

Vol. 4 · August 2023

# The Stalk

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

## ***New VCE Agriculture and Natural Resource Agents visit the Eastern Shore***

The new agent orientation held at the end of July on the Eastern Shore was an immersive experience for the incoming agricultural agents. They were introduced to the Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC) and had the opportunity to meet with VCE agents and specialists, fostering valuable networking and collaboration opportunities.

The facilities and field tour allowed the agents to gain first-hand knowledge of the agricultural practices and research initiatives specific to the Eastern Shore region. The interactive nature of the tour facilitated a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by local producers.

The event's highlight was the traditional Eastern Shore clam bake, which not only provided a delightful culinary experience but also showcased the area's rich cultural heritage. Learning how to open oysters and pick crabs added a fun and educational aspect to the event, allowing the agents to immerse themselves in the local seafood traditions.

Overall, the new agent orientation was a resounding success, offering a comprehensive introduction to the Eastern Shore's agricultural landscape, fostering professional relationships, and creating lasting memories of the region's unique culture and cuisine.

*See Photos on Page 6*

## ***This issue:***

New VCE ANR Agent Event  
[Page 01](#)

The Agent's Corner  
[Page 02](#)

Updates from the ESAREC Director  
[Page 03](#)

Plant Pathology Research  
[Page 04](#)

New Agent Event Photos  
[Page 05](#)

Society of St. Andrew Photos  
[Page 06](#)

Job Ads/Announcements  
[Page 07 & 08](#)

4-H Photography Workshop  
[Page 09](#)

Eastern Shore Water Clinic  
[Page 10](#)



### **Eastern Shore Insect Monitoring Program**

Bug Traps will continue to be monitored for another couple weeks in both Accomack and Northampton Counties. Corn earworm numbers have spiked twice in Northampton County but remained below threshold in Accomack. Fall armyworm numbers are below threshold in both counties. The Insect Monitoring Program plays a critical role in understanding the insect diversity, ecological balance, and potential threats in the region. The findings contribute to evidence-based decision-making for sustainable agriculture, conservation efforts, and management of insect-related challenges in the Eastern Shore area.



### **Society of St. Andrew**

The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) is a faith-based organization that aims to reduce food waste and fight hunger by salvaging fresh produce that would otherwise go to waste and redistributing it to those in need. They work with farmers, volunteers, and partner agencies to glean fields after harvest and collect surplus food from farms, packing houses, and distributors. This collected food is then distributed to food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens to help alleviate food insecurity among vulnerable populations. Some of the local beneficiaries include: Dos Santos Food Pantry, the Eastern Shore Food Bank in Tasley, as well as Lighthouse Ministries and Shore Health and Rehab.

You can read more about SoSA and its history of gleaning on the Eastern Shore by reading page 32 and 33 of the [July 21st edition](#) of the Eastern Shore Post or visit the SoSA website at [endhunger.org/Delmarva](https://endhunger.org/Delmarva).

### **USDA GAP Audit**

Seven regional farms have completed and/or passed a 2023 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit with assistance from the Accomack County Agricultural Extension Agent. The purpose of the audit is to ensure that the farm is adhering to strict food safety guidelines and practices to minimize the risk of contamination and ensure the safety and quality of their produce. Successfully passing a USDA GAP audit allows farms to gain certification, demonstrating their commitment to safe farming practices and often enabling them to access new markets, buyers, and opportunities for growth. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a certified farm or would like to complete a farm review, contact Theresa Pittman at the Accomack County Extension Office.

### **Eastern Shore Health Department**

I was recently contacted and asked to share information about the Eastern Shore Health District Community Health Assessment. This assessment is a vital initiative aimed at gathering valuable insights and feedback from residents in the Eastern Shore region regarding their health and well-being. By participating in this survey, community members have the opportunity to influence public health programs and services, as well as contribute to the development of targeted interventions and resources tailored to their specific needs. The survey provides a platform for individuals to voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas, enabling the health district to make informed decisions and foster a healthier, more vibrant community. Active participation from residents is encouraged to ensure the success and effectiveness of the survey in shaping a healthier future for the Eastern Shore. Please consider participating in this anonymous survey, which can be found in this newsletter.





### **A Summer of Experiential Learning: VT-REEL**

This summer, the Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC) hosted two interns that were housed within the Weed Science and Soils and Nutrient Management programs. Virginia Tech's Research and Extension Experiential Learning (VT-REEL) program has a focus on Securing Our Food in a research-intensive, 10-week summer experience. The VT-REEL program engaged undergraduate students in translational plant science research via a combination of hands-on laboratory and field-based experiences. VT-REEL fellows spent the first half of the program on-campus, working in molecular labs, and spent the second half of the program at ARECs, working in applied labs.

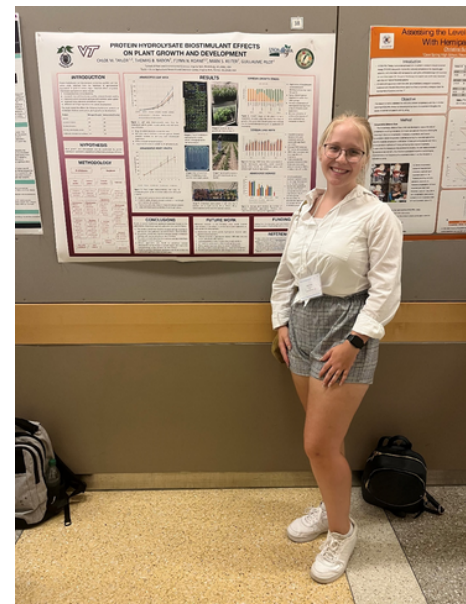


Chloe Taylor, working with faculty mentor Mark Reiter and graduate student mentor Thomas Badon, spent the summer investigating various biostimulants and resulting impacts on soybean growth. Chloe monitored soybean plant biomass, greenness, and time to reach milestone growth stages after various biostimulant applications. She presented her work at the Virginia Tech 2023 Summer Research Symposium on July 27, 2023 with a poster titled, "Protein Hydrolysate Biostimulant Effects on Plant Growth and Development." Chloe will continue showcasing her work at the Virginia Ag Expo in the Advanced Agronomy Area in Virginia Beach, VA on August 3. Chloe is a rising sophomore at Virginia Tech and majoring in Sustainable Biomaterials.



Chloe spraying biostimulant on soybean at the Eastern Shore AREC

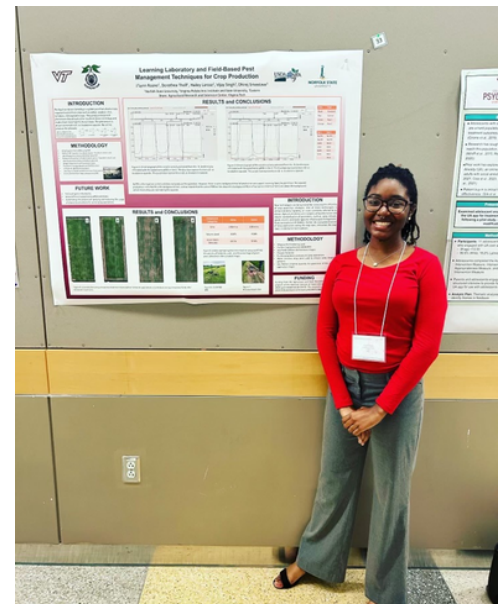
J'Lynn Roane worked with faculty mentor Vijay Singh and graduate student mentors Dhiraj Srivastava and Akash Brar. J'Lynn focused on pest management issues for field crops using traditional and technological techniques. At the Eastern Shore AREC, she learned about weeds important to our growers with a focus on Italian ryegrass and its control using harvest weed seed control methods (i.e. chaff lining). She also participated in studies that utilized drone-based mapping and spray applications. J'Lynn presented her work at the Summer Research Symposium with a poster presentation titled, "Learning Laboratory and Field-Based Pest Management Techniques for Crop Production." J'Lynn is a rising junior at Norfolk State University and is majoring in Biology.



Chloe presenting her work at the 2023 Summer Research Symposium at Virginia Tech



J'Lynn sampling the weed seedbank in topsoil in an Eastern Shore soybean field



J'Lynn presenting her VT-REEL experience at Virginia Tech's 2023 Summer Research Symposium in Blacksburg



## Plant Pathology Research Update

Dr. Doug Higgins, Plant Pathologist, Eastern Shore AREC

### Plant Pathology Lab - 2023 Snap Bean Disease Scouting Report

**Halo blight.** In late June we diagnosed a snap bean sample with halo blight. The disease is caused by a bacterial pathogen (*Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *phaseolicola*). Symptoms on leaves were a yellow-green halo surrounding small brown spots. Halo blight is considered a cool-temperature disease. The bacterial pathogen causing this disease produces a phytotoxin that 64-73°F. Management actions are only needed if favorable conditions, cool temperatures and high relative humidity, persist for extend periods of time.



**Pythium leak.** We have received several snap bean samples affected by Pythium leak. Pythium leak is a serious concern because it damages the harvestable pod resulting in decreased yield and poor quality. This is a soilborne disease caused by a water mold (*Pythium* spp.). The disease spreads by water splashing up into the canopy and bean pods that come in contact with the soil. White, cottony pathogen growth (mycelium) develops from lesions and can grow to cover the surface of affected tissue. This disease is often confused with white mold or southern blight that also produce white, cottony growth. Affected plants need to be examined by a plant pathologist to distinguish amongst these three diseases. Many of the fungicides applied to manage Pythium leak are ineffective against white mold and southern blight.



**Cyst nematode.** We diagnosed soybean cyst nematode (*Heterodera glycines*) on snap beans presenting stunting and low vigor symptoms. Female cyst nematodes were observed in the roots. Nematode issues are commonly found in conjunction with other soilborne diseases. Rotate crops to a poor/non-host plants (i.e. corn, wheat, rapeseed) and avoid soybeans.



Plant Pathology Lab harvested this year's field plots, designed to test Fusarium head blight control methods, in late June/early July with the new plot combine and veteran AREC Soil technician, John Mason (Left). Cole Siegel, Senior at Nandua High School, helping the Plant Pathology Lab develop a rating scale for Fusarium diseased kernel harvested from this year's field plots (Right).





# New VCE Agriculture and Natural Resource Agents visit the Eastern Shore July 19, 2023





# Society of St. Andrew Gleaning on the Eastern Shore



Society of St. Andrew  
GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS  
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) is a national gleaning nonprofit that partners with farmers and packing houses to rescue the good food that goes to waste in our food system and distributes to those in the community who lack access to it. The SoSA celebrated their 40th anniversary of the Potato Project while on the Shore the week of July 17th. SoSA began in Accomack County when Butch Nottingham and other farmers agreed to work with SoSA to see if there was food in their fields that could help others. Now, nearly a billion pounds later, we know Butch and his friends helped birth a whole new ministry for SoSA.

Eastern Shore farmers yielded 400 pounds of snap beans, 6,850 pounds potatoes, and 2,250 pounds of corn in 2023. Organizations that were able to distribute the donated produce to those in need included: Dos Santos Food Pantry, the Eastern Shore Food Bank in Tasley, as well as Lighthouse Ministries and Shore Health and Rehab.





# CAREERS



## Communications Associate (Job no: 525797)

Responsible for telling the story of the Eastern Shore and Hampton Roads ARECs to a local, state, and international audience. Can be based in Painter, VA at the Eastern Shore AREC. Experience working in communications, public relations, journalism or related field and have experience in writing about scientific issues for non-scientific audiences is required. Full-time position with benefits. For more information and to apply online, visit: <https://careers.pageuppeople.com/968/cw/en-us/job/525797/communications-associate-esarechrarec>

## Research Specialist, Sr. (Job no. 521473)

Conducts weed science research leading to efficient and effective weed control in grain, oilseed, fiber, and vegetable crops. A BS in weed science, a closely related field, or significant experience demonstrating proficiency in weed science research tasks is required. Full-time position with benefits. For more information and to apply online, visit: <https://careers.pageuppeople.com/968/cw/en-us/job/521473/research-specialist-sr>



## WHAT'S THAT BUG?

Hélène Doughty, Research Specialist Sr., invites you to test your entomology knowledge. Take a guess on the pest and email her your answer!  
[hdoughty@vt.edu](mailto:hdoughty@vt.edu)



Hint: found on a cabbage leaf this past spring

**July's Answer:** Neonate (just emerged) Saltmarsh caterpillars *Estigmene acrea* (Drury). This insect is considered a secondary pest of vegetable and grain crops. We typically never see large enough populations to inflict significant economical damage on crops. Its feeding as a larva leads to some defoliation in several vegetable host plants such as beans, beet, cabbage, carrot, celery, corn, lettuce, onion, pea, tomato, and others and field crop host plants such as soybean, cotton, tobacco, alfalfa and clover.



# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Eastern Shore Health District is  
collecting responses for our  
Community Health Assessment.  
We want your input!

The survey is anonymous and will only take around  
5 minutes to complete.

There are lots of ways to take it!

- Over the phone by calling Laurie at 757-710-0277
- In person at the health department
- Online at <https://redcap.link/fob7chii>  
or use the QR code below:



## **SAVE THE DATE**




**Accomack County Farm Tour Day - September 19, 2023**

*Hosted by: Accomack County Cooperative Extension, Accomack County Farm Bureau  
and Duncan Farms in New Church*

**Northampton County Farm Tour Day - September 20, 2023**

*Hosted by: Northampton County Cooperative Extension, Northampton County Farm  
Bureau and Shore Breeze Farms in Cheriton*





# NORTHAMPTON 4-H Photography Workshop

Friday, August 18, 2023  
9:00am - 12:00pm



Northampton County VCE office  
16392 Courthouse Rd  
Eastville, VA

Come gain an understanding of using the principal of three, creating interest in your photograph and many other techniques. No equipment or experience is necessary! Youth are welcome to bring a camera from home to learn on or use one of the cameras we will have available. For ages 10 and up.

To sign up, email  
[emorgan2@vt.edu](mailto:emorgan2@vt.edu) or call  
(757) 678-7946



## 2023 EASTERN SHORE Household Water Quality Clinic

*Does your water come from a well, spring, or cistern?*

*Do you want to learn more about the quality of your water and how to care for your water system?*

### How does it work?

1. Pick up a sample kit from your local County Extension office and get instructions on how to collect your household water sample.
2. Collect a sample from your tap at home and complete a short questionnaire.
3. Drop off sample at your local County Extension office.
4. About 4 weeks later, receive your confidential test results, an explanation of what the numbers mean, and information about how to handle any problems that are present. For more information, visit: <http://www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu/clinics.php>



### What does the water test include?

**Limited kits available • sign up today!!!**

Iron	Manganese	Sulfate	Hardness	pH	Total Dissolved Solids	Fluoride
Sodium	Copper	Nitrate	Arsenic	Lead	E. coli bacteria	Coliform bacteria

### How much does it cost?

Scholarships are available from a partnership with SERCAP through the Eastern Shore Water Quality Improvement Project grant (Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Justice Program). Sample kits are \$65 each or with scholarship, \$10 each, limit one \$10 kit per household.

**Registration is required** – Please visit <https://tinyurl.com/VCE-EasternShore-VAHWQP>, to pre-pay for your sample kit with a credit card. A registration receipt will be required for pick-up of your sample kit on Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to purchase your sample kit via check, please visit your local Extension Office.

	Date	Location (Accomack County)	Location (Northampton County)
Pick up sample kit	<b>August 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Accomack Cooperative Extension 23185 Front St Accomack, VA 23301 <b>8:30am – 4:00pm</b>	Northampton Cooperative Extension 16392 Courthouse Rd Eastville, VA 23347 <b>8:00am – 4:30pm</b>
Instructions for Sampling	<b>View on your own</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2wqzuzvbK4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2wqzuzvbK4</a>	
Drop off samples	<b>August 29<sup>th</sup></b>	Accomack Cooperative Extension 23185 Front St Accomack, VA 23301 <b>8:30am – 4:00pm</b>	Northampton Cooperative Extension 16392 Courthouse Rd Eastville, VA 23347 <b>8:00am – 4:30pm</b>
Receive Results via mail/email	<b>A few weeks after testing</b>	ONLINE	ONLINE

**Contact: Northampton County Extension Office: 757-678-7946 or**

**Accomack County Extension Office: 757-787-1361**

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Amanda Hurley at 757-678-7946 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.



## VCE & ESAREC Contact Information

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	Amanda Hurley	Unit Support Staff	amandalh@vt.edu	757/678-7946
	Faculty/Staff	Title	Email	Work/Cell Phone
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	VACANT	4-H Agent		757/787-1361
	Rachel Barnes	Unit Support Staff	mrbarnes@vt.edu	757/787-1361
	Faculty/Staff	Title	Email	Work/Cell Phone
<b>Eastern Shore Agricultural Research &amp; Extension Center</b> 33446 Research Dr. Painter, VA 23420 <a href="https://www.ares.vaes.vt.edu/ares/eastern-shore.html">https://www.ares.vaes.vt.edu/ares/eastern-shore.html</a>	Mark Reiter	Director/Professor, Soils & Nutrient Management	mreiter@vt.edu	W 757/807-6576 C 757/693-2556
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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, 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 Amanda Hurley at 757-678-7946\* (\*TDD number is (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss accommodations.