



**Don't Miss Out:
Last Chance to Attend a Farmer Field Day in 2023!**

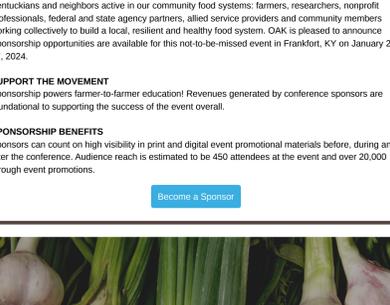


Rains and Sun Hilltop Farm
CSA Production, Packing and Planning
September 19, 2023 | Independence, KY | 11-4pm ET

Join our farmer-to-farmer learning as we visit Rains and Sun Hilltop Farm for OAK's next Farmer Field Day. Our conversation will focus on Anna Raines' community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, including early season crop planning, systems and infrastructure for packing and food storage, and equipment for year-round production on two+ acres of certified organic crop production. [Learn more in Anna's Farmer Profile in OAK's September Fall News!](#)

[Register TODAY](#)

**Save The Date for #OAK2024
Three Immersive Days with Your Farm Community!**



[Learn more about #OAK2024 HERE](#)

Sponsor OAK's Annual Conference TODAY!

The Organic Association of Kentucky's 13th annual farming conference includes hundreds of Kentuckians and neighbors active in our community food systems: farmers, researchers, nonprofit professionals, federal and state agency partners, healthy food service providers and community members working collectively to build a local, resilient and healthy food system. OAK is pleased to announce Sponsorship opportunities are available for this not-to-be-missed event in Frankfort, KY on January 25-27, 2024.

SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT

Sponsorship powers farmer-to-farmer education! Revenues generated by conference sponsors are foundational to supporting the success of the event overall.

SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

Sponsors can count on high visibility in print and digital event promotional materials before, during and after the conference. Audience reach is estimated to be 450 attendees at the event and over 20,000 through event promotions.

[Become a Sponsor](#)



[Celebrate Fall CSAs with OAK!](#)

**Learn from Kentucky Farmers
on OAK's YouTube**

Over the past several months, we have released many of our Conference session recordings from January 2023. These are now available along with 2020-2022 conference recordings, virtual field days, farmer hacks, chef demos, and more on [OAK's YouTube](#).

Don't miss these shared learnings from your OAK community and the farmers, researchers, and allied professionals who help us all further OAK's work to advance organic regenerative agriculture - improving the health of the environment and our communities!

[Click HERE for #OAK2023 sessions and more!](#)

**Global Farm Metric - Farm Sustainability Assessment Tool:
Opportunities to Participate this Fall**

Do you grow specialty crops on your farm? Are you interested in soil health and whole farm sustainability? If you answered "YES" to both of these then consider joining fellow OAK member farmers this fall to trial the Global Farm Metric - Farm Sustainability Assessment Tool.

Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK) is the first international partner of a United Kingdom-based nonprofit, The Sustainable Food Trust (SFT), to trial a unique tool that measures sustainability across a farm's operation. The tool is based on SFT's [Global Farm Metric framework](#), which can be used to understand, measure and monitor the state of farming systems anywhere in the world! Kentucky's agricultural landscapes and highly diversified farms create an excellent setting to test this tool and provide farmers with a powerful story about their farm's sustainability from a holistic point of view.

OAK staff have undertaken an effort to adapt the Global Farm Metric specifically for use on Kentucky farms. The resulting first draft of the Global Farm Metric Farm Sustainability Assessment Tool (GFM-FSAT) is based on guidance from SFT, farmer input, expert advice, peer-reviewed literature, published agricultural benchmarks and best practice standards. Agricultural terms and measurement units have also been adapted to those most commonly used in Kentucky.

If you are interested to participate in the Farm Trials this fall and use the GFM-FSAT on your farm, email to studies@oak-ky.org. OAK is seeking farms that produce specialty crops for Fall 2023 (specialty crops include fruits and tree nuts, vegetables, culinary herbs and spices, medicinal plants, as well as nursery, floriculture, and horticulture crops). Farms do not need to be certified organic to take part. Participating farmers will receive an honorarium for completing the GFM-FSAT thanks to funding from the Owsley Brown II Family Foundation and a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant administered through the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

To stay up to date on future opportunities to participate in 2024 and beyond, sign up for the OAK Climate Smart newsletter.

[Update Newsletter Preference](#)

Not-To-Miss Opportunities and Updates

Apply for Conservation Technical and Financial Assistance with NRCS

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) provides farmers, ranchers and forestland owners with the knowledge and tools they need to conserve, maintain and restore the natural resources on their lands and improve the health of their operations for the future. NRCS offers this assistance at no cost to the producers they serve. Their goal is to give customers personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to help them make informed decisions.

If a producer chooses to take the next step towards improving their operations, NRCS can work with them to develop a [conservation plan](#), with suggested conservation practices that can help them reach their production and conservation goals. Producers can also choose to apply for [financial assistance](#) to get help installing the conservation practices outlined in their conservation plan.

RAE Reminds Farmers: The federal 2024 fiscal year begins Oct. 1, 2023, and **all farmers should initially assume October 1st as the application deadline for receiving NRCS cost-share assistance in calendar year 2024.**

[Learn More About NRCS Conservation Assistance](#)

**USDA Farm Loan Borrowers Who Have Faced Discrimination:
Financial Assistance Application Process Now Open!**

Attend a September Workshop to Learn More

The application period for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) is open through **October 31, 2023**. Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are eligible to apply if they encountered discrimination by USDA in its farm loan programs before January 1, 2021, and/or currently hold assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was subject to discrimination prior to January 1, 2021. Applications for this program are **free**, and **do not require a lawyer**. All applications that are received by the deadline will be reviewed.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) specifies this assistance must be delivered to impacted producers by non-governmental program administrators. In May, USDA signed contracts with three vendors who, together, constitute a national administrator and four regional hubs. The vendors are working together to solicit applications from eligible farmers, provide technical assistance, and make decisions about each case following rules set by USDA. Serving producers in the eastern regions of the U.S., the Windsor Group LLC, will provide support to eligible farmers who may apply for the Program.

Anyone interested in applying or finding out more can visit the Windsor Group office at 107 W Loudon Ave., Ste 101, Lexington, KY between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. ET, Monday - Friday (except for Federal holidays).

Free local workshops are being offered to discuss the new USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program and are being hosted by Black Soil KY (in partnership with USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Windsor Group LLC).

Workshop Schedule:
Hopkinsville
Thursday, September 21st
Christian County Extension Office
2850 Pembroke Rd. Hopkinsville, KY
Morning Session (local time): 9:00AM - 11:00AM
Evening Session (local time): 6:00PM - 8:00PM
Winchester
Thursday, September 28th
Clark County Extension Office
1420 Fortune Drive Winchester, KY
Morning Session (local time): 9:00AM - 11:00AM
Evening Session (local time): 6:00PM - 8:00PM

Workshop topics include:

- Overview of Discrimination Financial Assistance Program
- Eligibility to Apply
- Frequently Asked Questions

The cost is free. Register at <https://www.blacksoilky.com/events>. For more information about these workshops contact Black Soil KY at Ashley.smith@wvnsdgroup.com, or phone (859) 312-7877.

Producers also have the option to file applications online at 22007amby.gov, by mail, or by turning in applications at the brick-and-mortar offices. The program call center number is 1-800-721-0970. Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides \$2.2 billion in financial assistance for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs prior to January 1, 2021. Distribution of these funds is one step in the long march towards justice and an inclusive, equitable USDA.

[Learn More About Assistance for Producers Who Experienced Discrimination in USDA Farm Loan Programs](#)

Grow Appalachia is now accepting draft proposals for the 2024 Garden Grants program cycle!

Final proposals due by October 1st!
Grow Appalachia seeks to impact food insecurity in central Appalachia by helping as many Appalachian families grow as much of their own food as possible through grantmaking to non-profits throughout the region.

Grow Appalachia partners with non-profit organizations throughout central Appalachia to administer a Grow Appalachia gardening program at the local level—delivering organic production resources and technical assistance through a hired partner site coordinator so that families truly have all they need to grow their own food.

Since 2010, Grow Appalachia has partnered with more than 60 non-profits in central Appalachia who have worked with over 6,000 families to grow 4 million pounds of organic food for themselves and their families. [Learn more by visiting their website.](#)

From Organic Farmers Association (OFA): Take Action Now: Urge Your Senators to Protect Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards

After years of work, a harmful amendment has been introduced in the U.S. Senate attempting to block finalization and implementation of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) Proposed Rule. The rule, which aims to update organic standards with critical animal welfare provisions, is currently in the final stage of approval. The proposed Rule encompasses decades of widespread organic community debate and industry support.

OFA encourages you to contact your Senators TODAY and urge them to vote against this harmful amendment and protect the Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) Proposed Rule. [Learn more here.](#)

Community Farm Alliance (CFA) Seeks Board Members
Do you know someone who cares about food access, equity, policy and sustainability in the Kentucky local food system, and who would like to be more involved? Because CFA needs your help choosing 6 new Community Farm Alliance Board Members!

[Click here to learn the Roles and Responsibilities of a CFA Board Member](#)
[Click here to see the current CFA Board of Directors](#)

If you know someone who would make a great CFA Board Member, please send us your recommendations by October 6th, 2023 by emailing don@communityfarm.org with the subject "2024 Board Nomination".

Upcoming Partner Events

- Seed Farming Workshops**
September 20 and October 18, 2023, 3-5pm
Berea College Farm and Gardens, Berea KY
Join the Cumberland Seed Commons for this two-part workshop combining education and hands-on work harvesting, processing, and cleaning seed. Cumberland Seed Commons is an emerging group working to help build community and infrastructure for the preservation of regionally-adapted heritage and native seeds in Kentucky and Tennessee.
There's so much to consider when managing a farm, and when you're doing it using regenerative practices, that list seems to grow exponentially in the fall. In Greg Brann's newest newsletter, he covers how to manage your pastures for optimum growth and soil health. He looks at everything from evaluating your soil structure to fall mowing, hay feeding, seeding, tree selection, and calculating your hay needs. [Read it here.](#)
- Third Thursday Thing**
September 21, 2023, 10 am ET
Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm, Frankfort KY
or streamed online at youtube.com/kvysaglive
Join Kentucky State University's monthly sustainable agriculture workshop. Free event; lunch included.
- 2023 Kentucky Beginning Grazing School**
Sept 27-28, 2023
Woodford County Extension office in Versailles, KY and at the UK C, Oran Little Research Farm.
This 2023 Fall Kentucky Beginning Grazing School's goal is to help livestock producers improve profitability with hands-on and classroom learning. Emphasis on ruminants - beef, dairy, sheep, & goats - in this event hosted by the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. [Register here](#)
- 2023 Southern Ohio Forest Farming Conference**
September 28 - October 1, 2023
United Plant Savers Botanical Sanctuary, Rutland OH
Interested in learning more about forest farming and sustainable income opportunities? In collaboration with the Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmers Coalition, Rural Action is hosting the 2023 Southern Ohio Forest Farming Conference at the United Plant Savers Botanical Sanctuary in Rutland, Ohio, September 28th - October 1st. The \$20 registration fee includes a one-of-a-kind keynote presentation, 5 classroom sessions, a field session, a panel with forest farmers and 5 meals. Attendees have the option to camp for FREE at the United Plant Savers Botanical Sanctuary. Lodging is available in the area. [See the full schedule, learn more, and register here](#)
- Growing Community Resilience with Ira Wallace and Pam Dawling**
October 1, 2023, 1-5pm CT
The Nashville Food Project
Join experienced vegetable, herb, and seed growers Ira Wallace and Pam Dawling for an afternoon of workshops and a book signing. Pam Dawling will present on Year Round Vegetable Production and Ira Wallace will present on Seedkeeping. Cooperation and Community Building: Everyday Acts of Resistance in Agriculture. Snacks and refreshments will be provided by The Nashville Food Project. \$25 fee. [Register here](#)
- KSU Habitat Management Symposium**
October 2, 2023, 9am - 4:30pm ET
KSU Research & Demonstration Farm, 1525 Mills Ln, Frankfort, KY 40601, USA
Kentucky State University (KSU) has partnered with the University of Kentucky (UK), KDFWR, KAE, and Seiler Geospatial to conduct a 3-day symposium that will highlight natural areas practices and demonstrations, case studies, and recent conservation projects, and applications of remote sensing in natural areas management. [Learn more and register here.](#)
- KY Forage and Grassland Council Field Day**
Old Homestead Farm, Manchester, KY
October 3, 2023 from 4:30-7:30 PM four starts at 5:00 PM Rain or Shine
Tour topics will include: Multi-species grazing systems, Novel tall fescue to reduce toxicity, Native grasses for summer production, Mineland reclamation using bale feeding, Multifora rose and blackberry as high quality pasture for goats and sheep, Composting bedding and on-farm mortalities, and so much more. [Registration information is here.](#)

Upcoming Virtual Events

- Open Farm Employment Law Week**
September 18-23, 2023
Open Farm Employment Law Week is one week of FREE [Farm Commons](#) educational employment law resources and programming. The goal is to provide all members of the agricultural community with an opportunity to receive free, easy-to-understand farm law resources so that they can get the solutions they need for their farm and ranch businesses, and build community along the way. [More information and access to free resources here](#)
- Lunch and Learn Webinar: Utopian Seed Project**
TOMORROW, September 19, 2023 12 PM ET
The Utopian Seed Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit that explores and promotes regional agrobiodiversity in Western NC. In 2022, the Utopian Seed Project expanded their experimental farm to a second site at the SAHC Community Farm focusing on a range of crop and variety trials, seed work, and supporting a WNC Seed Growers Collective. Hear from Executive Director and founder, Chris Smith to learn more about our partnership and how their work inspires, educates and celebrates diversity in food and farming. [Register here](#)
- Protecting plant germplasm during climate change**
Thursday, September 21, 2023 11 AM ET
Climate change is making the critically important task of safeguarding agriculturally significant plant germplasm much more difficult. Plant genetic resources (PGR) underpin the security of global agriculture.
In this webinar, guest speaker Brian Irish, a geneticist with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will explain potential effects of climate change on ex situ PGR maintenance and reproductive success, pollinators, and beneficial insects, pathogens and pests, infrastructure considerations, and wild populations within NPGS in situ reserves. Based on the research: [Safeguarding plant genetic resources in the United States during global climate change.](#) [Register here.](#)
- Communicating with Legislators Workshop Series**
From the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFFRF): As the Farm Bill and Appropriations situation continues to clear and muddy itself again, one thing remains certain, continued interaction with policy makers is imperative! OFFRF is hosting another series of workshops to give researchers and farmers tools to effectively engage with policy makers. These will be geared to publicly funded researchers as well as farmers that utilize and participate in research. There are four sessions available:
- **Thurs Sep 21st 7-8:30pm EST**
- **Wed Oct 11th 1-2:30pm EST**
- **Mon Oct 30th 5:30-7pm EST**
- **Tues Nov 1st 12-1:30pm EST**
All sessions cover the same material, so you only have to attend one. Please share this opportunity with your colleagues and networks! [Register here for the FREE event](#)
- Grant Writing Workshops for Producers and Young Professionals**
Please join Dr. Kathleen Liang to explore the secrets of effective grant writing! This series is designed for young professionals and producers to engage in project planning and grant writing via hands-on activities in Zoom.
Part 1 - **September 20, 2023, 12-2pm**
Part 2 - **October 26, 2023, 12-2pm**
Review categories of public/private funding opportunities, and review ongoing Call for Proposals to put an effective proposal together. [Register here](#)
Part 3 - **November 17, 2023, 12-2pm**
Use real examples and audience input to go through a grant writing exercise, and learn about grant review process and review components. [Register here](#)

Educational and Farming Support

NEW Crop-Livestock Integration Resources available!
The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFFRF) is proud to release a [suite of resources](#) focused on [Integrated Crop-Livestock Systems \(ICLS\)](#) informed by interviews with four highly-experienced organic producers who shared their challenges, successes, and advice. The suite of resources includes: farmer stories, podcast-style audio interviews, a video presentation, and downloadable fact sheets on these key topics: [Benefits of Crop-Livestock Integration](#), [Food Safety, Infrastructure](#), and [Crop Rotations](#).

Oak Trees as Staple Crop for People and Livestock
Perennial staple crops are a powerful and underutilized tool for climate mitigation, with many other benefits. Learn more in Eric Toensmeier's new publication, The Status of Oak Breeding and Demonstration as Food for People and Livestock, for [free here](#).

Greg Brann's Timely Tips for Livestock and Pasture
There's so much to consider when managing a farm, and when you're doing it using regenerative practices, that list seems to grow exponentially in the fall. In Greg Brann's newest newsletter, he covers how to manage your pastures for optimum growth and soil health. He looks at everything from evaluating your soil structure to fall mowing, hay feeding, seeding, tree selection, and calculating your hay needs. [Read it here.](#)

Cut Flower Short Course for Making Cover Crops Work for your Cut Flower Operation
Krista Jacobsen offered this webinar recently as part of UK's Cooperative Extension Service Cut Flower education; [view the recording here](#). Dr Jacobsen referenced this helpful [Cover Crop Calculator](#) in the presentation.

Online Sales Open For Tree Seedlings From The Kentucky Division of Forestry
From [Kentucky Woodland Owners Association \(KWOA\)](#): The Kentucky Division of Forestry is accepting orders for tree seedlings beginning September 1 online through its new [E-commerce Seedling Sales](#). Those ordering less than 10,000 total trees and are using a credit card to use the division's online store to place their order. Seedlings ordered from the store will be shipped by UPS. Those wishing to order seedlings and pay by check or want to pick up their seedlings at one of our two nurseries are asked to use the [Tree Order Form](#) and order through their local [branch office](#). Division branch offices can answer questions or questions can be emailed to KYSeedlingSales@ky.gov

Revised Guide to USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program Released
From [ATRRA](#): Farmers Legal Action Group (FLAG) has [released a second edition](#) of its Farmers' Guide to USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP). This new edition is much more detailed, and it explains the details of the program and provides a walk-through of the program application (due October 31, 2023; see above). The publication is available for online.

Study Identifies Effective Ways to Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Agriculture
From [ATRRA](#): A study by Cornell University scientists showed that [improving agricultural technologies and management techniques](#) could contribute significantly to sector-wide negative emissions. According to this study, the most effective ways to reduce emissions are to utilize soil modifications for crops (biochar, compost, and rock amendments), develop agroforestry, advance sustainable seedbed harvesting practices, and promote hydrogen-powered fertilizer production. Related ATRRA resource: [Climate Beneficial Practices](#)

FARM AID Festival Returns to Indiana, September 23
Farm Aid announced that its annual music and food festival is returning to Noblesville, Indiana, on September 23, 2023: Farm Aid 2023 — a full day of music, farm's farmers, HOMECORING food and agrarian experiences — will feature performances by Farm Aid board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews (with Tim Reynolds), and Margo Price, as well as Bobby Weir & Wolf Bros featuring The Wolfgang, Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats, Lukas Nelson, Allison Russell, The String Cheese Incident, and Particle Kid. The festival will highlight the work of family farmers to address climate change through regenerative, organic and sustainable farming practices. [Learn more here.](#)

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