**Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program: A Participatory Approach to Beginning Farmer Start-up and Sustainability.**

Kim Niewolny, Ag., Leadership & Community Ed, Virginia Tech, niewolny@vt.edu; Adrianna Vargo, Director of Grower Services, Local Food Hub; Allyssa Mark, Virginia Tech; Amy Fannon-Osborne, Virginia Cooperative Extension; Andrew Sorrell, VDACS; Andy Seibel, Catawba Sustainability Center; Jim Hankins, Fauquier Education Farm; James Hilleary, Virginia Cooperative Extension; John Fant, Cattle & Sheep Farmer, Virginia Forage & Grasslands Council; Josh Nease, Catawba Sustainability Center; Katie Myer, Certified Farm Seeker Program; Kathlyn Terry, Appalachian Sustainable Development; Kelli Scott, Virginia Cooperative Extension; Kim Morgan, Virginia Tech; Lorien MacAuley, Virginia Tech; Matt Lohr, Director of Knowledge Center, Farm Credit of the Virginias; Natalie Cook, Virginia Tech; Patrick Johnson, Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program; Ray Pickering, Department of Agricultural Development, Fauquier County; Ron Saacke, Virginia Farm Bureau; Rose Jeter, Jeter Farm; Steve Bridge, Service Coordinator, AgrAbility Virginia; Tamara McNaughton, Appalachian Sustainable Development; Tiffany Drape, Virginia Tech; William Crutchfield, Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program.

The scale and complexity of the beginning farmer issue raises critical questions about the strategies and frameworks required to achieve long-lasting impacts for beginning farmers. The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program (VBFRCP) utilizes a participatory approach to enhance start-up and sustainability opportunities for a diversity of new farmers across Virginia. This approach centers on a state-wide coalition to provide whole farm planning curricula and trainings, farmer networking and mentoring, and capacity building opportunities with the coalition partner organizations. With Virginia Cooperative Extension serving as the backbone organization of the VBFRCP, coalition partners work together in a number of ways to support their beginning farmer communities. From a collective impact perspective, this work requires broad-sector coordination and a more networked approach to allow collaboration and communication, while at the same time allowing autonomy for differentiated programming and activities that serve the goal of supporting the next generation of farmers and the communities in which they reside. In this roundtable presentation, we aim to discuss how VBFRCP works across the state, the ways in which coalition partners connect and collaborate, key outcomes from our programming initiatives, and ways to better support the beginning farmer and rancher community. This includes a focus on outreach to and support for socially disadvantaged, military veteran, and young farmers in Virginia.