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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **14<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SMALL FARM CONFERENCE TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 21**

**Charleston, W.Va.** – The 14<sup>th</sup> annual West Virginia Small Farm Conference is set to begin Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at the Waterfront Place Hotel in Morgantown, WV. The Small Farm Conference is hosted by West Virginia University Extension Services, in conjunction with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) and various partners.

“West Virginia has over 20,000 farms. Most of those operations are small. This gives West Virginia one of the highest percentages of small farms in the country,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “These small farms are the essence of West Virginia agriculture.”

Conference attendees will hear topic experts speak on issues including: animal production, specialty crops, valued-added products, Farm to School, agritourism and how to seek marketing opportunities. The WVDA will hold a West Virginia Grown stakeholder meeting, seeking valuable input from state agriculturalists, with a complete relaunch of the branding program set for this spring. There will also be a viewing of the documentary, *Farmers for America*, narrated by Mike Rowe, Friday evening.

“The Small Farm Conference is a celebration of our family farms and the exploration of improved management techniques and science to help our communities prosper,” said WVU Extension Service Small Farm Center Program Leader Tom McConnell.

FarmHer, a national organization focused on inspiring young women to pursue careers in agriculture, will host an event during the conference. It will take place 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> and is open to young women ages 16–22. Participants will hear firsthand stories from successful Agri-women.

To register for the Small Farm Conference, click here:

<https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=2093069> or for more information,

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contact Lisa Jones at 304-293-2715 or [Lisa.Lagana@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Lisa.Lagana@mail.wvu.edu).

To register for the FarmHer event, contact Dee Singh-Knights at 304-293-7606 or [dosingh-knights@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:dosingh-knights@mail.wvu.edu).

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