

Vol. 9 - August 2024

The Stalk



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



New Hire Announcements for CALS and the ESAREC

Welcome Dr. Mario Ferruzzi, new Dean of the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Dr. Mario Ferruzzi, professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and director of Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center, has been named the next dean of the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Ferruzzi will officially step into his new role on Oct. 15, succeeding Dr. Alan Grant, who is retiring after serving as dean since October 2009. For more information, please visit the CALS press release - [HERE](#)



Welcome Dr. Kemper Sutton, new Assistant Professor of Entomology and Extension Specialist at the ESAREC



Kemper Sutton, Ph.D. is currently a Postdoctoral Associate at the University of Georgia where he is studying pest management of peanuts. Prior to his work with the University of Georgia, he completed his Ph.D. at Virginia Tech in 2022 where he worked on pest management of vegetables, specifically edamame at the Eastern Shore AREC and Blacksburg. When we asked Dr. Sutton on his thoughts about his new position, he said: "The Eastern Shore reminds me a lot of my home in northeastern North Carolina, where my family has farmed for six generations. My upbringing in a family with strong ties to agriculture helped create my motivation for taking this career path in life. I am grateful to have this opportunity to come back to Virginia Tech and the Eastern Shore where my research and extension programs will directly revolve around addressing the needs of growers and other stakeholders."

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THE AGENT'S CORNER

Theresa Pittman - Accomack County ANR Agent

Hélène Doughty - Northampton County ANR Agent



Planning and needs assessment never stops! We want your feedback!

ANR agents are heavily involved in continuous planning and logistics for events, workshops and needs assessment. As fall approaches, we will hit our busiest time of the year for these activities, starting with planning meetings for the Farm Tours, the Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference, the Eastern Shore Ag Fair and Small Farm Workshops. Accomack and Northampton County ANR agents are soon meeting to layout plans for the upcoming year for events and workshops.

We want your input on what ANR programs would benefit you as a:

- **farmer / producer**
- **nursery / horticulturist**
- **landscaper / gardener**
- **community member**



Email, text or call:

Theresa Pittman - tpittman@vt.edu

757-787-1361

Helene Doughty - hdoughty@vt.edu

757-999-0780

Agents' Calendar:

"Working for the Wellbeing of Our Communities!"

What are the ANR agents up to in August?

- August 8th - ESAREC/VCE monthly planning meeting
- August 8th - ISTRO 2024 planning committee meeting
- August 14th - ACPS Poverty Simulation
- August 15th - Shadowing VDACS food safety inspection
- August 15th - Training webinar: How to Market your Programs
- August 20-21 - Agents' poultry in-service
- August 21-22 - Agribusiness Management Team in-service
- August 26-28 - Household Water Quality Program

Ongoing:

- Regional Shared-use kitchen Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Study
- International Soil Tillage Research Conference Project Management (2024 ISTRO, Virginia Beach Sept. 23-27)
- Agricultural commodities competitions at the ES Ag Fair

Weekly:

- Click Beetle Trap Monitoring
- Pheromone Trap Insect Monitoring



**WE WANT YOUR
FEEDBACK!**



ANR Extension Agents attended the Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents - in Dallas, TX



Accomack and Northampton County extension agents Theresa Pittman and Helene Doughty attended the 109th Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents July 14-17. The conference receives over 1,500 attendees from all states and territories.

The program included a wide variety of sessions on leadership and administrative skills, agricultural issues, early career development, horticulture and turfgrass, natural resources/aquaculture and sustainable agriculture.

The conference offers numerous benefits for collaboration, networking, and learning.



It is a unique platform for county agents to connect with peers from across the country, fostering a collaborative environment where ideas and best practices can be shared. Networking opportunities abound, allowing agents to build professional relationships that can lead to future partnerships and initiatives.



Virginia Extension Agents at AMPIC

Agent Question of the Month

How much weight should be put on Hessian fly resistance ratings when selecting wheat varieties for the Eastern Shore?

This is a very good question and has incited taking a renewed look at this pest in wheat. Growers are very diligent about respecting the planting dates and, generally, there has not been any issues with Hessian flies in recent years.

Virginia Tech entomologists (Dr. Rashed, Kuhar, Bryant and Sutton) and Dr. Olga Walsh, Grain Crops Associate Professor will be teaming up to plant non-resistant wheat at various planting times in the coming fall in various locations.

In the meantime, it is recommended to continue selecting wheat varieties with good Hessian fly ratings as it provides a natural barrier against potential infestations, combined with planting past the Hessian fly free date (first frost). In Virginia, the first frost date can be unpredictable so it is recommended to take a look at the 30- to 60-day weather outlook and delay planting further if warmer than normal temperatures are predicted.

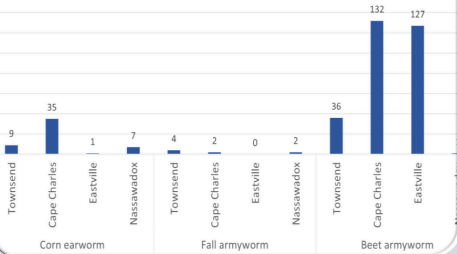


Hessian fly adult (left) and larvae and damage to wheat (right)



EASTERN SHORE INSECT PESTS ACTIVITY UPDATE

Pheromone Trap Counts
25 Jul - 1 Aug
Northampton County



Moth Activity

Pheromone trap monitoring continue (see chart above for current numbers). **Corn earworm** activity is present and consistent scouting is recommended

Fall armyworm activity is starting to increase

Beet armyworm trap catch is building, and activity has been observed in fields

Stink Bugs

Green and brown stink bugs are active currently with some reports of damage on fruiting crops. Brown marmorated and Southern green stink bug will be active through August and September.

In soybeans, stages R1 through R5 are the critical times to scout

Mites

I have observed some mite activity on tomatoes and others. This is likely due to the hot and dry weather we experienced earlier this summer. With some welcome precipitation last week, their presence may diminish.

WHAT'S THAT BUG?

Hélène Doughty, Northampton ANR agent, invites you to test your entomology knowledge.



Take a guess on the pest and email or text your answer to 757-999-0780 / hdoughty@vt.edu

July Answer: The Corn Earworm Moth

- Our previous "What's That Bug" was a corn earworm moth (*Heliothis virescens*). The larva of the corn earworm moth is an important economic pest of many crops on the Eastern Shore: sweet corn, tomatoes, soybeans, cotton, and snap beans. It is a chewing insect that feeds on leaves, pods and fruits. Although it may overwinter as a pupa during warm winters, the moths usually migrate in from the South in the summer. It is known to have developed resistance to certain insecticides and can therefore be difficult to control. Every year, the CEW moth activity is monitored through pheromone traps. If you would like to receive these reports, email hdoughty@vt.edu or tpittman@vt.edu



THE AGENT'S CORNER

Theresa Pittman - Accomack County ANR Agent

Hélène Doughty - Northampton County ANR Agent



REGISTER TODAY TO HAVE YOUR WATER TESTED

Do you have a well or spring and wonder if your water is safe to drink?

The Virginia Household Water Quality program offers affordable water testing and education to improve the water quality and health of Virginians who rely on private wells and springs.

The cost is only \$10 per sample kit (limited quantities!). The kit can be picked up on August 26th and returned with the water samples on August 27th at your county extension office. Results will be emailed.

Testing includes: bacteria, lead, copper, arsenic, iron, manganese, pH, hardness, sodium, sulfate, fluoride, and nitrate.

For questions, contact either Accomack or Northampton County Extension Offices 757-787-1361 or 757-678-7946.

How to participate:

- ✓ [Register online](#)
- ✓ [Pay online](#)
- ✓ [Pick up kit Aug 26](#)
- ✓ [Return kit Aug 27](#)

**EASTERN SHORE
HOUSEHOLD
WATER QUALITY
PROGRAM**

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Accomack County
Northampton County

23185 Front St
Accomack, VA 23301 **16392 Courthouse Rd**
Eastville, VA 23347

Monday August 26th (kit pick-up)
Tuesday August 27th (kit drop-off)
8am to 4pm

**Do you have a well or spring
and wonder if your water is
safe to drink?**

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Register at:
<https://tinyurl.com/VCE-EasternShore-VAHWQP>

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.

INTRODUCING CROP COMPETITIONS AT THE EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL FAIR



NEW for 2024 at the Eastern Shore Agricultural Fair!!

Accomack and Northampton County Cooperative Extension Offices present:

CROP COMPETITIONS

- ☆ Largest pumpkin
- ☆ largest zucchini
- ☆ Vegetable basket
- ☆ Row crop competitions (field corn and soybeans)

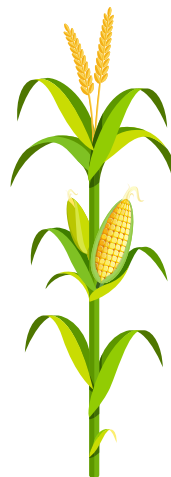
Start planning your garden today, get growing, put on your vegetable basket creative cap, and come participate in the most fun event of the fall season!

All rules are posted on the Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce website at <https://www.esvachamber.org/esvaagfair> or call your local extension office for more information

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5th


10am-2pm

Machipongo Old Middle School




FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 Northampton

 @vce_northampton

 Accomack

 @vce_accomack

2024 Ag Expo is a Success!

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



Eastern Shore AREC faculty, staff, and graduate students highlighted applied research at the 2024 Virginia Ag Expo in Champlaine, VA on August 1, 2024. We had a great time talking shop with attendees that were interested in topics ranging from soils and nutrient management to disease to weed science and technology.

- The soils and nutrient management crew (Dr. Mark Reiter, John Mason, Joseph Haymaker, Thomas Badon, Mary Michael Lipford, and Luke Duer) discussed cover crops and nutrient cycling through the corn-cover crop-soybean management system. They also collaborated with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services to showcase soils of the area in a soils pit with nutrient stratification and soil compaction throughout the soil profile being demonstrated.
- Andrew Fletcher, Makenzie Shifflet, Belinda Sterling, and Alana Martin represented the

Eastern Shore AREC, networked with other farm management staff from around the AREC system, and facilitated outreach for the greater Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station.

- The weed science team (Dr. Vijay Singh, RC Cooley, and Rutvij Wamanse) showcased findings from their herbicide resistant weed studies and demonstrated their unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for site specific herbicide applications and scouting. Additionally, the weed science crew demonstrated plant injury on sensitive crops that could occur if herbicide drift occurs.
- Plant pathology (Dr. Doug Higgins and Calyn Adams) discussed wheat disease management with a focus on head scab.

The 2024 Virginia Ag Expo was held on Level Green Farms in Champlaine, VA from 7:00 am until 2:00 pm. Over 100 exhibitors with invested interest in Virginia agriculture attended along with representatives from Virginia Tech's Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station and ARECs from across the Commonwealth. More information about the event, vendors, and pictures can be found online at <https://www.vaagexpo.com/> or via <https://www.facebook.com/vaagexpo>.



Part of the Eastern Shore AREC crew set up and ready for the day!

Dr. Doug Higgins, Plant Pathology Extension Specialist, and Mary Michael Zahed, MS Student, discussing their research to growers at the VA Ag Expo.



Dr. Vijay Singh, Weed Science Extension Specialist, displaying herbicide drift to sensitive crops commonly grown in eastern Virginia.



Soil pit defining nutrient, cation exchange capacity, pH, and organic matter concentrations to a depth of 5-feet on the Ag Expo host farm.



Eastern Shore AREC crew with Dr. Mary Burrows, Director of Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, and Dr. Kang Xia, Associate Director of Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station.

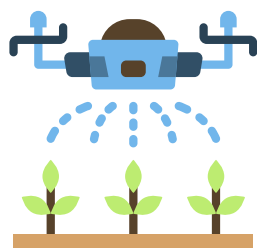
2024 Mid-Atlantic Spray Drone Workshop

Dr. Vijay Singh, Weed Science Extension Specialist



Virginia Tech – ESAREC organized a Mid-Atlantic Spray Drone workshop (July 23-24, 2024) in Painter, VA. The workshop highlighted the benefits of spray drones, emphasizing their role in crop protection and comparing efficacy and economics with traditional spraying methods. Over the two-day workshop, federal regulators, university researchers, industry personnel, and custom pesticide applicators examined the current status of the technology, and debated drift issues, and management strategies. The workshop was attended by participants from Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York.

Daniel Goerlich (Associate Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension) and Mark Reiter (Director, Eastern Shore Agricultural and Extension Center) spoke about Virginia's extension priority on smart farming, and how soil, agronomy, and pest management can be integrated for future sustainable farming systems. Vijay Singh (Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Virginia Tech), and Daniel Martin (USDA-ARS Research Engineer) highlighted the importance of spray drone technology, and shared results of herbicide efficacy studies conducted in soybean, corn, and vegetables. They also discussed important considerations, and flight parameters optimization for effective operations.



Dr. Vijay Singh



Participants in the Mid-Atlantic Spray Drone Workshop

- Dr. Singh showed results of his studies which indicate that aerial spray drones provide greater efficacy at late postemergence weed control compared with tractor sprayers when weeds and crop plants are large and overlapped. At preemergence and early postemergence herbicide applications, both aerial spray drones and tractors provided similar weed control.
- Shawn Askew (Professor and Turf Weed Specialist, Virginia Tech), shared his team's research on turfgrass, and potential use of spray drones for weed management in turf. He showed how different spray altitudes can impact spray coverage and overall efficacy.
- Steve Li (Associate Professor and Extension Weed Specialist, Auburn University) and Simerjeet Virk (Associate Professor, Precision Ag, Auburn University) discussed their studies on potential drift issues, deposition studies, and large-scale spray operations.
- Sarah Hovinga (Bayer CropScience) discussed about regulatory concerns, and her efforts to standardize spray drift protocol to bring transparency and uniformity in methodology for drift studies. Currently, drift is a major concern surrounding spray drones.
- Andrew Shelby (Environmental Protection Agency) described EPA's objectives, framework and current policy on spray drone operations.

2024 Mid-Atlantic Spray Drone Workshop *continued*



- Dana Beegle (Virginia Tech Pesticide Program Publications and Marketing Coordinator) shared updates on aerial drone regulations and manual revisions in Virginia.
- John McGee (Geospatial Extension Specialist, Virginia Tech) and his postdoctoral researcher - Daniel Cross, provided information on advance teachers' training program on drones, and other initiatives where drone workshops were conducted for NGO's, state extension staff and high school educators.
- Experiences were also shared by 4th generation farmer (Andrew Bond) from Ohio on spray drone technology and his venture into custom pesticide application service with drones (Top Dog Ag). Mr. Bond shared how he conducted operations over 6500 acres past year and targeting 10-12,000 acres in 2024. He described the economics and diverse applications which made him profitable in this business.
- Aerial drone technology is continuously changing, and Kelley Wittenberg from LeadingEdge Aerial Technologies shared how her team is refining the spray drone technology and provided updates on new PrecisionVision 40X equipped with LIDAR, multispectral camera, and versatile payload capability.
- Mark Ledebuhr (Application Insight, LLC), emphasized on the importance of right tools and methodology to collect swath, and drift data.
- Participants visited field trials conducted with aerial drones. Studies highlighted the use of aerial drones with varying spray volumes for herbicide applications in different crops, impact of droplet size, and extent of ground drift damage in windy conditions.
- Molly Cheatum (Swift AeroSeed) discussed how spray drones can be used for dual purpose where same systems can spread fertilizers and cover crop seed with minor changes or swapping the payload tanks. She provided information on Swift AeroSeed services, and demonstrated cover crop seeding with aerial drone.
- The workshop provided information on the latest research, highlighted practical aspects and challenges with regards to operating spray drones, and visual evaluations of the technology through field trials. Participants provided feedback and liked the idea of bringing stakeholders and researchers at the same platform and sharing their expert knowledge and opinions. The workshop was sponsored by USDA-NIFA, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech – Center for Advanced Innovation in Agriculture, LeadingEdge Aerial Technologies, Hooper Inc. DJI drones, Bayer CropScience, and Application Insight, LLC.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



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

ACCOMACK & NORTHAMPTON PRODUCERS

THE DEADLINE FOR NATURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE IS

August 20, 2024

On December 20, 2023, Northampton County received a Secretarial disaster declaration (Designation #S5649) due to drought that occurred from 5/1/23 and continuing. Emergency loans are available for an 8-month period from 12/20/2023 to 8/20/2024. Under this designation, if you have operations in any primary or contiguous county, you are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

Producers should contact their county's FSA Service Center at 757-787-0918 or visit fsa.usda.gov for more information.



SAVE THE DATE

EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

Wednesday January 29, 2025
Thursday, January 30, 2025



Work at Virginia Tech

Join our team at the Virginia Tech Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Painter, VA! We are currently looking to fill positions to help us out with our applied research and Extension activities. - [CLICK HERE: Mechanic \(Job posting #529483\)](#).



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #VT-208-18759-000-AE

FOR

ARCHITECTURE/ENGINEERING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE
EASTERN SHORE AREC IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT



ISTRO 2024

Sep 23 - 28, 2024
Virginia Beach,
VA, USA

Living Roots. Living Soil



International
Soil and Tillage
Research Organization

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.