Foodshed Field School Launch

**Future Harvest CASA** recently launched its new **Foodshed Field School**, which provides year-round educational programming for farmers, consumers, and everyone in-between wanting to learn how to grow and source sustainably in the Chesapeake region.

The program offers farmer education on the latest innovations in sustainable growing. It also provides programming for farmers’ customers – chefs, wholesalers, grocery stores, and individual consumers – on how and where to source sustainably and locally grown food. Our programming comes in a variety of formats: panel discussions, field days, intensives, and workshops.

The Foodshed Field School also houses our **Beginner Farmer Training Program (BFTP)**, which is now in its seventh season and in greater demand than ever. The BFTP provides trainees with in-depth classroom learning as well as practical, hands-on training by pairing them with successful, sustainable farmers in the region. (article cont. on page 2)
The Foodshed Field School starts each year with our annual conference in January, which this year attracted more than 550 attendees. We then carry the momentum and ideas generated at the conference through our programming for the rest of the year. The school covers a range of experience levels, from introductory to advanced, in 6 topic areas: Fruit & Vegetable Production, Grassfed: Meat & Dairy, Made Local: Artisanal Foods, Environment, Community & Policy, Business of Farming, and Everybody Eats: Health & Food.

Here is a brief look ahead at upcoming field events, the most up-to-date information can be found on our website at: futureharvestcasa.org/field-school/field-school-events

March 20: Coastal Sunbelt Produce: Working with Distributors (Savage, MD)

Early April (Date TBD): 2-Day High Tunnel Raising at UMD Terp Farm (Upper Marlboro, MD)

April 27: Sassafras Creek Farm Tour: Improving Efficiency on Your Farm (Leonardtown, MD)

May 7: Farm Skills Refresher (Purcellville, VA)

May 23: Hops Hop – Tour of local hops growers and Flying Dog brewery (Multiple locations in MD & VA)

More programming to be announced soon, including pasture walks on the Eastern Shore, and field events in West Virginia and Delaware!

Also, coming up on April 16th: Dinner at Gertrude’s of Baltimore, a fundraiser for Future Harvest’s Beginner Farmer Training Program. Simply eat dinner at the restaurant on Thursday, April 16, and a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to Future Harvest. To make dinner reservations, call: (410) 889-3399.
Recap: Mid-Atlantic WIA

The **Mid-Atlantic Women in Ag Conference** took place on February 12 and 13 in Dover Delaware. Over 100 women from across Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia flocked to Dover Downs to learn about the many aspects of agriculture.

Friday night activities included two pre-conference workshops covering Agri-tourism and Estate Planning. These informational sessions were followed by an evening social hour and harness racing.

Despite the bitter cold, Saturday’s events kicked off with a discussion of biotechnology from which preceded the afternoon workshops covering many diverse topics.

**Be sure to join us next year!!!**

Recap: Small Ruminant Expo

The **Small Ruminant Expo** took place on Saturday, February 28 at the Frederick 4H Camp Center with over 120 in attendance. The all-day event featured separate educational programs for adults and youth. Four tracks were offered, including forage/pasture, marketing, production and health, and alternative enterprises.

The youth program included sessions related to fiber, dairy, meat, and science. Everyone enjoyed a lunch of a taco bar, with a choice of lamb and/or goat meat and sheep and/or goat milk cheese all sourced locally.

Thanks to all for coming!
Beginning a Successful Small Farm Course

Studies show that most new small farm owners are new to farming, or have little agricultural experience, and that the new farming venture is a family project. For this reason, this 7-week, 14-hour course is designed to provide some basic training in critical farming subject matter for those new and inexperienced in agricultural production in this region.

You are invited to participate in this upcoming short course series, Beginning a Successful Small Farm, to be held on Thursdays from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, from April 2 to May 14. This course is specifically designed for beginner farmers. All classes will be held at the University of Maryland Extension, located at 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick.

Topics to be covered include Finding the Perfect Farm Enterprise/Marketing What You Produce, the Basics of Soil and Plant Fertility, Developing a Pasture System, Pasture System Management Hay Evaluation, Review of Weeds Commonly Found in Pastures, Field and Forage Crops on Small Farms, and Adding Animals to Your Farm.

To register for this course, please either complete the registration form included in this pamphlet and return it promptly to my office, or call me at 301-600-3577, or email me at tepoole@umd.edu. Registration is $15 for this entire course and checks should be made payable to Frederick County EAC. Space is limited, so register as soon as possible.

Click here to receive this newsletter every month

To submit information for the monthly newsletter, please contact the Beginning Farmer Success Project Coordinator, Hannah Shear at hshear@umd.edu.

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