



Virginia Farm to Table Conference 2026

*Resilient Farms and Healthy Foods for the
Commonwealth and Common Good*

📅 December 8 - 9, 2026

🕒 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

📍 Blue Ridge Community College
Plecker Workforce Center
One College Lane
Weyers Cave, Virginia 24486

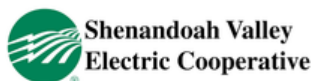
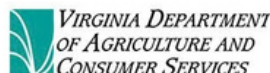
Learn more and register at

www.virginiafarmtotable.org

Evening of Networking and Music at The Granary at Valley Pike Farm Market

Tuesday, December 8 at 4:30 p.m.
The Granary at Valley Pike Farm Market

Brought to you in partnership with



**Michael Rozyne
and Kelsey Gosch**

Red Tomato and
EcoCertified™



Bob Jones Jr.

Chief Executive
Officer and
Farmer, The Chef's
Garden



Julia Freedgood

Author and Senior
Fellow, American
Farmland Trust



Chef Radelle Reese

AgriCulinary &
Hospitality Educator
Department of
Hospitality Management
Virginia State University

and more!

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.

Conference Schedule at a Glance



Day 1 - Tuesday, December 8, 2026

8:30-9:00 AM	Registration and Refreshments
9:00-9:10 AM	Opening Remarks and Welcome - Auditorium Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Katie K. Frazier (Confirmed)
9:10-10:00 AM	Keynote: “The Cost/Price Squeeze: Farms and Markets of the Middle” - Auditorium Michael Rozyne and Kelsey Gosch of Red Tomato and EcoCertified™
10:00-10:50 AM	Keynote: “The Chef’s Garden: A Story of Resilience, Flavor, and Health” - Auditorium Bob Jones Jr., Chief Executive Officer and Farmer, The Chef’s Garden
10:50-11:00 AM	Stretch and Electronic Break
11:00-11:50 AM	Plenary Panel: Resilience and The Convergence of Food Systems Crises - Auditorium • Rick Williams of LD & B Insurance • Michael Rozyne of Red Tomato and EcoCertified • Ashlie Howell of First Bank and Trust • Tony Banks of Virginia Foundation of Agricultural Innovation and Rural Sustainability (VA FAIRS) • Moderator: Dale Gardner, Sustainability Coordinator, Virginia State Dairymen’s Association
11:50 AM-1:00 PM	Lunch - Rooms A and B Catered by
1:00-1:50 PM	Producer Panel: Resilience and The Convergence of Food System Crises - Auditorium • Duron Chavis of Happily Natural Day and Central Virginia Agrarian Community Land Trust (CVACLT) • Amanda Cather of Plow and Stars Farm and American Farmland Trust • Bob Jones Jr. of The Chef’s Garden • Doug Fifer of Fifer Family Farms • Moderator: Katie Trozzo, PhD, Assistant Director, VT Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation
1:50-2:00 PM	Stretch and Electronic Break



Day 1 - Tuesday, December 8, 2026

VOICES FROM THE FIELD: ORCHARDS, VINEYARDS, AND VEGETABLES (ROOM B)

- Stefan Hess of Friendly Neighbor Gardens
- Henry Chiles of Crown Orchards
- Tom Croghan, M.D., The Vineyards of Dodon and Center of Ecological Farming
- Mary Stickley-Godinez and Raul Godinez of Cross Keys Farm
- Moderator: Mizuho Nita, PhD, of Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension

BEYOND FOOD IS MEDICINE: BUILDING HEALTH AND RESILIENCE FROM SOIL TO COMMUNITY (AUDITORIUM)

- Maureen McNamara Best, MPH, LEAP, leader for Virginia Food Access Coalition's Food is Medicine committee
- Caitlyn Owens, PhD, James Madison University Department of Graduate Psychology
- Bee Thorpe, MA, Local Food Systems Coordinator, Virginia Department of Education
- Abby Calvert of Augusta Health Farm (Invited)
- Moderator: Kathryn Strong, RD, Virginia Cooperative Extension Community Health

FARMS AND MARKETS OF THE MIDDLE: STORYTELLING TO SHIFT THE FARM AND FOOD NARRATIVE (Part 1) (ROOM A)

- Michael Rozyne and Kelsey Gosch of Red Tomato, EcoCertified, and the National Farm and Food Narrative Project
- Moderator: Steve Cooke, General Manager, Friendly City Food Cooperative

VOICES FROM THE FIELD: LOCAL AND REGIONAL GRAINS (ROOM B)

- Nico Melas of Mill Song Bakery
- Gary Knicely of Hilltop Farms
- Jonathan Bethony of Seylou Bakery and Mill
- Moderator: Agatha Brinkley of the Common Grain Alliance

WHO'S MISSING? EXPANDING FOOD IS HEALTH CONVERSATIONS FOR MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES (AUDITORIUM)

- Tom Croghan, M.D., The Vineyards of Dodon and Center of Ecological Farming
- Wanda Johnson, State Program Assistant, VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program
- Devon Byrne of 4P Foods' Farm-to-Food is Medicine (FIM) work
- Kellie Del Signore of Virginia Cooperative Extension's Virginia Family Nutrition Program
- Moderator: Paige Riddle, MSW, Virginia Cooperative Extension Community Health

FARMS AND MARKETS OF THE MIDDLE: THE FARM AND FOOD NARRATIVE (Part 2) (ROOM A)

- Michael Rozyne and Kelsey Gosch of Red Tomato, EcoCertified, and the National Farm and Food Narrative Project
- Moderator: Steve Cooke, General Manager, Friendly City Food Cooperative

4:30-7:00 PM

Networking time at The Granary at Valley Pike Farm Market



Day 2 - Wednesday, December 9, 2026

8:30-9:00 AM	Registration and Refreshments
9:00-9:10 AM	Open Remarks and Welcome - Auditorium Mr. Chris Mullins, Interim Associate Dean for Extension and Extension Administrator, Virginia State University
9:10-10:00 AM	Keynote: “Planning Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems: A Soil-to-Soil Framework” - Auditorium Julia Freedgood, MS, Senior Fellow of American Farmland Trust
10:00-10:50 AM	Functional Foods and Health from the Soil Up: A Chef’s Perspective - Auditorium Chef Radelle Reese, MIHM, MEBM, Department of Hospitality Management, Virginia State University Moderator: Andrea Haubner, MPH, VCE Community Health
10:50-11:00 AM	Stretch and Electronic Break
11:00 AM-12:10 PM	Food Systems Resilience: County-Level, Urban, and Cultural Perspectives - Auditorium • Heather Bruskin of Montgomery County, MD Government • Duron Chavis of Happily Natural Day and Sankofa Community Orchard • Michael Carter Jr. of Carter Farms and Africulture • Moderator: Mary Sketch Bryant, Director, Virginia Soil Health Coalition
12:10-1:20 PM	Lunch and 2026 Carl Luebben Soil Health and Water Quality Award - Rooms A and B Catered by
1:20-2:20 PM	Planning for Resilience From Cultivation to Cooking to Compost --Auditorium • Heather Bruskin of Montgomery County, MD Government • Michelle Edwards of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Planning Commission • Chef Radelle Reese, MIHM, MEBM, Department of Hospitality Management, Virginia State University • Eric Walter of Black Bear Composting • Closing thoughts: Julia Freedgood, MS, Senior Fellow of American Farmland Trust • Moderator: Lindsay Smith, Coordinator, Municipal Washington Council of Governments
2:20-2:30 PM	Stretch and Electronic Break



Day 2 - Wednesday, December 9, 2026

2:30-4:00 PM Concurrent Breakout Panels	FUNCTIONAL FOODS AND HEALTH FROM THE SOIL UP: A CHEF'S DEMONSTRATION (ROOM B) • Chef Radelle Reese, MIHM, MEBM, Department of Hospitality Management, Virginia State University • Moderator: Kathryn Strong, RD, VCE Community Health RESILIENCE AND THE CONVERGENCE OF CRISES THROUGH STORY CIRCLES (ROOM A) • Bob Leonard, BA • Kim Niewolny, PhD • Katie Trozzo, PhD PRODUCER PANEL: SOIL-TO-SOIL FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE (AUDITORIUM) • Bob Waring of Brandon Farms and Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District • Amanda Cather, Plow and Stars Farm and American Farmland Trust • Shelley Sackier of the Virginia Heritage Grain Project • Alan Thibault, Director of Wine, Ashton Creek Vineyard • Moderator: Summer Thomas, PhD, Education and Outreach Specialist, Virginia Soil Health Coalition
4: 00-4:30 PM	Closing, Evaluation, and Final Networking - Rooms A and B <i>Safe travels home!</i>



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Resilient Farms and Healthy Foods for the Commonwealth and Common Good

Tuesday, December 8th and Wednesday, December 9th
Blue Ridge Community College, Plecker Workforce Center, Weyers Cave, VA

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Business/Organization: _____

I will be attending (check all that apply)

_____ Day 1: Tuesday, December 8th \$45

_____ Day 2: Wednesday, December 9th..... \$45

_____ Evening Networking Reception, December 8th.....\$20

Total Enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to “Treasurer, Virginia Tech”

Mail completed Registration form and payment to: VCE Northwest District Office, 147
Dinkel Ave., Suite C, Mount Crawford, VA 22841

Register online at <https://tinyurl.com/2026VAF2TConferenceReg>

Please contact Eric Bendfeldt at ebendfel@vt.edu/540-232-6006 or
Mary Sketch Bryant at mksketch2@vt.edu/919-402-7241 with any questions.