



Media Contact:

Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304-380-3922
cgallagher@wvda.us

February 5, 2019

15th Annual Small Farm Conference to Begin February 13th

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The 15th annual West Virginia Small Farm Conference is set to begin Wednesday, February 13th at the Charleston Coliseum and Conference Center in Charleston, 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 agriculture is unique to what we typically think of when it comes to farming in the United States. We do not have numerous large farming operations as we lead the nation in small, family-owned farms,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “Given our topography, our farmers have to be looking for new, cutting edge innovations and ideas in order to grow their operations.”

This year, the WVDA Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Division will be presenting on new regulations for farmers markets and their vendors, as well as holding trainings on the changes to the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). In addition, producers have the opportunity to take the Better Process Control School, as well as hear presentations on expected changes from the 2018 Farm Bill. The WVDA will have a table set up during the Small Farm Conference for anyone that wants to register their farmers market, register as a vendor, ask questions about their product or registration or join the West Virginia Grown program.

“If we are to expand the impact of West Virginia agriculture, it will start with entrepreneurs. This conference allows folks to meet and discuss best practices, as well as obtain trainings and certifications. If you have any interest in agriculture, this is the conference for you,” Leonhardt said.

In addition to WVDA sponsored activities, conference attendees will hear from topic

-more-



experts speak on issues including: animal production, specialty crops, valued-added products, Farm to School, agritourism and marketing opportunities.

In conjunction with the Small Farm Conference, the Winter Blues Farmers Market will take place on Saturday, Feb. 16, 1-5 p.m. at the Charleston Coliseum and Conference Center. In past years, vendors have sold everything from just-bottled maple syrup to heirloom popcorn, farm-fresh eggs to goats' milk soap. Producers will also sell fresh vegetables grown in greenhouses and high tunnels in the middle of winter.

To register for the Small Farm Conference, click here:

<https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=2547794> or for more information, please contact Lisa Jones at 304-293-2715 or Lisa.Lagana@mail.wvu.edu.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

###

