



Organic Association of Kentucky
Advancing Organic Agriculture in Kentucky

Join OAK's on-Farm Field Days!



Pavel and Katie Ovechkin, of [Pavel's Garden](#) in Oldham County, hosted our first Farmer Field Day of the year. Nearly 50 farmers and allied professionals joined this 3-hour event to tour Pavel's 5 caterpillar tunnels, high tunnel, packshed, and field plantings to hear about his systems developed over 15 years of growing produce for local markets. We'll offer a summary of the event, complete with resources shared by Pavel and others, on our Farmer Field Days webpage later this month - don't miss it!

These on-farm opportunities to learn from host farmers create open discussion and learning among farmers and their peers, and provide opportunities for ag professionals to better understand the needs and challenges of producers in their local communities. We encourage anyone interested in attending to register for an upcoming event, occurring monthly spring through fall!

[Learn More About 2023 Field Days HERE](#)

Upcoming Farmer Field Days

From Spring to Fall, Visit KY Farms with OAK!



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, KY -- June 20 2023, 1-4pm ET

Keeping our Balance: Diversified Farming with Steep Hills and Off-Farm Jobs
Hallow Springs Farm -- Climax, KY -- July 6, 2023, 9am-noon 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

[Register TODAY](#)

OAK Family Farm Members - Spring Promo is Happening!



OAK Member Farmers, UPDATE your profile page on the Directory. The OAK Staff is hard at work developing Spring Find-a-Farm Directory promotion. As the local market season really ramps up this month, OAK's Spring Directory promotion will unroll. Folks will be directed to [OAK's Find-a-Farm Directory](#) so plan to get your profile page updated. If you have any questions, need help updating your profile, or want to create a new profile as a Family Farm Member, please reach out to Robin@oak-ky.org

Not Yet A Member? Join OAK Today!

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 committed to creating a healthier, more nourishing food landscape.

Join or Renew TODAY

USDA Commits Greater Conservation Assistance for Producers Transitioning to Organic Production

On April 10, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced details about its \$75 million investment in conservation assistance for producers transitioning to organic production. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is dedicating financial and technical assistance to a new organic management standard and partnering with new organic technical experts to

increase staff capacity and expertise. NRCS will dedicate \$70 million to assist producers with a new organic management standard under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This program is for farmers who are beginning or in the process of transitioning to organic certification.

OAK is in conversation with NRCS Kentucky and will work to communicate with farmers about the opportunity to apply for this new Organic Management Practice when it is available. Stay tuned for more info in upcoming e-newsletters!



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Organic Certification and NRCS Assistance for Organic Producers



Background

Organic agriculture is an ecologically based system of growing and harvesting crops and raising livestock using cultural, biological, and mechanical practices to conserve natural resources and biodiversity, foster ecological balance, and adapt to site-specific conditions.



[Click here](#) to access a factsheet on certified organic production created by NRCS-Kentucky

Interested in Transitioning To Organic?

OAK is 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.



NRCS-Kentucky Extends Deadline for EQIP and CSP

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.

For FY 2023 in Kentucky, IRA-EQIP funds will be focused on certain core and supporting practices including cover crops, and those that address energy, as well as practices that address climate and clean energy solutions on forestland. [Find more info here](#)

For FY 2023 in Kentucky, IRA-CSP contracts must include one or more core conservation practices or activities which have been identified to provide climate-related benefits. [Find more info here](#)

Upcoming Partner Events

Path to Prosperity: Regional Small Business Development

TODAY, April 18, 2023, 8am-5pm

University of Kentucky, William T. Young Library, 401 Hilltop Avenue, Lexington, KY 40526

OR Virtually, via Zoom

You are invited to the Kentucky “Path to Prosperity” economic development series, hosted by the University of Kentucky. The no-cost series features experts in the lending industry, Federal Government, community partners and stakeholders.

This event will include panel discussions comprised of economic and lending experts, community partners and stakeholders, who will identify challenges, share best practices, and innovative solutions to accessing capital and contracting opportunities. Presenters will discuss how financial institutions, non-profits, public and private sectors, and community-based organizations encourage the development of a “Path to Prosperity”

All participants must register to attend either “In Person” or “Virtually.” [Register today](#)

Questions? contact Jacqueline.davis-slay@usda.gov or 202-422-2551.

Small Farms Conference: Eastern Kentucky Style

April 21-22, 2023

Whitley County Extension Office - Goldbug

Funded by a grant to bring a sustainable agriculture conference to Eastern Kentucky, this two-day Kentucky State University event will include practical information from experts on agricultural topics such as honey bees, building a business plan, disaster preparedness, pawpaw trees and more. [Register here](#)

2023 KY Grazing School

April 25-26, 2023

Princeton, KY

This two-day field school will help you improve profitability with hands-on and classroom learning and will be held at the UK Research Station and the KY Soybean Board office.

During the morning of the first day you'll learn about soils, rotational grazing, meeting nutritional needs on pasture, portable/seasonal water systems, methods to access pasture production and determine stocking rate, hands-on small paddock set-up, and then travel to a local grazing operation. After lunch at the farm additional topics will include electric fencing to control grazing, offsets, soil and hay sampling, forage plant growth and grazing management and choosing forage species for a comprehensive grazing system.

The second day you'll learn about fence types and costs, electric fencing for serious grazers, how to set up a grazing system, and how to reinvigorate a rundown farm. Additional topics include how to calibrate a grain drill and use a GPS unit designed for frost seeding pastures. A local producer will discuss how they made grazing work on their farm. [Register here](#)

Cost is \$60. If you can't register online then call Christi Forsythe at 270-625-0712. See the full agenda on the [UK Forage Website](#) under Events

Women for the Land: Climate Resiliency Practices to Improve Outcomes on the Farm

April 29, 2023, 9 am–2:30 pm ET

Millers Farm – Lincoln County, KY (address will be sent after registration)

Join this American Farmland Trust event to hear from technical service providers from Cooperative Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and other entities to share opportunities to improve climate resiliency practices for your operation. We will also tour the Millers' Farm. Lunch, stipends, and other goodies will be provided!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Not-to-Miss Opportunities

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>

Latest News & Calls to Action

Urban Producers, Public Invited to Attend April Meeting of Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

TODAY April 18, 3-5pm ET - [Register here](#)

Urban producers, innovative producers, and other stakeholders are invited to virtually attend a public meeting of the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. The Committee is part of USDA's efforts to support urban and innovative agriculture, creating a network for feedback. Members include agricultural producers and representatives from the areas of

higher education or extension programs, non-profits, business and economic development, supply chains and financing. [Learn more here](#)

Topics for the upcoming meeting will include addressing public comments and discussing the following recommended topics:

- A new public/online database for grant and funding programs
- Farm Service Agency loan programs
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Food loss and waste; and
- Food labeling.

Urban Producers, Public Invited to Attend April Meeting of Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

USDA is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers. Nominations may be submitted electronically by April 24 to the Advisory Committee's dedicated email inbox at acmf@usda.gov

USDA Seeking Applications to Expand Conservation Assistance to Underserved Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking applications for projects that will improve outreach to underserved producers and underserved communities about conservation programs and services and opportunities for students to pursue careers in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering up to \$70 million in cooperative agreements with entities for two-year projects that encourage participation in NRCS programs, especially in underserved communities and among urban and small-scale producers. **Proposals are due April 27, 2023.** [Learn more here](#)

Nominations open until May 1st for the 2023 Bill Best Award!

The Bill Best award is given annually to a Kentucky resident or community-based organization. Rather than a 'captain of industry,' this award seeks to recognize the patient, humble, and community-sustaining work of a food and farm steward. [Nominate here](#)

Reducing Cost by Working Together Survey from Kentucky Orgs.

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 here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YPZ5XT7>

Upcoming Virtual Events

Marketing Resources for Kentucky Food Businesses Webinar

TODAY, April 18, 2023, Noon ET

Presented by: Tim Woods, Ph.D, Ext. Professor, Agriculture Economics at University of Kentucky

Kentucky has many smaller, start-up food ventures that are exploring opportunities to build on their artisanal and geographic proximity to local and regional customers. There are, indeed, lots of market opportunities, resources, and important strategic considerations for food entrepreneurs exploring growth. This webinar will introduce the MarketReady training program and resources and suggest ways that food businesses can explore a possible fit into a variety of commercial market opportunities. [Register here.](#)

Webinar: Scouting, an Essential Practice in Organic Pest Management

April 19, 2 - 3 PM ET

Routine scouting of crops is one of the most effective ways organic farmers can stay ahead of costly pest and disease issues. In this presentation, Rodale Institute will review best practices around scouting and monitoring, discuss how scouting observations can be used to inform pest management, and highlight tools and resources available to farmers. [Register here](#)

Improving Air Quality In and Around Livestock Facilities

April 21, 2023 at 2:30 pm ET

Air quality inside and around livestock and poultry barns can negatively impact animal and worker welfare and can be a challenge to overcome. This webinar will discuss drivers of indoor emissions as well as established and new interventions to control ammonia and dust levels inside barns. Since indoor air quality is only one piece of the air emissions puzzle, the webinar will also highlight treatment methods that impact exhaust air from barns to improve farmstead air quality. [Register here](#)

Cut Flower Virtual Short Course - Farm Layout and Design

April 24, 2023, 6:30 PM ET

The quarterly event in the cut flower production series from Kentucky Horticulture Council and UK. [Register here](#)

Webinar: How Houses of Worship Can Get Surplus Farm Produce, Through Gleaning, to People in Need

April 24, 2023, 6:30 – 8PM ET

This webinar is the third in a mini-series on Sustainable Land Use Practices, Reducing Food Waste & Supporting Vulnerable Communities, as part of the EJ Webinar Series for Houses of Worship and Communities. This webinar will identify ways Houses of Worship can help improve the access of healthy food for the vulnerable individuals, families, and communities they serve. The presentations will discuss how Houses of Worship can partner with farmers and farm gleaners to deliver healthy produce to people in need. The presenters will provide examples, information on available resources, and best practices that can be used and immediately implemented. [Register here](#)

Food Systems Finance Webinar

April 25, 2023 2 p.m.

The CDFA Food Systems Finance Webinar Series is a free online series demonstrating how businesses and projects within the food system can be connected to development finance tools, such as bonds, tax increment finance, tax credits, and revolving loan funds, to create equitable local and regional food systems. This series will showcase how development finance agencies from across the country are investing in local food systems. Speakers will present case studies on a range of food systems projects – including production, processing, distribution, retail, storage, and more – to explain why various financing tools were chosen for the specific project and how those financing tools work. Each installment of this series will explore how the development finance toolbox can be used to drive investment across the food supply chain.

[Register here](#)

Ask an Agroforester Webinar Series- Propagating Trees from Seed

Tues April 25th, 7-8:30pm ET

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](#)

The Problem with Pesticides - Webinar

April 26, 2023, 1:30pm ET

The world has never used as many pesticides as it does today, and the United States uses more than any other country. The world has also never had more evidence of the impacts of pesticide use. Real Food Media is hosting a webinar for the launch of the US edition of the Pesticide Atlas, a powerful compendium on the state of pesticides around the world and in the United States—and why it matters. This conversation will bring together the authors of the US chapters of the global Pesticide Atlas for a compelling and timely virtual conversation about pesticides and their persistent use in the United States and what we can do about it. [Register here](#)

Webinar: Exploring The Link Between Soil And Human Health—Protein, Protein Quality, And The Nutraceutical Amino Acid Ergothioneine

April 26, 2023, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm EDT

This Rodale Institute webinar will be a project update of a multidisciplinary project funded by the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR). This project seeks to link soil and human health by investigating the relationship between agricultural practices, soil microbiology, and crop nutrient quality in grain crops, specifically wheat and corn. This study is measuring plant available nitrogen and soil microbial structure along with concentrations of protein, amino acids, B vitamins, and the nutraceutical amino acid ergothioneine in grain crops produced in long-term systems trials, on working farms, and in controlled field and laboratory studies.

Active research on ergothioneine is finding that this amino acid has antioxidant properties and increasingly apparent human health benefits. It is only biosynthesized by fungi and fungi-like bacteria, is present in many foods, and plants obtain it through an unknown mechanism where it is transferred up the food chain to animals and humans. Thus, there should be a clear link between soil microbiomes, ergothioneine biosynthesis in the soil, its concentration in plants, and human health. [Register here](#)

Webinar: Biochar in Urban Vegetated Applications

April 27, 2023 from 11 to 12 pm ET

The US Forest Service in partnership with the US Biochar Initiative and the Southern Regional Extension Forestry will be presenting its latest Biochar Webinar titled: "Biochar in Urban Vegetated Applications". [Learn more here](#)

Herbicides: A Double-Edged Sword? What We Know about Herbicide Impacts on Pollinators

April 27, 2023, 1:-2PM ET

Herbicides, "the chemical hoe," make up more than half of global pesticide sales and use, and are widely applied in agriculture, residential landscapes, and natural areas. Along with reducing the availability of food and shelter for pollinators, herbicides may have some direct effects on insects exposed in air, soil, water, and plants. Join Emily May, Pollinator Conservation Specialist with the Pesticide Program at Xerces, to get up to speed on what's currently known about the direct and indirect effects of herbicides on pollinators. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Educational and Farming Support

NCAT Podcast: Organic Production and the Climate

In this episode, NCAT Agriculture and Natural Resource Economist Jeff Schahczenski discusses the climate benefits of certified organic production

systems with Dr. Amber Sciligo, Director of Science Programs at The Organic Center. Dr. Sciligo serves on OAK's Board Of Directors and has collaborated on a diverse range of research programs. [Learn more and listen here](#)

Decentralizing the Food System Resources

Our friend Irucka Embry shared his research compiled for his role as a Moderator/Panelist in the Decentralizing the Food System workshop during the Tennessee Local Food Summit (<https://www.tnlocalfood.org/>) in December 2022. [Check it out here](#)

Southeast Seed Resources

In 2021 The Utopian Seed Project and Communal Studios received a grant from Southern SARE to create a Southeast Seed video series. The project traveled across 12 states and interviewed over 50 farmers, community gardeners, seed savers, seed growers and seed advocates. The footage was weaved together to tell the story and seed saving of six southern crops: corn, okra, southern peas, collards, sweet potatoes and squash.

The [videos are hosted on YouTube](#) and on the [SE Seed website](#). If you find the resources valuable, support the Project: tag @utopianseedproject on IG and FB and use the hashtag #seseedvideo

New Podcast by Kentucky Horticulture Extension Agents: Hort Culture

For anyone who loves plants! [Find it here](#)

Compatibility of Selected OMRI-listed Insecticides and Fungicides with Biological Control

Biological control is a method of using natural enemies to control pests. Biological control and OMRI-listed insecticides are integral parts of organic vegetable production. This webinar will summarize research data from a Organic Research and Education Initiative funded project that evaluated the compatibility of nine OMRI-listed insecticides and fungicides with eight predatory mite and insect species. This webinar will also provide practical suggestions on integrating biological control and insecticides. This webinar took place on April 13, 2023, and the recording is now available at <https://eorganic.org/node/35682>

Ask an Agroforester: Tree Protections Systems by Wyn Miller

Our friends at ASD's Agroforestry team launched the first of their Ask an Agroforester webinar series, and the [recording is now available!](#) In this event, Wyn Miller talks about and answers questions regarding her experiences using tree protection systems. Wyn is an environmental consultant based in East Tennessee, specializing in climate-smart agriculture, silvopasture, and intergenerational farm transitions. She is a fifth generation farmer and serves as the COO of Lick Skillet Farm (lickskillet.farm) – her family's century farm. Miller previously worked as a licensed landscape architect in the field of stormwater management and ecological landscape design. Currently she is engaged in developing grazing and land management scenarios that reintegrate native species into southeastern woodlots and pasturelands.

Evaluating Organic Inputs for Improving Soil Health in Blueberry Systems

In this webinar, Shikha Singh of Oregon State University will discuss the suitability of different locally available organic materials to improve the quality of sandy and calcareous soils of eastern Oregon and Washington and improve organic blueberry production. More specifically, we are looking at impacts of different organic amendments on physical, chemical, and biological health of soils, which are instrumental to sustainably manage soil resources to promote future cultivation. Results from this study will not only help in determining best management practices and optimal amendments for improving soil health but also increase resource use efficiency by utilizing the locally available waste materials which will help foster grower profitability. This webinar took place on April 12, 2023 - [find the recording here](#)

Equipment and Tools for Small-Scale Intensive Crop Production

Current interest in small-scale intensive crop production in the United States has generated a resurgence of the small-scale farm machine industry and provided opportunities for farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing on tool and equipment design and local fabrication of hand tools.

[This ATTRA publication](#) was updated by Andy Pressman and Omar Rodriguez to cover equipment and tools for intensive crop production on a small-scale commercial farm. It details equipment and hand tools for soil preparation, planting, weed management, and harvesting. It explains how use of appropriate equipment and tools, both in terms of size and practicality, can increase production efficiency and profits while minimizing disturbance to soil and to plant health. Lists of further resources and tool and equipment suppliers are included.

From FACT: Free, on-demand training modules for farmers

FACT hosts a free, online [Humane Farming School](#) that offers short courses for farmers to take on-demand. We currently have two courses available: **Funding Your Farm** and **Beginning Pastured Poultry**. To get started, simply create a student account and dive right in. You will have free, lifetime access to our courses and the ability to access them from any device.

Manure and Soil Health: Current Research and Future Directions

This webinar highlights literature reviews and studies to reveal what is known now and how the results are currently and will continue to shape future research on soil health and manure's effect on it. This presentation originally broadcast on February 17, 2023 - [find the recording here](#)

Stay in touch:

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