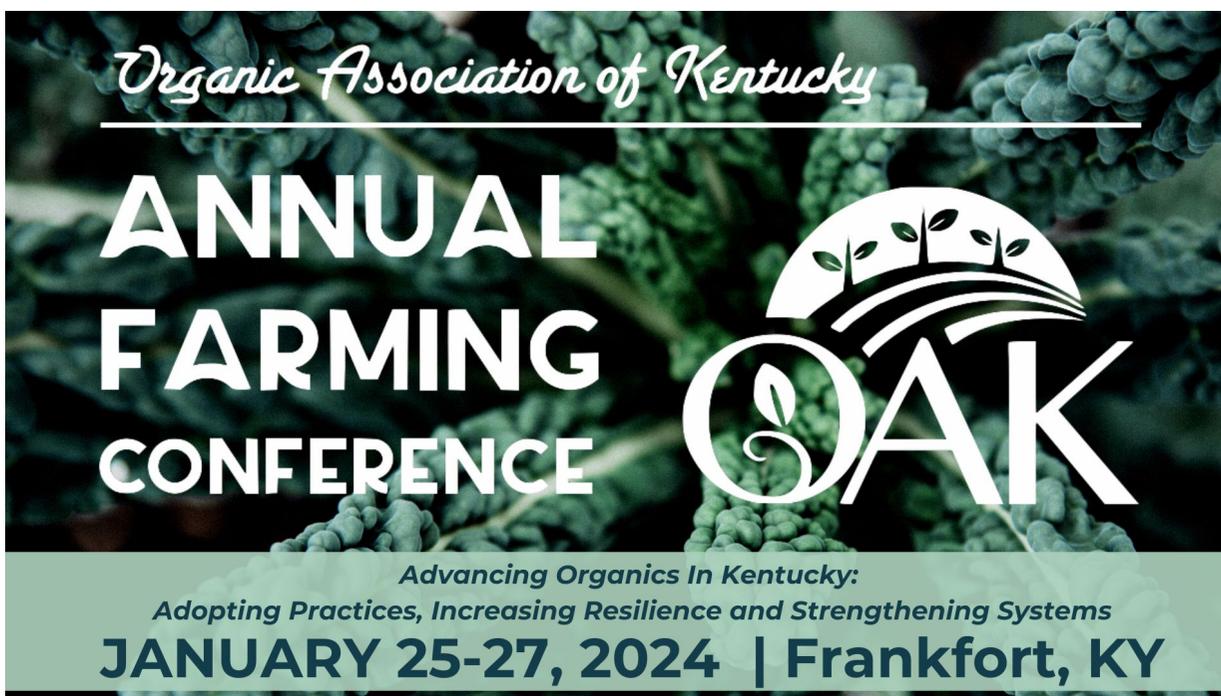




Organic Association of Kentucky
Advancing Organic Agriculture in Kentucky

Make Plans to Attend #OAK2024 - Registration Opens This Week!



[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 who are active in our community food systems: farmers, market gardeners, researchers, nonprofit professionals, federal and state agency partners, allied service providers, aspiring growers and community members working collectively to build a local, resilient and healthy food system.

OAK is pleased to announce that 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 about 450 attendees at the event and over 20,000 through event promotions.

[Become a Sponsor](#)

Become an OAK Board Member

Interested in serving as a Board Member for the Organic Association of Kentucky? OAK is currently looking for future board members and is requesting your nominations! As a part of our community, you or someone you know may be the right person to bring their time and talent to serve in this important role.

The Board of Directors actively supports OAK and promotes its mission, vision, programs and fundraising efforts. We are looking for individuals who are interested in helping OAK grow the sustainable and organic farming movement in Kentucky. We especially need Board Members who have experience in the areas of fundraising, finance, law and organic farming.

Help OAK flourish! Learn more and nominate yourself or someone else.

[Share Your Interest Here](#)

OAK Joins Midwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)

The Midwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) is a coalition of partners across 11 states providing mentorship, technical assistance and wrap-around support for transitioning and existing organic producers. This coalition of partners serves producers in Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

Through TOPP, the Midwest Regional Center and its partner organizations connect farmers who are transitioning to organic production with local, experienced organic mentors; provide farmer training and education; offer education and technical assistance in agronomy, organic certification, extension, conservation planning, organic regulations, certification cost share, business development and marketing; build networks and strengthen the organic community; develop and expand access to technical assistance and training and support workforce training and development.

Through this partnership, OAK will offer an organic farmer mentorship program starting this winter. Interested organic farmer mentors and farmer mentees are encouraged to sign up now!

[Learn More Here](#)



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program
Transition to Organic Partnership Program



Not-To-Miss Opportunities and Updates

Understanding the NEW Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule - What Farmers Need to Know

Details abound when it comes to organic certification and OAK is here to help!

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) published the Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) [final rule](#) to amend the USDA organic regulations to strengthen oversight and enforcement of the production, handling and sale of organic agricultural products. **The new rule's implementation date is March 19, 2024.** This means all operations in the supply chain must be in compliance by March 19, 2024 at the latest.

In addition to the webinar in the following block, check out these [four informative webinars](#) that Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) recently published. You can also take the quiz "[Are You SOE Ready?](#)" to explore exemptions and requirements under SOE.

November 3 Webinar: How Will the New Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) Rule Impact My Farm?

Farmers will need to understand how this new rule will impact their certified organic operations and the supply chain. This webinar will help you prepare to stay in compliance, highlight areas for your consideration, provide examples of exemptions and answer your questions. Join in this informative webinar co-hosted by OAK and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA).

Abigale George from KDA's Organic Program will lead this webinar on **Friday, November 3, 1-2pm ET** and share details on strategies farmers can use for handling and sale of organic agricultural products under the Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) [final rule](#).

[Learn More and Register Here](#)

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

The application period for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) has been extended **through January 13, 2024.** 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 Windsor Group LLC has opened a local office in Lexington, Kentucky. Anyone interested in applying or finding out more can visit the office in Lexington, KY, between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. ET, Monday - Friday (except for Federal holidays):

USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program – Kentucky Office
107 W Loudon Ave., Ste 101
Lexington, Ky. 40508

Producers also have the option to file applications online at 22007apply.gov, by mail, or by turning in applications at the brick-and-mortar offices. The program call center number is 1-800-721-0970. Further information can be found at Farmers.gov/22007.

Upcoming Partner Events

KY Grazing: Low Stress Livestock Handling for Serious Graziers **October 31 or November 1**

October 31, 2023, 7:30am - 3:30pm ET - Elizabethtown, KY

[Details and registration here](#)

November 1, 2023, 7:30am - 3:30pm ET - Lexington, KY

[Details and registration here](#)

This meeting is a cooperative effort of the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council and the UK Extension. Topics include: Reducing Livestock Stress in Grazing Systems, Fencing for Multi-Species Grazing, Designing Flexible Watering Systems, Designing Livestock Handling Facilities for Existing Structures, and Optimizing Resources with Multi-Species Grazing - with [Greg Brann](#).

Kentucky Small, Limited-Resource, Minority Farmers Conference **November 16-18, 2023 - Frankfort KY**

Join Kentucky State University's 25th Annual Small, Limited-Resource, Minority Farmers Conference. This year's theme is "Planting Ideas, Harvesting Success." The purpose of the Small, Limited-Resource, Minority Farmers Conference is fourfold:

- Providing a forum for underserved farmers to interact with USDA, state, research, Extension, and other professionals
- Providing an opportunity for farmers across Kentucky to meet each other and to network across the state.
- Providing education for small, limited-resource, minority, and underserved farmers on numerous topics related to production, economics, health, and land stewardship.
- Providing small, limited-resource, and minority farmers from across Kentucky opportunities to see and learn about Kentucky State University and to network with university employees.

Registration for this conference is required and costs **\$50**. That fee covers your attendance at all three days of the conference as well as four meals. For more information and to register, [click here](#)

Upcoming In-Person Events

Developing Your Value-Added Marketing Strategy

October 24, 2023 - Lexington, KY

October 25, 2023 - Bowling Green, KY

Are you a value-added producer or technical service provider? Have you heard about our upcoming value-added marketing strategy workshop series? Register now for a session of "Developing Your Value-Added Marketing Strategy". While this workshop series uses cheese and dairy as an example, this workshop series is open to all interested producers or technical assistance providers. Regardless of your involvement with dairy, this workshop is open to ANYONE interested in learning more about value-added marketing strategies! Please note all workshops will provide identical material - only the workshop locations will change. For more details, [visit here](#). Please contact Alaina Boyd at acboyd@utk.edu with any questions.

Kentucky Maple School

November 4, 2023, 9am - 4pm ET

Berea Forestry Outreach Center

Each year the School allows maple syrup producers to learn about current topics in maple production and to network and share ideas. Join us on November 4th at the Berea Forestry Outreach Center for the eagerly-anticipated Kentucky Maple School. Our program is informative, entertaining, and set to be unforgettable. [Register today](#) for updates and further details.

Sustainable Mountain Ag Center Annual Seed Swap

November 4, 9am-1pm ET

100 Churchill Court, Berea, KY

More than a dozen different seed vendors from several states, with many kinds of heirloom vegetable seeds: hundreds of varieties of tomato, bean, corn, squash, and more! Buy or swap! Contact Barbara Toti with questions: smac@heirlooms.org <https://www.heirlooms.org/>

Upcoming Virtual Events

Farmer-Led Research with OFRF

October 25t, 2023, 2pm ET

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is hosting an informal Farmer-Researcher Virtual Networking event with researchers and farmers who will share their experience and strategies for working together. They will highlight the successes and challenges of engaging in farmer-researcher partnerships. wo researchers and two farmers that have organic research projects funded by USDA/NIFA will share their insights: Julie Grossman and collaborating farmer KaZoua Berry, and Eric Gallandt and collaborating farmer Seth Kroeck. The two teams will highlight key factors that led to their successful researcher/farmer partnerships and share details on their experience and the process of engaging in on-farm research. A facilitated Q&A and engaging breakout sessions will follow to provide open opportunities for discussion and networking. [Registration and more information](#)

Soil Carbon 101 Webinar

October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Unlock the Secrets of Soil Carbon! What is soil carbon, what does it mean to capture carbon, and why should you care? If you're a farmer, grazer, or ag advocate, get ready for answers. Join Gregg Sanford, Senior Scientist at UW Madison, as he demystifies carbon's power in a must-attend Carbon 101 Crash Course. Seize the benefits now! [Register here](#)

Livestock and Poultry Webinars from Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)

[From the Cell to the Rail: The science of meat quality and yield](#)

October 28, 1pm ET

Regardless of species, proper management and nutrition are critical to maximizing the genetic potential of your animals. In this presentation, Jennifer Martin with Colorado State will explore the scientific underpinnings of muscle, fat, and bone development and the impacts of management and nutrition on the quality and yield of livestock species. [Register Here](#)

Communicating with Legislators Workshop Series

From the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF): 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! OFRF 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 two sessions available:

October 30 5:30-7pm ET

November 21, 12-1:30pm ET

Both 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](#)

Beginning Farming Webinar for Transitioning Service Members, Spouses and Veterans

October 31 - November 1, 2023, 10am-4:30pm ET

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces a unique training opportunity tailored to transitioning service members, veterans and military spouses. This free, two-day webinar provides a comprehensive overview of the opportunities, programs and services available to those interested in their journey in farming and ranching. Participants will explore the essentials required to start a career in farming and ranching and learn how to connect with USDA programs and services. They'll also begin to build a supportive network that will aid in the success of an agricultural operation. The webinar will be recorded and shared on the [USDA Veterans](#) website. [Register Now!](#)

Getting your Farm Funded: Understanding FACT's Fund-a-Farmer Grants

November 1, 6pm ET

Looking for funding that can help take your farm to the next humane farming level? One that's easy to apply for and report on? Look no further: the Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)'s Fund-a-Farmer grant program is the perfect way to improve the lives of the livestock on your farm. In this session former FACT Humane Farming Director, Larissa McKenna and FACT's Humane Farming Manager, Samantha Gasson will be joined by the fabulous Kara Shannon, ASPCA's Director of Farm Animal Welfare Policy, Response and Engagement (a major underwriter of FACT's Fund-a-Farmer grants) to discuss the Fund-a-Farmer grant process and application tidbits. If you're planning on applying this year you won't want to miss this informative session. [Register Here](#)

Educational and Farming Support

HIRING: Finance Director- Black Farmer Fund

Black Farmer Fund (BFF) was created by Black farmers who were frustrated with the limited financing options available to them, hoping to create a funding vehicle that would challenge the racial injustices and wealth inequalities faced by Black food actors. Black Farmer Fund seeks a full-time Finance Director to lead finance operations and ensure accurate, efficient and compliant financial functions and reporting. This is a remote, full-time position requiring 5% travel for in-person events and workshops. Starting salary between \$100-115k. [More information here](#)

Call for Proposals - Kentucky Local Food Systems Summit 2024

Deadline: November 1, 2023

The Food Connection, in partnership with the KY Center for Ag & Rural Development and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, are pleased to announce the call for breakout session proposals for the 2024 Kentucky Local Food Systems Summit. The 6th Annual Summit will be held on March 20th, 2024 at Kroger Field in Lexington.

We are seeking breakout session proposals that explore current challenges and/or opportunities facing local/regional food systems in Kentucky or highlight novel programming, research, or outreach efforts related to local/regional food systems in Kentucky. While we encourage anyone who is interested to attend, the primary audience for the Summit is local food systems practitioners.

The deadline to submit a proposal is November 1st. More information about the Summit can be found [here](#).

Support CFA's Mattie Mack Farmer Fund*

(*Previously the Kentucky Black Farmer Fund)

The Mattie Mack Farmer Fund, organized by Community Farm Alliance (CFA) supports BIPOC farmers across Kentucky. If you would like to donate to assist with this fund, please [click here!](#) Applications for interested farmers open in Fall 2023. Those eligible to apply must satisfy all of the following:

- BIPOC-operated, family farms in Kentucky with fewer than ten employees;
- Farms who are actively part of the local food system, including produce, livestock, edible herbs, honey, maple syrup;
- Currently farming; and
- Selling products through local markets (i.e. farmers market, roadside market, Community Supported Agriculture, farm share, local restaurants, etc.)

Please contact CFA staff members Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin at tiffany@cfaky.org and Laurie White at laurie@cfaky.org for assistance.

From ATTRA: Urban Agroforestry

This new ATTRA publication covers planning, designing, and managing and maintaining an urban agroforestry project and also addresses siting and discusses considerations of community urban agroforestry. Trees and other perennial crops can be integrated into any number of urban landscapes, including urban farms, backyards, public parks, roadsides, neighborhoods, and other underutilized or marginal spaces. With proper planning, design, and management, these systems can increase the economic, ecological, and community resilience of urban areas. [Read it here](#)

Manage Weeds on Your Farm Video Series

The Manage Weeds on Your Farm Video Series is a companion to SARE's [Manage Weeds on Your Farm](#), a definitive guide to understanding agricultural weeds and how to manage them efficiently, effectively and ecologically. [Manage Weeds on Your Farm](#) shows you how to outsmart

your weeds by identifying the right tactic for the right weed at the right time, which will reduce as much as possible the amount of herbicide used. Download your copy today!



red, while ensuring you use the right tactic for the right weed at the right time, which will reduce as much as possible the amount of herbicide used. Download your copy today!

Stay in touch:

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PO Box 22244, Lexington, KY 40522
e: info@oak-ky.org | p: 1.502.219.7378

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