

Vol. 10 - OCTOBER 2024

# The Stalk



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



## ***The International Soil Tillage Research Organisation Conference (ISTRO2024) is a wrap and it was a global success!***



We had an excellent week in Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA, hosting the International Soil Tillage Research Organisation (ISTRO) conference! Scientists from around the world gathered to showcase their innovative research aimed at sustaining global food production systems.

Theme: "Living Roots, Living Soil" focusing on regenerative agriculture, soil health, cover crops, residue systems, and sustainable crop production.

### **Key Highlights:**

- **Networking:** ISTRO2024 emphasized the importance of collaboration to enhance research and establish fruitful partnerships.
- **Participation:** 198 scientific abstracts presented by 512 authors and co-authors from 35 registered countries. Including attendees living and working outside their homeland, we had representation from over 42 countries.
- **Sessions:** The general session included presentations on Virginia agriculture and the Global Agricultural Productivity Report (GAP), followed by 3 days of oral and poster presentations in breakout sessions.
- **Farm Visits:** Attendees visited farms growing soybean, potato, snap beans, corn, and other crops. Discussions included Coastal Plain soil, manganese deposits, and summer cover crop roots nearly 6-feet deep.
- **Working Groups:** ISTRO2024 concluded with sessions focused on future collaboration and targeted research ideas.

Overall, ISTRO2024 was a resounding success, fostering global collaboration and advancing sustainable agricultural practices.

*Mark Reiter & Helene Doughty*

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## International Soil Tillage Research Organisation Conference

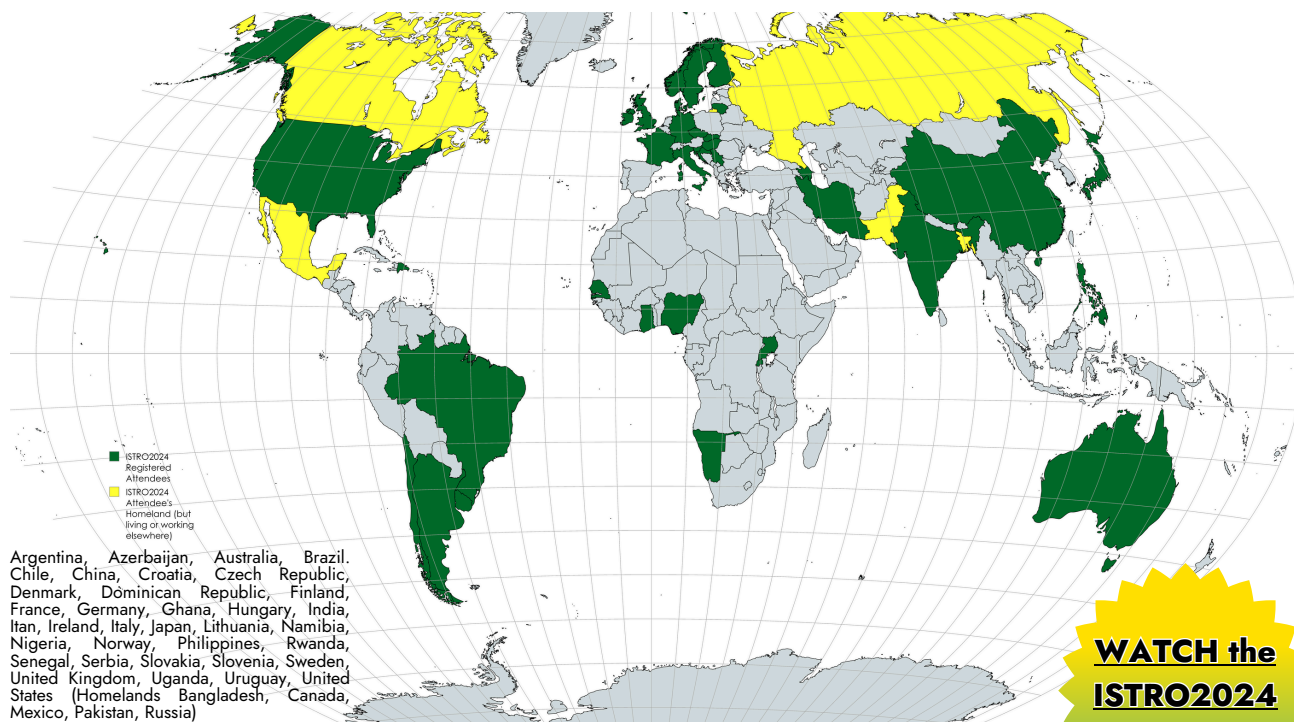
Dr. Mark Reiter, ESAREC Director & Soils & Nutrient Management Extension Specialist



We had an excellent week in Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA as we hosted the International Soil Tillage Research Organisation (ISTRO) conference! Scientists from around the world made their way to Virginia to highlight their innovative research to sustain our global food production systems. ISTRO2024's theme was "Living Roots, Living Soil" to focus on regenerative agriculture, soil health, cover crops, residue systems and sustainable crop production as a whole.

We aimed to focus on how sustainable practices impact the soil. Networking is a key role of this conference as we must work collectively to improve each other's research to establish fruitful collaborations to utilize within our research networks. Overall, we had 198 scientific abstracts presented representing 512 authors and co-authors from 35 registered countries. We had 42+ countries present if you count people now living and working somewhere other than their homeland.

ISTRO2024 kicked off with a general session that included presentations about Virginia agriculture, the Global Agricultural Productivity Report (GAP, <https://globalagriculturalproductivity.org/2024-gap-report/>). Conference attendees then presented their work via oral and poster presentations in breakout sessions throughout the week. The most exciting day of the conference allowed attendees to visit farms that grow soybean, potato, snap beans, corn, among other grains and vegetables. We ventured below the soil to discuss our Coastal Plain soil, saw a nice manganese deposit, and measured summer cover crop roots nearly 6-feet below the soil surface. The last day of the meeting ended with working groups designed to ensure collaboration in the future that focused on targeted research ideas.



Registered ISTRO2024 countries (red) and attendees representing their homelands (green).

**WATCH the  
ISTRO2024  
VIDEO**



## ISTRO2024 Local Organizing Committee

*This event would not be possible without the work, expertise, and perseverance of the local organizing committee. The local organizing committee consisted of:*



**Dr. Mark S. Reiter**  
ISTRO President  
Director, Extension Specialist,  
Professor of Soils and Nutrient  
Management, Eastern Shore  
Agricultural Research and  
Extension Center, Virginia Tech



**Ms. Helene Doughty**  
ISTRO2024 Event Project Manager  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Extension Agent, Northampton  
County, Virginia Cooperative  
Extension



**Ms. Belinda Sterling**  
ISTRO2024 Fiscal Manager  
Office Services Specialist, Eastern  
Shore Agricultural Research and  
Extension Center, Virginia Tech



**Dr. Ryan Stewart**  
ISTRO2024 Proceedings Editor  
Associate Professor, School of  
Plant and Environmental Sciences,  
Virginia Tech



**Mr. John Mason**  
ISTRO2024 Audio Visual Specialist  
Research Specialist Sr., Soils and  
Nutrient Management, Eastern  
Shore Agricultural Research and  
Extension Center, Virginia Tech



**Mr. Roy Flanagan**  
ISTRO2024 Field Tour Chair  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Extension Agent, Virginia Beach,  
Virginia Cooperative Extension



**Dr. Vijay Singh**  
ISTRO2024 Student Contest Chair  
Extension Specialist and Assistant  
Professor of Weed Science,  
Eastern Shore Agricultural  
Research and Extension Center,  
Virginia Tech



**Dr. W. Hunter Frame**  
ISTRO2024 Planning Committee  
Extension Specialist and Associate  
Professor of Cotton Agronomy,  
Tidewater Agricultural Research  
and Extension Center, Virginia  
Tech



**Ms. Theresa Pittman**  
ISTRO2024 Planning Committee  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Extension Agent, Accomack  
County, Virginia Cooperative  
Extension



**Ms. Ursula Deitch**  
ISTRO2024 Planning Committee  
Marketing Specialist, Virginia  
Department of Agriculture and  
Consumer Services,  
Commonwealth of Virginia

## ISTRO2024 SPONSORS

### DIAMOND



### GOLD



### SILVER



### LUNCH / BREAKFAST



### STUDENT AWARDS



ISTRO2024 scholarship recipients received funds to travel to Virginia to network and experience an international event.





## ES Ag Fair: A Successful Partnership

Virginia Cooperative Extension extends its heartfelt thanks to the ESVA Chamber of Commerce for their valuable partnership in making this event a success. Together, we have increased agricultural literacy and representation on the Eastern Shore, providing one of the best events of the year.



Scenes from the VCE Tent at the Eastern Shore Ag Fair

## Agents' Calendar:

*"Working for the Wellbeing of Our Communities!"*

## OCTOBER 2024

- Oct 1: Virginia State Fair Volunteering; Northampton Farm Bureau Meeting
- Oct 5: Eastern Shore Agricultural Fair
- Oct 7: VCE/ESAREC Monthly Meeting
- Oct 9: Eastern Shore Ag Fair Recap Meeting
- Oct 10: Northampton Farm Tour
- Oct 15: Accomack Farm Tour
- Oct 16: ESSWCD Monthly meeting
- Oct 18: Adventure Career Day ESCC
- Oct 22: VCE Southeast District Conference
- Oct 24: VCE Backyard poultry cohort meeting
- Oct 29-30: ANR onboarding session: horticulture, vegetables, seafood

### Ongoing:

- Regional Shared-use kitchen Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Study
- 2025 Ag Conference and Trade Show Planning
- 2025 Accomack/Northampton VCE Program Planning

### Weekly

- WESR VCE AG Radio recordings - daily @ 8:30 am & 12:30 pm
- WESR Master Gardener Radio recordings - daily @ 12:20 pm







## Virginia Cooperative Extension Leads Exciting Competitions at Eastern Shore Agricultural Fair

On Saturday, October 5th, the Virginia Cooperative Extension proudly led several engaging competitions at the ESVA Chamber of Commerce's Eastern Shore Agricultural Fair, held in Machipongo. The event was a great success with over 1,500 attendees, showcasing the talents and creativity of participants from across the region.

### Giant Pumpkin Contest Steals the Show

The Giant Pumpkin Contest was a highlight of the fair, captivating attendees of all ages. Families and children flocked to take photos with the winning pumpkin, a massive 760-pound marvel grown by "Doc" Brown of Eastville. The youth category also saw many impressive entries, with the winning giant pumpkin from Percy and Parker Thomas weighing in at 210 pounds. This contest was a favorite among fairgoers, providing a fun and memorable experience for all.



Doc Brown loading the winning pumpkin

### Crop Competition Celebrates Local Agriculture

Farmers from Accomack and Northampton counties competed in the crop competition, showcasing their best soybean and field corn entries. The competition was fierce, with participants vying for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons and prizes. A youth soybean entry by Bailey Sturgis also delighted the crowd giving hopes for a future young farmer. This event highlighted the dedication and hard work of local farmers, celebrating the rich agricultural heritage of the Eastern Shore.



Eastern Shore AREC Graduate Students assisting with the weighing of the pumpkins





# THE AGENT'S CORNER

Theresa Pittman - Accomack County ANR Agent

Hélène Doughty - Northampton County ANR Agent



## Creative Vegetable Basket Displays

The vegetable basket competition featured both youth and adult entries, with participants presenting creative and attractive fall-themed baskets filled with fresh summer vegetables. The displays were a feast for the eyes, demonstrating the artistic talents and agricultural knowledge of the contestants.

## 4-H Competitions Delight Attendees

The 4-H competitions were a major attraction, drawing crowds to watch and participate in a variety of fun events. Sack races and the critterless critter contest provided plenty of entertainment, but the highlight was the sweet potato decorating contest. Fair attendees marveled at the creative and charming entries, with the winning designs representing staples of Eastern Shore agriculture and aquaculture: a nesting hen and a crab.





# SCENES FROM ISTRO2024

## Virginia Beach, VA

### September 23-27, 2024

Attendees discussing research over one of the poster presentation sessions.



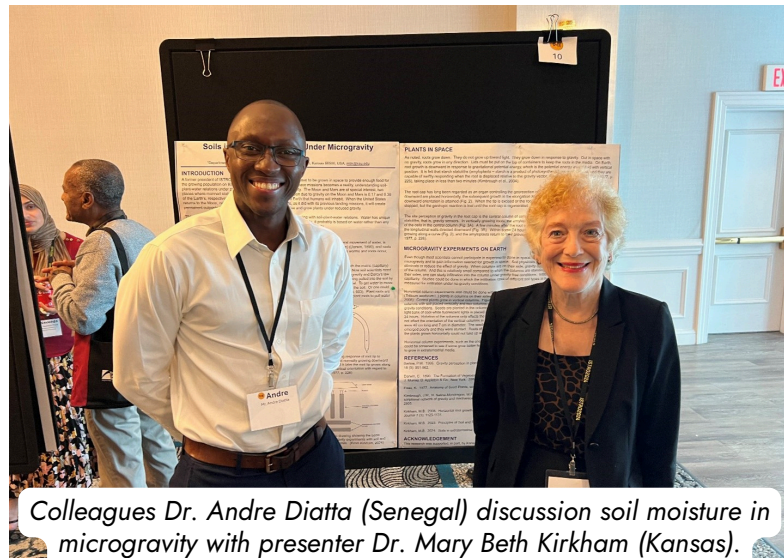
Dr. Tom Thompson, Associate Dean for CALS Global at Virginia Tech, discussing the GAP Report.



Dr. Ole Wendroth was our keynote speaker. He discussed how organizations like ISTRO can engage in further research in meaningful ways.



Michelin discussing soil compaction with conference attendees.



Colleagues Dr. Andre Diatta (Senegal) discussion soil moisture in microgravity with presenter Dr. Mary Beth Kirkham (Kansas).



# SCENES FROM ISTRO2024

## Virginia Beach, VA

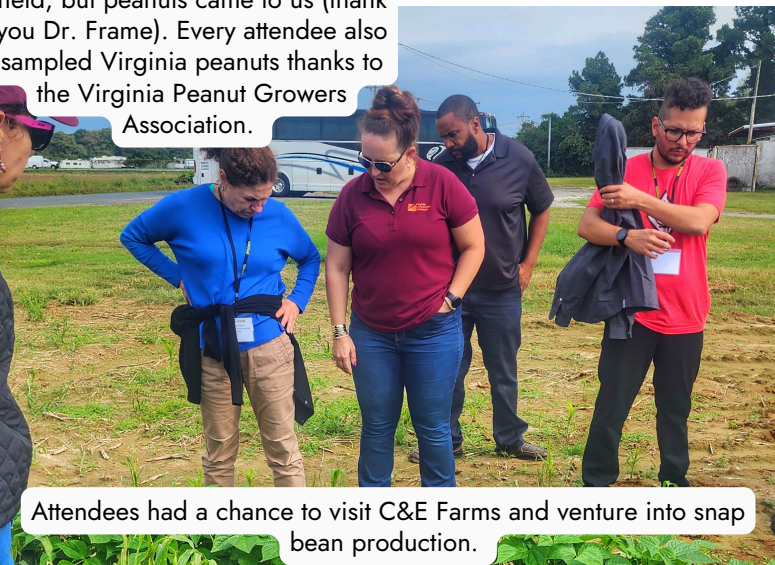
### September 23-27, 2024



Dr. Mark Reiter, ISTRO President, welcoming colleagues to Virginia Beach, VA



We did not make it to a peanut field, but peanuts came to us (thank you Dr. Frame). Every attendee also sampled Virginia peanuts thanks to the Virginia Peanut Growers Association.



Attendees had a chance to visit C&E Farms and venture into snap bean production.



Check out this Coastal Plain soil pit being shown by Cameron Bermand! The manganese layer is the dark layer directly above the light tan colored sand layer. Thank you to USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services for helping out with the soil pit and to the Hampton Roads AREC for digging the hole in their field!



ESAREC graduate student, Fatemeh Esmaeilbeiki, with Dr. Singh's research group, discussing research with attendees.



Ms. Helene Doughty welcomes attendees to Virginia Beach, VA.



Mountaire gave us a great tour discussing grain marketing and the soybean industry here in Virginia.



# SCENES FROM THE CROP COMPETITIONS AT THE AG FAIR

## Machipongo, VA

### October 5th, 2024

1st place Soybean Adult  
submitted by Nick Thomas of  
Atlantic



1st place Field Corn  
Bobby Snyder



2nd place Field Corn  
Ralph Dodd



"Future Farmer" Bailey Sturgis  
won first place in the Soybean  
youth category



Largest Zucchini submitted by  
Copper Cricket Farm



# SCENES FROM THE CROP COMPETITIONS AT THE AG FAIR

## Machipongo, VA

### October 5th, 2024

"Doc" Brown of Eastville with his First Place 760lb pumpkin



Bill Mytnik, 2nd place pumpkin (105 lbs)



Parker and Perry Thomas - First place Giant Pumpkin in the youth category with their dad Nick Thomas, First place Adult Soybean



Workshops were led by agents in the spring to teach community members how to grow giant pumpkins. 30 adults and youth attended



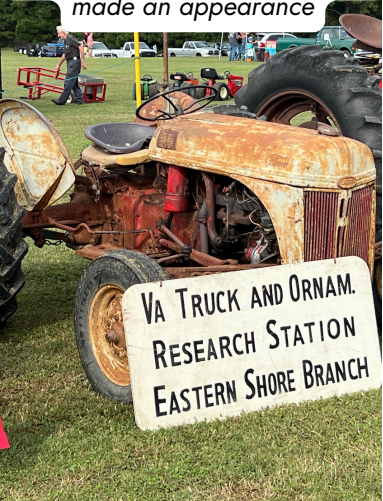


# Scenes from the Eastern Shore Ag Fair Machipongo, VA October 5th, 2024

Participants learned about 4-H programming at the Northampton VCE Booth



The oldest tractor at the ESAREC made an appearance



The VCE competitions booth at the ES Ag Fair



Participants were so excited to grab selfies with the winner of the giant pumpkin contest



The VCE/VT ESAREC Crew at the Eastern Shore Ag Fair



# Scenes from the Eastern Shore Ag Fair Machipongo, VA October 5th, 2024





# ANNOUNCEMENTS



VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION  
EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL  
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER  
VIRGINIA TECH.





## EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW



**Wednesday January 29, 2025**  
**Thursday, January 30, 2025**



VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION  
EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL  
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER  
VIRGINIA TECH.

## Mid-Atlantic Crop School

Obtain your continuing education units

NOV **19-21** 2024

PRINCESS ROYALE | OCEAN CITY, MD

**Crop School Reception hosted by Mid-Atlantic  
CCA Wednesday Night, be sure to RSVP**

**Early Bird Deadline: 10/25**  
**Last Day to Register: 11/8** <http://go.umd.edu/24crop>

We have an exciting and educational lineup for this year's Mid-Atlantic Crop School! This is a great chance to network with other Certified Crop Advisers (CCA) in the Mid-Atlantic, mingle with Land Grant University scientists, and earn all your continuing education credits in one place.

Registration is officially open. Please go ahead and register today to secure your spot and share this information with others that may benefit. The permalink for Crop School info is <https://bit.ly/MidAtlanticCropSchool>. All event details, link to the program booklet with titles and abstracts, and link to Eventbrite registration is on the website.

To register, please navigate to: <http://go.umd.edu/24crop>. This event is organized by the University of Maryland and University of Delaware, with nutrient management committee support from Dr. Mark Reiter at the Eastern Shore AREC and many speakers from Virginia Tech. See you in Ocean City, Maryland in November!



## VCE & ESAREC Contact Information

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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.