

Vol. 5 · April 2024

The Stalk



Accomack & Northampton County Cooperative Extension
Eastern Shore Agricultural Research & Extension Center

Meet the Candidates Interviewing for Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences!

The Provost of Virginia Tech has announced several Open Forums and opportunities for stakeholders across Virginia to meet with the 3 candidates interviewing for dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech. A full description of happenings, candidate biographies, and the search process can be found [HERE](#)

THE FOLLOWING OPEN FORUMS ARE BEING OFFERED:

Tracy Rutherford

- Monday, April 15, in 145 Steger Hall on the Blacksburg campus and on Zoom. Open forum, 3:30-4:30 p.m. for presentation and Q&A. Reception: 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 17, at the Virginia Farm Bureau Auditorium, 12580 West Creek Parkway in Richmond, and on WebEx. Open forum: 2-3 p.m. for presentation and Q&A. Reception: 3-4 p.m.

John Killefer

- Thursday, April 18, in the Holtzman Alumni Center Assembly Hall on the Blacksburg campus and on Zoom. Open forum: 2:00-3:00 p.m. for presentation and Q&A. Reception: 3-4 p.m.
- Friday, April 19, at the Virginia Farm Bureau Auditorium, 12580 West Creek Parkway in Richmond, and on WebEx. Open forum: 2-3 p.m. for presentation and Q&A. Reception: 3-4 p.m.

Mario Ferruzzi

- Monday, April 22, in the Holtzman Alumni Center Assembly Hall on the Blacksburg campus and on Zoom. Open forum: 3:30-4:30 p.m. for presentation and Q&A. Reception: 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 24, at the Virginia Farm Bureau Auditorium, 12580 West Creek Parkway in Richmond, and on WebEx. Open forum: 2-3 p.m. for presentation and Q&A. Reception: 3-4 p.m.

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Agents participate in Agricultural Literacy Week

The week of March 18 through 23 was Agricultural Literacy Week. It is part of Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom program, a statewide educational program providing resources, training and support to schools, educators and volunteers so that they can meaningfully connect children to agriculture.

Northampton and Accomack extension agents read the 2024 Book of the Year, "Logan's Greenhouse" to Occohanock Elementary School on Friday March 22nd to a group of first graders. We also conducted hands-on activities to teach students how to plant seeds and the recognition of vegetables and fruits.



Hélène and Theresa visit Occohanock Elementary



Agents' Calendar:

"Working for the Wellbeing of Our Communities!"

On-Going VCE Efforts in April

- April 2nd: Eastern Shore Master Gardener Volunteer meeting
- April 17th - Agriculture Showcase: Metompkin Elementary Career Day
- April 18th: VCE DPLT Fiscal Training
- April 20th: 4H/ESSWCD Eastern Shore Science Fair Judging
- April 23rd-24th: Agent Training: Pesticides (Southern Piedmont AREC)
- Slug Trapping Research to evaluate slug population density.
- Wireworm bait damage evaluation following seed treated wheat
- Field corn variety trial planting at the ESAREC.
- Planning of "Raising Quality and Large Sized Vegetables for Fair Competition" Workshop
- In-person Interviews for ESAREC Assistant Entomology Professor Hiring Committee
- Finalizing presentations and planning for Commercial Pesticide License Course
- Graphic design projects for food safety website
- Surveying field corn on-farm planting on the Eastern Shore
- Eastern Shore Agricultural Fair Planning Committee Meeting
- Regional Shared-use kitchen Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Study
- International Soil Tillage Research Conference Project Management (2024 ISTRO, Virginia Beach Sept. 23-27)

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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@vce_northampton



@vce_accomack

THE AGENT'S CORNER

Theresa Pittman - Accomack County ANR Agent

Hélène Doughty - Northampton County ANR Agent



UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS



VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

EASTERN SHORE COMMERCIAL PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION



- Categories 1A, 3A, 3B, 6, 10 & 60
- \$20 registration fee
- Register HERE: <https://tinyurl.com/VCE-ES-CPAR-2024>

Time
8:00 am - 3:30 pm

Location
ESAREC
33446 Research Dr
Painter, VA 23420

Date
May 1st, 2024

FOR QUESTIONS
Theresa Pittman - Accomack County - 757-787-1361 - tpittman@vt.edu
Helene Doughty - Northampton County - 757-678-7946 - hdoughty@vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or accommodation, please notify Rachel Barnes, Accomack County at 757-787-1361 during business hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.



VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

WEED SCIENCE WORKING LUNCH



VCE is hosting a working lunch that focuses on post-emergence options for corn and soybean, and control of herbicide-resistant weeds.

Time - Registration
11:30 am

Location
ESAREC
33446 Research Dr
Painter, VA 23420

Date
May 13th, 2024

RSVP
Helene Doughty - Northampton County - 757.678.7946 - hdoughty@vt.edu
Theresa Pittman - Accomack County - 757.787.1361 - tpittman@vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

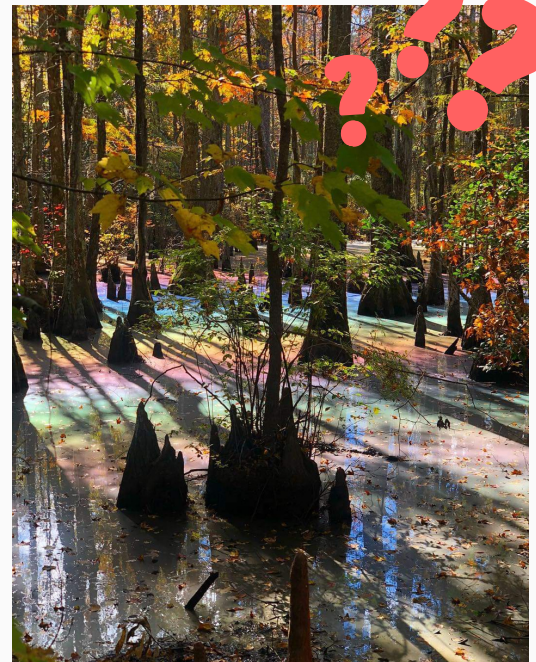
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Agent Question of the Month

What is the oily rainbow color film in ditches?

Answer: Certain oily films bodies of water are biofilms, also sometimes called bog sheen. In habitats with oxygen, aerobic bacteria release carbon dioxide but in habitats without oxygen, anaerobic bacteria release methane. The oily sheen is a product of the water going anaerobic. Methane will escape from this water but some small percentage gets converted into larger hydrocarbons that are less likely to evaporate. Those are lighter than water so they float on the surface creating a sheen.





SMALL FARM WORKSHOP MARCH 20th and 21st

Between the 2017 and 2022 USDA Agricultural Census, there has been a notable surge in the number of small farms on the Eastern Shore. This region, known for its picturesque landscapes and agricultural heritage, has witnessed a growing interest in sustainable farming practices.

VCE's Eastern Shore Small Farm Workshop played a pivotal role in fostering this agricultural growth. Held over two days, the workshop drew 35 enthusiastic attendees—a mix of seasoned farmers, aspiring growers, and agricultural enthusiasts. The event served as a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and skill enhancement.



*"It was a great two days!
Thank you for your efforts -
it was well attended and
excellent topics!"*

Many Thanks to our sponsors:



WHAT'S THAT BUG?

Hélène Doughty, Northampton ANR agent, invites you to test your entomology knowledge. Take a guess on the pest and email or DM your answer! hdoughty@vt.edu



Our previous "What's That Bug" was a trichopoda pennipes. This fly is a parasitoid of several of our insect pests including squash bugs and stink bugs. The fly will lay its egg on the body of the bug from which a larva will emerge and feed and develop within its host. Following larval development, a pupa will emerge from the insect to later reach its adult form. Parasitism of squash bugs may be as high as 80%. However, parasitized bugs continue to feed and lay eggs for some time, and the influence of the fly is not always sufficient to prevent economic crop damage.

Agents' Statistics to Date:

Pesticide Applicators certified to use Paraquat Products:

14

Pesticide Applicators certified to use Dicamba Products:

7

CONTACT US IN PERSON, PHONE OR BY EMAIL:

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Virginia Cooperative Extension and WESR Celebrate National Agriculture Week

VCE agents/specialists and partners celebrated National Agriculture Week with local agricultural facts and a positive message during weekly radio spots provided by WESR.



Below is the radio script played from March 17th - 23rd, 2024

Hi, this is Theresa Pittman, an Eastern Shore farmer's daughter bringing you information on Eastern Shore Agriculture from Virginia Cooperative Extension. Tuesday, March 19th is National Agriculture Day and this week is National Agriculture Week.

I'm honored to tell you about National Agriculture Day. American agriculture is the foundation of our country. It's the backbone of a healthy and prosperous nation, made possible by the hard work of America's farms and farm families.

Every week and more especially this week, there is a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture and remind citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us. Many agricultural associations, corporations, students and government organizations involved in agriculture are participating in the educational effort. Our goal is to encourage Americans while educating them on how food and fiber products are produced.

The agriculture industry is essential not only to our community but to our nation. It is critical to acknowledge and consider that the strength of our local agriculture industry contributes to a strong Eastern Shore economy. The farmer's efforts in growing and tending to crops and livestock, plays a particularly important role in the safe, abundant and affordable products we consume.

While National Agriculture Day allows us to recognize and celebrate the pivotal role of the Eastern Shore agriculture industry, I encourage everyone to join me in being an AGvocate every day! Let's all do our part to share and support the amazing story of Eastern Shore agriculture.

For more information on Eastern Shore agriculture, or for answers to other questions, contact your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office. Here on the Shore call 678-7946 or 787-1361

Agricultural Facts shared on FM 103.3 for National Ag Week

- Consider this: just about everything we eat, wear and use comes from American agriculture. Agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry and contributes 82.3 billion dollars annually in sales and provides more than 381 thousand jobs in the Commonwealth.
- Individual farmers provide food for 6 times as many people as they did in the 1960s.
- We rely on agriculture for the very necessities of life. From beef and pork to cotton and corn, agriculture is working harder than ever to meet the needs of Americans and others around the world. Our industry is dedicated to providing plentiful and safe food and fiber for consumption.
- Did you know American agriculture not only provides you food and clothing, but also helps meet needs around the world? Plus, American agriculture is not just producing more food, it's producing higher quality food.
- 90% of Virginia farms are owned by families or individuals, not corporations.
- According to the most recent U.S. Agricultural Census, farmers in Northampton & Accomack Counties produced over 435 million dollars in total crop sales.
- New technology means farmers are more environmentally friendly than ever before. Eastern Shore growers utilize nutrient management plans for over 65,000 acres of crops and plant over 50,000 acres of cover crops in order to preserve the natural resources for which the Shore is so well known.

[CLICK HERE FOR SOURCES](#)



Together, we raised over \$13 million on Giving Day!

You made a difference this Giving Day! Thank you for joining thousands of Hokies in supporting what you love most about Virginia Tech and the Eastern Shore AREC. Because of you, our future is filled with promise. We hope you enjoy [this video](#) recapping some of our key results.



Giving Day has a long-lasting impact on our university, Hokies everywhere, and the communities we serve. By coming together in the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), we can achieve more than we ever thought possible - and we did.

In just 24 hours, 18,945 Hokies raised more than \$13 million from 22,125 gifts. More than 700 Hokies raised more than \$1 million for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences! That's an accomplishment worth celebrating.

We couldn't do it without you! Thank you for being a game-changer this Giving Day. In addition, the Eastern Shore AREC won 1st place for number of gifts, earning us a bonus prize thanks to our ambassador, Belinda Sterling, and all our Eastern Shore AREC supporters! Thank you for all you do!



LEADERBOARD

The top-4 ARECs that receive the most unique donors during Giving Day will receive bonus funds

RANK	PRIZE	AREC	DONORS
1	\$2,500	Eastern Shore Experiment Station	65
2	\$1,750	Southern Piedmont Experiment Station	37
3	\$1,250	Virginia Seafood Experiment Station	15
4	\$750	Eastern Virginia Experiment Station	9



St. Patrick's Day Parade. Spreading the cheer of the Eastern Shore!

BE ON THE LOOKOUT for emails and social media posts announcing opportunities to interact with our four Applied Entomology Extension Specialist Candidates!

Candidates will be on the ESVA on April 16, 22, 24, and 30th. Candidates will present an Extension and applied research seminar, followed by an Open Forum to answer questions and for you to dig deeper into their interests. Zoom interaction will be available so you can still be working in the field while participating! All comments given by stakeholders will be heavily weighed by the search committee in deliberations.

Research Needs Assessment for CALS



The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech has launched a comprehensive research needs assessment survey, aimed at steering the future direction of its agricultural research initiatives. This strategic effort is currently underway, and the survey is open until fall.

The survey, open to faculty, students, industry partners, and stakeholders, seeks to identify the most pressing research needs within the agricultural sector. It covers a range of topics, including sustainable farming practices, crop science, animal husbandry, agricultural echnology, and the life sciences.

Mary Burrows, associate dean of research and director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, emphasized the importance of this endeavor.

"In a rapidly evolving world, it's crucial that our research stays ahead of the curve," Burrows said. "This survey will help us align our resources with the most urgent and impactful areas of agricultural research."

Participants have until fall to complete the survey, which can be accessed online at [bit.ly/VAES Survey](https://bit.ly/VAES_Survey). The college anticipates releasing the findings in late 2024 with the goal of implementing new research projects that reflect the community's needs and priorities.



<https://virginiatech.questionpro.com/VAESSurvey>

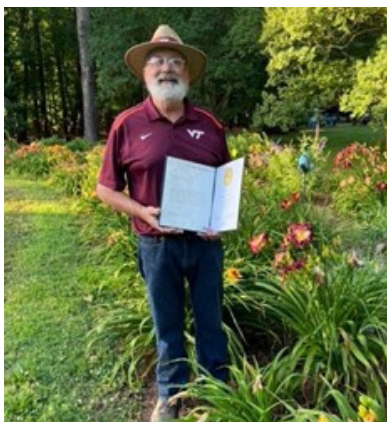


Custis wins Career Achievement Award

Mr. Tommy Custis was nominated as a finalist for the 2024 Virginia Tech Staff Career Achievement Award. Created in 2011 to recognize retiring staff members, the Staff Career Achievement Award is presented annually to individuals who retired the previous year and who distinguished themselves through exemplary performance and service during their university career.



Tommy became eligible for this award upon retiring as our Eastern Shore AREC Farm Manager after 38-years of dedicated service to Virginia Tech and the agricultural industry in Virginia. During his tenure at the Experimental Station, Tommy assisted with countless applied research experiments that were used to gather innovative datasets to improve the efficiency and economics for Virginia growers in the fields of soils, nutrient management, weed science, plant pathology, entomology, horticulture, food safety, and biological systems engineering.



Tommy managed a farm crew that was well versed and managed to keep older equipment running and juggled multiple tasks within a day to ensure effective research was conducted, which is now published and utilized to positively impact farm practice and regulation around the Commonwealth. Tommy will receive his award in May 2024.

Pay attention to the weather during flowering for economic disease control in wheat.

Dr. Doug Higgins, Plant Pathologist, Eastern Shore AREC, Painter, VA

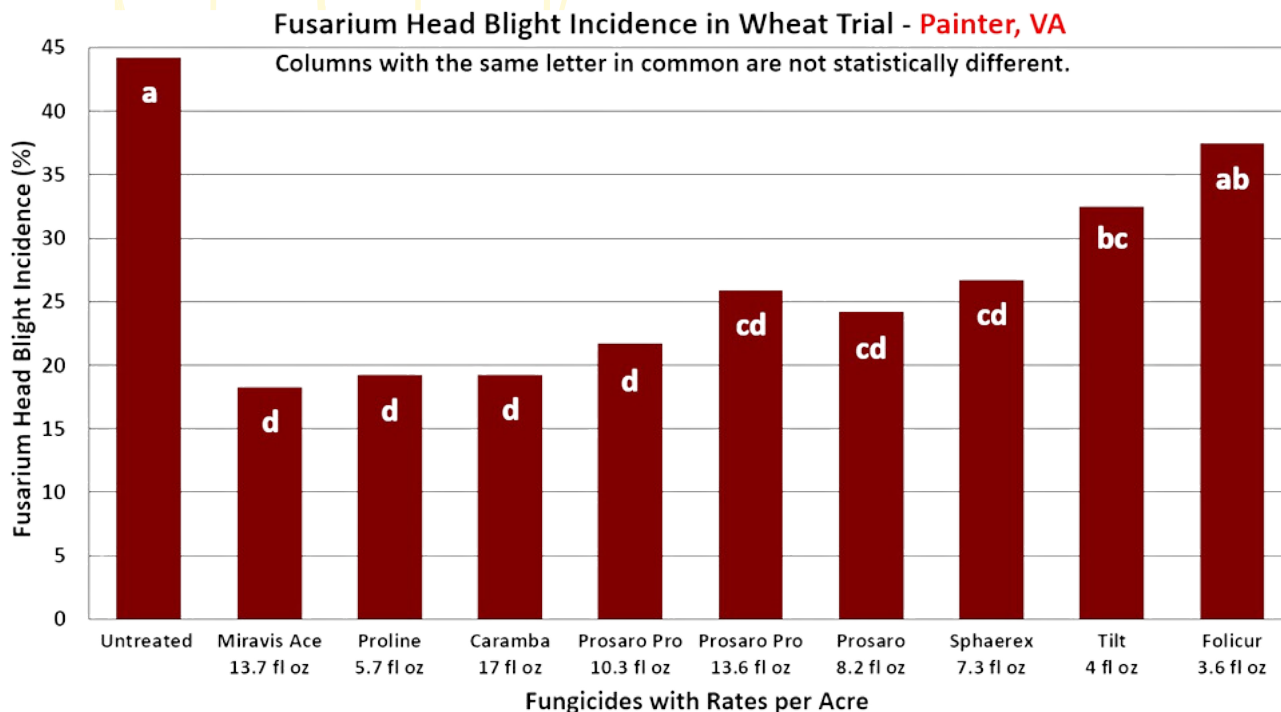
Wheat heads are susceptible to Fusarium head blight during flowering. While some varieties of wheat are less susceptible to Fusarium head blight than others, none are immune to the disease. A well-timed fungicide application can help reduce disease and lower mycotoxin (deoxynivalenol) levels but fungicides are most beneficial when weather conditions favor disease.



Essentially, dry and cool weather during flowering are low risk conditions for Fusarium head blight. However, conditions can change rapidly. The highest disease risk is when there is 2-3 days of high humidity and warm (75-85°F) temperatures just before, during and after flowering. To get the most up-to-date disease forecasts for the Eastern Shore refer to the [Fusarium Risk Tool](#).

Fungicide should be applied at early wheat flowering (Feekes 10.5.1) when Fusarium head blight risk is at a medium risk in the forecast tool. If the fungicide cannot go on exactly at early flowering, it is still worthwhile to apply the fungicide up to several days later. Do not use fungicides that contain QoIs (strobilurin; FRAC 11) after the flag leaf stage, they can increase mycotoxin levels.

In replicated fungicide field trials conducted on the Eastern Shore in 2023 Camabra, Proline, Miravis Ace, Sphaerex, Prosaro, and Prosaro Pro are among the most effective fungicides at reducing Fusarium head blight (see figure). Camabra has been discontinued by the registrant and is no longer available. If you have any questions, please reach out!



[CLICK
HERE
FOR
Fusarium
Risk
Tool](#)

Cover Crop Termination, Timing, and Herbicide Selection

Dr. Vijay Singh, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist, Weed Science



Planting season is approaching fast, and growers who planted cover crops in past fall need to terminate them timely. In general, there are three major factors which growers need to consider for deciding time of termination. First, termination timing should allow maximizing of cover crop biomass, which suggests late termination, however, (2) timing should also consider maturity of cover crop, and cover crop should be terminated before it matures or produce seeds, especially, brassica species (e.g. rapeseed mustard). Matured cover crop seeds can lead to volunteer issues later in the crop or next season. (3) Consider termination timing based on herbicide program, herbicide residual time period and its impact on timing of main crop planting.

In general, growers in our region can target third week of April to first week of May for termination of cover crops if they are planning to plant corn crop. For soybean and cotton, cover crops can be terminated by second to third week of May.

Herbicides are the most preferred tools for termination of cover crops and glyphosate is the most common herbicide. However, our previous experiences indicate that glyphosate alone is not sufficient for terminating high biomass cover crops. Combining glyphosate with roller crimper, and/or with 2,4-D for broadleaved cover crops (e.g. rapeseed, mustard, hairy vetch, red clover) helps in better termination. Paraquat (Gramoxone) can also be used to terminate cover crops, and has shown excellent efficacy on broadleaved cover crops, but paraquat alone may not be a good option for cereal rye termination as it may re-grow after some time. Both glyphosate and paraquat are non-residual herbicides, however, glyphosate may take more time to completely kill cover crop compared with paraquat. Paraquat requires greater carrier volume (15-20 gallons/ac) for excellent control compared with glyphosate (10-15 gallons/ac). Among other options, Liberty (glufosinate) can be used for termination of cover crops in late April or May when temperature is above 72 F accompanied with bright sunny days.

Consider tankmix applications for greater termination efficiency and burndown of other weeds. For soybean system, Select max (6 – 8 oz/ac) can be tankmixed with glyphosate. Add 2,4-D amine (16 fl oz / ac) with glyphosate (Roundup Powermax 22 – 32 fl oz/ac), glufosinate (Liberty 43 fl oz/ac) or paraquat (48 fl oz/ac) if targeting broadleaved cover crop species in corn and soybean systems. If using 2,4-D in combination, plant corn at least 7-days after application. Considering adding AMS (8.5 lbs/ 100 gallons) to glyphosate for greater efficacy. Sharpen (1 oz/ac) can be used with glyphosate for termination but maintain a window of 14-days before planting soybean. Follow label guidelines and mixing of adjuvants for herbicide safety and efficacy.





IMPORTANT

INFORMATION FOR VEGETABLE GROWERS



Survey on a USDA SCRI Grant proposal (UGA-UF-NCSU-VT)

The Eastern Shore AREC research teams are putting together a USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) proposal with other colleagues from the University of Georgia, North Carolina State University and University of Florida that is led by Dr. Theodore Mcavoy (UGA).

The project is related to the conversion of agricultural waste products into valuable resources and the implementation of advanced labor-saving technologies, in order to promote sustainability and competitiveness of vegetable farms.

In order to support our submission, we have considered it important to get feedback from as many as possible vegetable growers.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL IS PROVIDED BELOW:

The future viability of American vegetable farms is in peril. Rising fertilizer and labor costs, burdensome environmental and labor regulations, food safety and water quality concerns, and yield declines overtime due to soil borne pathogens and soil exhaustion are all contributing factors. Our multistate specialty crop research and extension project will have two major components:

- 1) improving soils by amending them with renewable, locally sourced, affordable waste products such as biochar and manure and
- 2) implementing next level labor saving technology, including commercially available machines, drones, self-charging and propelled robots utilizing artificial intelligence software to preform manually intensive farm operations, such as transplanting, spraying and weeding.

THE OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- 1) provide information and promote sustainable production practices that lead to adoption of methods which improve soils resulting in increased plant growth, food safety, yields and profitability while reducing diseases, costs and environmental impacts and
- 2) reduce reliance on labor leading to increased worker safety, productivity, and revenue while reducing costs, chemicals and dependence on manual labor.

Therefore, we would be grateful if you as a vegetable grower would fill out this quick survey:

https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a5XisdWDWAY9aIM



**WE WANT YOUR
FEEDBACK**



Happy ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS Day!



Rachel Barnes, Unit Support Staff, Accomack County VCE
Amanda Hurley, Unit Support Staff, Northampton County VCE
Belinda Sterling, Administrative and Office Specialist, Eastern Shore AREC

April 24, 2024 is a day to recognize and celebrate the amazing work that VCE's administrative professionals do every day. We are so grateful to have so many talented and dedicated administrative professionals on our team. Thank you for all your hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. We couldn't do it without you!



SAVE THE DATE: AUGUST 26, 2024 2024 Eastern Shore Household Water Quality Clinic

Hosted by: Accomack & Northampton County Cooperative Extension Offices



4-H EMBRYOLOGY

Northampton 4-H
is
EGGS-PECTING!

Duck eggs will be set at
Broadwater Academy and Shore
Christian in April

Chicks will arrive in May!



EASTERN SHORE REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024
9:00AM

VIMS Eastern Shore Lab
40 Atlantic Ave
Wachapreague, VA 23480

**OPEN TO PUBLIC,
PRIVATE &
HOMESCHOOL**

Schools will need to register youth representing their school by April 12, 2024 by completing this form: bit.ly/ESVAscifair

For Rules & Judging Criteria please contact Erin Morgan or Julie Head.

Competition Divisions:
Upper Elementary (3rd - 5th)
Middle School (6th - 8th)
High School (9th - 12th)

For more information, please contact:
Northampton 4-H Agent Erin Morgan at 757-678-7946 x15 or email emorgan2@vt.edu
Eastern Shore Soil & Water Environmental Educator Julie Head at 757-302-4433 or email julie.head@esswcd.org

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Erin Morgan at 757-678-7946 ext. 15 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

Virginia Cooperative Extension
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VCE & ESAREC Contact Information

	Faculty/Staff	Title	Email	Work/Cell Phone
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	VACANT	4-H Agent		
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	VACANT	Mechanic		
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VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
 VIRGINIA TECH.

Virginia Cooperative Extension brings the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth. VCE provides education through programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development and Community Viability.

The Virginia Tech, Eastern Shore AREC is committed to supporting commercial vegetable, grain, oilseed, and fiber production throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Centrally located on Virginia's Eastern Shore, the center conducts basic and applied research on more than 25 agricultural crops.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in any activity, please contact Rachel Barnes at 757-787-1361* (*TDD number is (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss accommodations.