget Your Member Perks

Ordering seed? Need more soil amendments or tools? Don't forget OAK offers Member Benefits from partnering businesses and organizations, like AcresUSA, [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](mailto:Robin@oak-ky.org).

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## 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.



## OAK Returns from The Hill

OAK's Executive Director, Brooke Gentile, traveled to Washington D.C. last month urging Congress to take up climate action in the next Farm Bill and proclaiming that organic practices are a win for Kentucky farmers. Brooke serves on the Organic Farmers Association (OFA) Governing Council. Together with the OFA Policy Council and farmers from across the country, a group of over 25 people met with members of Congress and USDA staff through 50 meetings in 2 days. The group seized opportunities to share stories from farmers that illustrated why organic priorities need to be present in the Farm Bill. In Washington D.C. these farmers and food systems changemakers joined others for the Farmers for Climate: Rally for Resilience organized by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), Heal Food Alliance and many other organizations and advocates. [Read about the rally here.](#)



## Farm Bill 2023

The federal Farm Bill is reauthorized by Congress roughly once every five years. The current Farm Bill expires in September 2023. This means that we have a twice-in-a-decade opportunity to advocate for a new Farm Bill that invests in environmental conservation, advances food justice, and confronts climate change. This legislation has an enormous impact on farmers' livelihoods and how the U.S. food system operates. The Farm Bill influences who farms and where, what production methods farmers use, and how profitable farm businesses are across farming and food systems. The Farm Bill also influences who can access nutrition assistance, the safety of our air and water, and the stability of rural jobs and economies.

**Curious to learn more about all twelve titles in the Farm Bill and what they include?**

- Read about the Farm Bill in this overview from NSAC [here](#).
- Watch the Community Farm Alliance (CFA) recorded webinar [here](#) to gain an understanding of the Farm Bill “big picture” and the breakdown of Farm Bill titles.

### **Interested in reading up on organic and sustainable agriculture priorities for the Farm Bill?**

- Organic Farmers Alliance (OFA) Farm Bill priorities [here](#).
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) Farm Bill Priorities [here](#).
- Share your Farm Bill priorities with OAK [here](#).

### **Has your farm or community benefited from any of the following Farm Bill programs?**

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Working Lands programs, such as: Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Farm Service Agency loans, such as: Direct Farm Ownership loans or Ownership or Operating Microloans
- Local Agriculture Market Program such as Value-added producer grants or Local Food Promotion Program, Farmers Market Promotion Program and Regional Food Systems Partnership
- Nutrition Assistance programs, such as: SNAP or Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Rural Energy for America program
- SARE research grants

And so much more! If you’ve participated in a mentorship program, research project, or regional food system initiative, there’s a chance funding for that program can be traced back to the Farm Bill! The Farm Bill hasn’t been perfect, and we have an opportunity to advocate for the programs that can support small farms and our local food systems.

### **Take Action!**

Tell Congress how the 2023 Farm Bill can support a more equitable and sustainable future. The U.S. House Agriculture Committee and the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee are gathering feedback about how the current Farm Bill is (or isn’t) working.

### **Share your insights and recommendations through these online forms:**

- [2023 Farm Bill Feedback | House Agriculture Committee](#) (note that organic practices largely fall under: Title II - Conservation and Title X - Horticulture)
- [Farm Bill Input | Senate Committee On Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry](#)

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**Looking for Farm-Fresh Items this April?**



**You Can't  
Beet Local.**

Now is the perfect time to find locally-sourced asparagus, spring greens, radishes, lamb, and more in Kentucky! We don't think you can "beet" it. Search the OAK directory to find a farm near you, look for specific items, or find where to pick it up.

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](mailto: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!](#)



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## Opportunities, the Latest News & Calls to Action

### Farmers: Share Your Thoughts on Cover Crops in the National Cover Crop Survey!

Farmers are invited to share their thoughts on cover crops in an online survey at [bit.ly/CoverCrop23](https://bit.ly/CoverCrop23). Why do you plant cover crops...or why don't you? What do you want to know? Your insight will help guide research, communications, seed development, and more.

This National Cover Crop Survey is the seventh since 2012 conducted by the USDA-NIFA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) and the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), with the help of Informa/Farm Progress.

"Since 2012, the National Cover Crop Survey has been extremely valuable in helping guide research priorities, direct communications and education efforts, provide data to researchers, and illustrate the effects of policy on cover crop use and adoption," says Dr. Rob Myers, regional director of extension programs for North Central SARE and director of the University of Missouri Center for Regenerative Agriculture. "Data from previous surveys have been used in scientific papers, business planning, extension efforts, media coverage of cover crops, and even included in testimony to Congress."

**Contribute your voice to the National Cover Crop survey,** [bit.ly/CoverCrop23](https://bit.ly/CoverCrop23). After completing the questionnaire, you may enter a drawing for one of three \$100 Visa gift cards.

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### Reducing Cost by Working Together Survey

Are you interested in working with other farms to order a supply in bulk or share another needed resource? Information from the survey below will be compiled to see if there is sufficient interest in pooling certain needs and determine what geographic area these needs are centered. KY Center for Ag and Rural Development, Community Farm Alliance, the Kentucky Horticulture Council, the Kentucky Dairy Development Council, and other farming partners will work together to see if there is an efficient way to meet that need and help your farm's bottom line. If there is sufficient interest, we will use your contact information to reach out for next steps, but it will not be used for any other purpose. **Take the survey,** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YPZ5XT7>.

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## **NRCS Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements**

### **Applications are due April 27, 2023**

The primary goal of this outreach opportunity is for the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), in collaboration with partners, to expand conservation assistance to historically underserved producers and underserved communities and to provide opportunities for students to pursue careers in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences.

Projects should support outreach activities that encourage diverse and inclusive participation in NRCS programs and introduce conservation planning and climate smart practices to protect farmland ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife habitat in geographical areas of underserved communities ranging from rural agriculture to urban and small acreage producers.

Eligible applicants may propose projects that engage historically underserved producers and underserved communities equitably and offer access to opportunities through outreach activities that:

- Promote NRCS programs through education about, or demonstration of, conservation practices;
- Develop community conservation partnerships that encourage historically underserved producers to plan and protect farmland ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife habitat in geographical areas of underserved communities;
- Inform small scale or urban agriculture producers about participation in conservation programs;
- Support education on, planning for, and adoption of conservation practices that are climate smart.

Read more about this funding opportunity here:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/partner-with-us/outreach-and-partnerships/equity-in-conservation-cooperative-agreements-2023>

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### **#OAK2023 Recordings 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. Reach out to [robin@oak-ky.org](mailto:robin@oak-ky.org) if you are having trouble accessing your OAK profile page.

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## Educational & Farming Support

### In-person Events Throughout the Region

#### **Small Farms Conference: Eastern Kentucky Style**

April 2, 2023

Whitley County Extension Office - Goldbug

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

#### **2023 Kentucky Fencing Schools**

This program is designed for producers and agricultural professionals to learn the newest fencing methods and sound fencing construction through a combination of classroom and hands-on learning.

April 11 Scottsville, KY

April 13 Richmond, KY

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

#### **2023 Kentucky Beginning Grazing School**

April 25-26, 2023

Kentucky Soybean Board Office, Princeton, KY

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

#### **Climate Resiliency Practices to Improve Outcomes on the Farm: AFT Women in Land Learning Circle**

April 29, 2023 9-2:30 ET

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

#### **International Grassland Conference**

May 14-19, 2023

Covington, KY

Scholarships available and due by December 30, 2022

[More details and registration here.](#)

#### **Heartland Homesteading Conference**

Save the Date Friday, Sep 29- Sunday, Oct 1, 2023

Campbellsville, KY

<https://brushfire.com/homeplaceongreenriver/conference/546211>

### Virtual Events



### **Ask an Agroforester Webinar Series**

Appalachian Sustainable Development's "Ask an Agroforester" Webinar Series is an opportunity to come together for a deep dive into detailed information about specific topics. Each webinar will consist of a welcome and intro from ASD and a short presentation from the presenter. There will then be a 2-part Q and A. The first half will consist of questions collected ahead of time, the 2nd half of the Q and A will be live audience questions. Register here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/ask-an-agroforester-webinar-series#>

Thurs April 6th, 7-8:30pm ET - Tree Protection in Animal Systems with Wyn Miller of Lick Skillet Farms.

Tues April 11th, 7-8:30pm ET - Forages in Silvopasture Systems with Dr. John Fike of Virginia Tech

Tues April 25th, 7-8:30pm ET - Propagating Trees from Seed with Sean Dembrosky of Edible Acres

Thurs May 4th, 7-8:30pm ET - Silvopasture on a Shoestring with Austin Unrue of Trees for Graziers

Tues May 9th, 7-8:30pm ET - Wildly Homegrown: Sourcing, Selection and Storytelling with Jonathan McRay of Silver Run Forest Farm

Tues May 16th, 7-8:30pm ET - Getting Started in Resprout Silviculture with Mark Krawczyk

Date TBA (May) - All About Persimmons with Eliza Greenman

### **Cut Flower Short Course- Farm Layout and Design**

Apr 24, 2023 05:30 PM

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

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## **Resources and Funding for Farmers**

**NRCS Kentucky just extended the IRA-EQIP and IRA-CSP sign-up period until April 21, 2023.** Although the extended opportunity is open to all applicants, this 21-day extension to accept applications is being offered to ensure underserved communities have been provided the time and information they need in order to participate in this FY 2023 IRA funding opportunity.

### **USDA Announces Sign-up for Cost-Share Assistance for On-Farm Grain Storage in Areas with Limited Commercial Capacity Due to Severe Storms**

Last week USDA announced that Kentucky producers in counties affected by the December 2021 tornadoes, among other states affected by eligible disaster events, can apply for cost-share assistance through the Emergency Grain Storage Facility Assistance Program (EGSFP). An initial allocation of \$20 million in cost-share assistance is available to agricultural producers in affected

counties impacted by the damage to or destruction of large commercial grain elevators as a result of natural disasters from Dec. 1, 2021, to Aug. 1, 2022. The **application period closes Dec. 29, 2023.**

For more information visit the [program webpage](#) or the [EGSFP fact sheet](#). USDA also has an existing [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program](#) that can immediately provide low-interest financing for eligible producers who may not be eligible for EGSFP but are in need of on-farm storage capacity.

### **\$1 Billion Available to Help Farmers Invest in Renewable Energy**

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is accepting applications starting on April 1 for \$1 billion in grants to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses invest in renewable energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. USDA is making the \$1 billion in grants available under the [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#), with funding from President Biden's landmark Inflation Reduction Act, the nation's largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis.

For additional information on application deadlines and submission details, see page 19239 of the March 31 [Federal Register](#).

### **Silvopasture and Forest Farming Support / Funds Available**

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

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

### **Slow Food Bluegrass Garden Grant**

**Deadline:** ongoing

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

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

### **KSU Small Scale Farm Grant**

**Deadline:** The 1st day of every other month

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

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

**Link:** <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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