2027 Future Harvest Conference Schedule

Wednesday Pre-Conferences

Presentation Time	Session Name	Room	Session Description	Speaker(s)
Wednesday 9:30 AM - 12 PM	**Farmer's Market Pros: Farmers Market Management Fast Track**	**Fenton Room**	This 3 hour deep dive on farmers market management will get new managers up to speed and provide new ideas and perspectives for managers with some experience. We'll dig into vendor recruitment and guidelines, application processes, budgets and space fees, market site management, nutrition incentives and general marketing plans. Taught by experienced market managers including Catt Fields White of the Farmers Market Pros, you'll learn best practices and share ideas with other managers to return to your market energized and inspired.	Catt Fields White, *Farmers Market Pros*
Wednesday 9:30 AM - 12 PM	**BFTP 2026 Presentations & Graduation**	**Colesville**		
Wednesday 1:30 - 4:30 PM	**Farmer's Market Pros Farmers Market Funding Intensive**	**Ellsworth A**	This 3 hour session will look at strengthening your farmers market's financial sustainability. From space fees, budgets and expenses to sponsorships, grants and fundraising events, let's talk about keeping your market financially secure and strong in today's climate. This session is for new and experienced market managers, development staff, executive directors and potential farmers market operators studying feasibility.	
Wednesday 1:30 - 3:30 PM	**Urban Beekeeping: Pollinators, Food Sovereignty, and Community Resilience**	**Spring Room**	This session introduces participants to urban beekeeping as a tool for pollinator conservation, local food production, and community resilience. Attendees will learn the basics of honey bee biology, hive management, seasonal care, and how beekeeping can support urban agriculture initiatives. The presentation highlights practical strategies for starting and maintaining hives in urban environments while promoting environmental stewardship and food sovereignty.	Saj Dillard, *Sajeeda Urban Farm*
Wednesday 1:30 - 4:30 PM	**Advanced Cover Crop**	**Ellsworth B**		
Wednesday 1:30 - 4:30 PM	**BFTP 2027 Orientation**	**Colesville**		
Wednesday6-8:30 PM	**Fork in the Road Documentary, Hordourves & Cash Bar & Panel Discussion**	**Main Ballroom**	Join us for a special screening of the documentary "Fork in the Road," executive produced by Nick Offerman. This inspiring film follows small farmers, visionary chefs, and innovators dedicated to building a regenerative future for our food systems and the planet. Following the screening, engage in a thought-provoking panel discussion with experts in the field. Future Harvest Conference ticket holders will receive complimentary admission to this event (RSVP Required).	

8:00 am – 7:30 pm: Registration Open & Exhibits — Exhibitor Hall

8:00 – 9:00 am: Coffee & Tea available — Heated Tent & Exhibitor Hall

Thursday, Session I

Presentation Time	Session Name	Room	Session Description	Speaker(s)
Thursday 8:30 - 9:45	**Farmers Market Myth Busters**	**Fenton Room**	Farmers Market Managers and Market Farmers compare their perspectives on common market challenges after a quick round of speed networking	Catt Fields White, *Farmers Market Pros*
Thursday 8:30 - 9:45	**Ready, Set, Germinate! Seed Starting and DIY Germination Chambers**	**Spring Room**	Starting healthy transplants begins with creating the right conditions for germination. This session will cover the basics of seed starting, including temperature, moisture, timing, and common challenges growers face. Participants will then learn how to build a simple germination chamber using an inexpensive broken fridge. The session will focus on practical techniques that can improve germination consistency and help growers get seedlings off to a strong, uniform start.	Hayden Schug, *University of Maryland Extension*
Thursday 8:30 - 9:45	**Growing Tropical Crops**	**Ellsworth A**		
Thursday 8:30 - 9:45	**Food Product Development and Food Safety: a Guided Brainstorming Session**	**Ellsworth B**	Starting a food business? Considering expanding into value added products? This session is intended to get participants thinking about how to incorporate food safety into the earliest stages of their food business plan. The session will help participants find a firm starting point for recipe and product formulation as well as the food safety considerations when choosing how to sell their products such as passing retailer's audits or selling from their farm.	Andrea Gilbert-Eckman, *UMES Extension*
Thursday 8:30 - 9:45	**Producer & Agency Expectation with USDA NRCS**	**Colesville**	This session will outline the expectations for both the farmers and the agency when it comes to applying for conservation programs and implementing conservation practice decisions	Sherri DeGraphenreed, *Assistant State Conservationist Of Field Operations , Southern & Eastern Shore Maryland*

Land Acknolwedgement, 5 Min Speech with Maryland Dept of Education & Keynote - Origins of Regenerative Agriculture

Lunch & Farmer to Farmer Chats				
Thursday, Session II				
Presentation Time	**Session Name**	**Room**	**Session Description**	**Speaker(s)**
Thursday 12:45 - 2:00	**Turning Your Farm into a Learning Experience plus other Agritourism?**	**Main Ballroom**		
Thursday 12:45 - 2:00	**Blueberries and Blackberries: How to Get Started and Which Varieties Perform Best in the Mid-Atlantic**	**Spring Room**	Are you interested in growing blueberries or blackberries, or looking to improve an existing planting? This session will cover the basics of getting started with these small fruit crops in the Mid-Atlantic, including site selection, establishment, and key production considerations. We'll also explore which blueberry and blackberry varieties perform best in our region based on research trials and field experience.	Haley Marie Sater, *University of Maryland Extension*
Thursday 12:45 - 2:00	**Market Success by the Numbers**	**Fenton Room**	Data collection at markets can help recruit farmers, vendors and sponsors and aid advocacy for municipal support. Let's make it easier	
Thursday 12:45 - 2:00	**Hosting Beneficial Creatures on Your Farm**	**Ellsworth A**	This workshop will illustrate how you can host a range of beneficial creatures in your farm or garden to provide pest control, pollination, fertilizer and aesthetic appeal. The preferred habitats and helpful functions of insects, spiders, birds, amphibians, reptiles and more will be discussed, accompanied by vivid photos from the speaker's one acre edible forest garden. Providing habitat for these creatures promotes ecological diversity and their sights and sounds enhance the pleasure of working the land.	Dani Baker, *Cross Island Farms*
Thursday 12:45 - 2:00	**Is Sap Worth Listening To? - Two Seasons of Learning Using Sap, Soil & Water Analysis**	**Ellsworth B**	Sap analysis reads what a plant is doing right now — not just what's in the soil. But is it worth the cost and effort? Join agronomist Kevin Arthun and grower Rebecca Buckler for an honest look at two seasons of tomato sap testing at Williwaw Farm: why they tested, how to read the numbers, and how they turned results into in-season decisions. Bring your questions — this is a working conversation, not a lecture.	Kevin Arthun, *Deeper Roots Ag*
Thursday 12:45 - 2:00	**Farm Energy Efficiency and Energy Alternatives:**	**Colesville**	Energy costs are volatile and can be one of the highest farm expenses. Knowing this, it's important to look at ways to contain energy costs. In this session Chris Lent, an NCAT Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, will share how a farm can assess energy use and adopt thinking and design strategies to reduce energy needs. He will review alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, micro-hydro, and biofuels, and their applications in farm settings.	Chris Lent, *NCAT*
Thursday, Session III				
Presentation Time	**Session Name**	**Room**	**Session Description**	**Speaker(s)**
Thursday 2:15 - 3:30	**Farm Marketing 101**	**Main Ballroom**	Most farmers know they should be marketing their farm, but few have a clear plan. In this two-part workshop, Lisa Wheeler Duff, owner of Oak Spring Farm and founder of CSA Love, will first teach the fundamentals of effective farm marketing, including customer attraction, storytelling, email marketing, and retention. Participants will then create their own farm marketing plan or campaign during a hands-on working session, receiving personalized feedback, coaching, and practical tools they can implement immediately.	Lisa Wheeler Duff, *Oak Spring Farm LLC & CSA Love*
Thursday 2:15 - 3:30	**Extend Your Market Season to Profit Year Round**	**Fenton Room**	Short farmers market seasons means limiting income and rebuilding shoppers' habits each year. Explore increasing offerings with value added products and adapting operations to extend success.	*Farmers Market Pros*
Thursday 2:15 - 3:30	**"Squashing" the Nutrient Competition: Preliminary Results from our Organic No-Till Trials in Winter Squash**	**Spring Room**	2026 was the first year of our 2-year research trial funded by Northeast SARE comparing cover crop-based no-till organic production systems. We are excited to share our preliminary results and discuss our experiences with tarp and zone-till approaches to roller-crimping cover crops.	Bryan Alexander, *Good Dog Farm*
Thursday 2:15 - 3:30	**Edible Perennial Flowers and Vegetables that Sustain Themselves**	**Ellsworth A**	Why plant, weed, cultivate and water annual vegetables year after year when you can grow perennials that mimic the annuals, plant them once, and harvest them year after year with minimal labor? Attendees will learn about highly nutritious perennial vegetables, herbs, flowers and leaves and become inspired to try their hand at growing these carefree food plants. Growth habit, food value, and aesthetic appeal of each plant will be described. If you want to expand your CSA or farm stand offerings, create a you-pick venue, sell wholesale, or produce value-added products, this workshop will introduce you to a variety of perennial plants to choose from.	Dani Baker, *Cross Island Farms*

Thursday 2:15 - 3:30	**Telling the Story of Our Food: Connecting Farmers and Consumers**	**Ellsworth B**	Consumers increasingly want to support local agriculture, yet farmers face growing challenges in reaching and retaining customers. Moderated by the Publisher of Edible DC, this panel brings together farmers, chefs, and food-system leaders to discuss changing market dynamics, consumer perceptions, and strategies for building stronger connections between producers and the public. Through real-world examples and practical insights, panelists will explore how storytelling, collaboration, and transparency can strengthen demand for local food and help sustain the next generation of farms.	James Whitman, *Edible DC Magazine*
Thursday 2:15 - 3:30	**Building a Farm That Lasts**	**Colesville**	This session will explore how legal planning can protect working farms while creating opportunities for future generations.	Genevieve H. R. Macfarlane, Esq., *Law Offices of Stevens Palmer, LLC*
Thursday, Session IV				
Presentation Time	**Session Name**	**Room**	**Session Description**	**Speaker(s)**
Thursday 3:45 - 5:00	**The Underground Garden: A Speakeasy for Culture, Justice, and Expression**	**Spring Room**	Step into The Underground Garden, a speakeasy-style gathering where art, music, and storytelling spark conversations about justice and community. Farmers, artists, and advocates come together to share poetry, song, and creative expression, rooted in lived experience and hope for change. Whether you perform or just listen, you'll find a welcoming space to connect, collaborate, and celebrate culture's role in advocacy. Every voice is valued in this vibrant, expressive, and justice-driven session.	Dr. Dominic K. Nell, *City Weeds, LLC*
Thursday 3:45 - 5:00	**SNAP to It and Increase Market Income**	**Fenton Room**	Using innovative marketing and partnership technqiues to increase market attendance, maximize matching funds and boost farmer and vendor income	Omar Marroquin, *Crossroads Farmers Market*
Thursday 3:45 - 5:00	**Lessons Learned: 26 Years of Farming**	**Ellsworth A**	Twenty years from now, you'll look back on your farming journey and recognize the missteps you made. Sam White with American Farmland Trust in the Mid-Atlantic region, will discuss mistakes he made over the last two decades of farming. He has made the mistakes so that you don't. From physical health to finances, to family and soil health, this potentially serious and humorous talk has something for every producer.	Sam White, *American Farmland Trust*
Thursday 3:45 - 5:00	**Wild Weeds as a Secondary Crop**	**Ellsworth B**	Weeds can be the bane of many farmers' existence, but they can also be quite lucrative. Many weeds are revered by herbalists and foragers. This presentation will discuss the many ways that weeds can be used as a secondary crop including value added products, crafts and more, as well as which agricultural weeds are most desired.	Candise Jordan, *Farm Forage Feast*
Thursday 3:45 - 5:00	**The Local Food Exchange: A New Way for Maryland Schools to Buy Local Food [Sponsored Session]**	**Colesville**	The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is developing the Local Food Exchange (LFE), an online platform launching Summer 2027 to connect local agricultural producers with Maryland schools and streamline the procurement of fresh, local foods. Participants will explore the platform's purpose and key features and learn how it can expand opportunities to supply institutional markets, including schools.	Kanika Campbell & Leslie Sessom-Parks, *Maryland State Department of Education*

5:00 – 7:00 pm: Happy Hour — Cash Bar & Appetizers, Farmer Bingo & Farmer Swag Swap (bring your farm's logowear!) — Main Ballroom & Exhibitor Hall

7:30 am – 4:30 pm: Registration Open & Exhibits

8:00 – 9:30 am: Coffee and light breakfast available — Heated Tent

8:15 – 9:30 am: Annual Membership Meeting — Main Ballroom A

Friday, Session V				
Presentation Time	**Session Name**	**Room**	**Session Description**	**Speaker(s)**
Friday 9:30 - 10:45	**Are You TOO Diversified? How Many Enterprises Can One Brain Handle?**	**Main Ballroom**	We've been told for decades that one pillar of the sustainable farm is DIVERSITY. Is it possible that some have taken this message too far? Is it really possible for one adult brain to hold all the information about more than one productions system? My observation after consulting with hundreds of farms around the country is that those who suffer burnout the most are farms with TOO MANY enterprises. It's just an overload of the farm managers brain. Let's dig in to what might make sense on a farm of different scales and crops.	Ellen Polishuk, *Plant to Profit*
Friday 9:30 - 10:45	**Expanding the Role of Farmers Markets PANEL**	**Fenton Room**	Market aggregated CSAs, market staffed and co-op produce booths, mobile markets and more challenge traditional definitions of farmers markets and extend their reach. Which changes are right for your market?	*Farmers Market Pros*

Friday 9:30 - 10:45	**How to Harvest and Treat Rainwater for Irrigating Vegetables**	**Spring Room**	Are you interested in collecting rainwater and storing it to irrigate vegetables? Do you already harvest rainwater for irrigation? In this workshop you will assess whether rainwater harvesting fits into your operation, learn research-validated irrigation best practices and water treatment methods for food safety, and learn how to retrofit a rainwater harvesting system onto a high tunnel. This workshop draws on research and education funded by grants from USDA-NIFA, the Hughes Agroecology Center, and NESARE.	Neith Little, UMD Extension, Agriculture and Food Systems *Program* & Amanda Rockler
Friday 9:30 - 10:45	**From Roadmap to Action: Building Climate-Resilient Agriculture in the Region**	**Ellsworth A**	The Maryland Climate-Smart Agriculture: Roadmap to Resilience, released in 2026 by the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, outlines 13 recommendations for how the agricultural community can increase resilience amid a changing climate that is disrupting farm operations and viability. This session will explore the recommendations from the Roadmap and current efforts to improve climate resilience and will include an interactive session for conference attendees to discuss what action looks like in the Mid-Atlantic region.	Ernie Shea, *Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology*
Friday 9:30 - 10:45	**Nobody Ever Gets No Land: Lessons Learned in Land Access**	**Ellsworth B**	Deciding to share space with other farmers can be challenging, but rewarding. In this session, join Maura McCasted of Ad Astra Farms as she breaks down what she has learned about trying to share land in a fair and equitable way with other farmers, her reasons for doing so and why other farmers shouldn't wait until they have 50 acres or own their land to consider similar arrangements.	Maura McCasted, *Ad Astra Farms*
Friday 9:30 - 10:45	**Small Farms: Healthy Herds and Flocks**	**Colesville**	This presentation highlights the critical role of biosecurity and emergency preparedness for small livestock producers. Using everyday farm defense habits as a baseline, the session covers practical strategies for comprehensive disease prevention across multiple species. We will discuss how strict Lines of Separation, proper quarantine, intentional chore sequencing, and waste management can safeguard rare agricultural genetics against foreign animal diseases. Materials have been developed through a collaboration between The Livestock Conservancy and the Center for Food Security and Public Health (CFSPH).	Dr. Amanda Skidmore

5 minute speech from Secretary Kevin Atticks, Keynote - Tia Earman "Making Space for Agriculture"

Lunch & Farmer to Farmer Chats

Friday, Session VI

Presentation Time	Session Name	Room	Session Description	Speaker(s)
Friday 1:45 - 3:00	**Soft Skills for Managing People**	**Main Ballroom**	Strong teams are built on communication, trust, and thoughtful leadership. This session will offer practical strategies for managing people, navigating workplace challenges, and creating a more collaborative farm or organization.	Ellen Polishuk, *Plant to Profit*
Friday 1:45 - 3:00	**DIY Experiential Marketing**	**Fenton Room**	Shoppers come to markets for groceries and for community. How to design, fund and staff programs that bring them back every week.	*Farmers Market Pros*
Friday 1:45 - 3:00	**Preparing for and Understanding Your Farm's Nutrient Management Plan**	**Spring Room**	This session will introduce topics related to nutrient management plan development for Maryland farmers including regulatory requirements and how individuals can get a plan. We will explore an example nutrient management plan to better understand regulatory requirements as well as the real world application of the plan information on the farm. Soil sampling strategies for diverse farms will be discussed, and we will answer farm specific questions about soil sampling and your nutrient management plan.	Kayla Griffith, *University of Maryland Extension*
Friday 1:45 - 3:00	**Lessons from Communal Farms**	**Ellsworth A**	Launched in 2020, the DC Parks and Rec's Communal Farm program maximizes urban agriculture production and inclusivity to grow, glean, and distribute nearly 100,000 lbs of veggies to 1000s of people annually. This presentation shares best practices developed from the last six years including strategies for community organizing around shared resources, intercropping methods that double yields, low-maintenance multi-site management, tips for growing with rats, rooftop farming, and creating resource networks to connect urban agriculture movements.	Josh Singer, *DC Parks and Rec*
Friday 1:45 - 3:00	**Advocacy in Action: Elevating Voices From Annapolis to Capitol Hill**	**Ellsworth B**	Learn about advocacy opportunities and best practices to create change in our communities.	Nick Healy, *Communitas Farm*
Friday 1:45 - 3:00	**Multifunction Hedgerows: Benefits, Outputs, and Design**	**Coleville**	Panelists discuss and give examples of the benefits of hedgerows to farm operations, marketable products, design and planning considerations. Panelists take questions from the audience as well.	Don English, *Keystone Tree Crops Cooperative* & Austin Unruh, *Trees For Graziers*

Friday, Session V

Presentation Time	Session Name	Room	Session Description	Speaker(s)

Friday 3:15 - 4:30	**Advanced Techniques for Managing Soil Fertility in Organic Vegetable Production**	**Main Ballroom**	This session will cover advanced soil fertility management strategies for organic vegetable production in fields and high tunnels. We will discuss multiple approaches to soil and plant tissue testing and interpretation that provide a basis for nutrient planning and addressing deficiencies. Learn how to integrate cover crops, compost/manure, commercial fertilizers and appropriate tillage to feed plants and build soil health. We will also highlight fertigation and foliar feeding with micronutrients and biostimulants	Alex Hessler, *Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation*
Friday 3:15 - 4:30	**Mapping the Future with Strategic Planning**	**Fenton Room**	Uncertain times, shifting landscapes and varied priorities make long term planning challenging. How to map your farmers market future with insight and flexibiity.	*Farmers Market Pros*
Friday 3:15 - 4:30	**Beginning Sheep Farming**	**Spring Room**	Getting started with sheep- selecting breeds to match your goals, making equipment decisions and beginning a grazing operation	Emily Chamelin, *Aerie Farm East*
Friday 3:15 - 4:30	**Building a More Resilient Food and Farm System through Grassroots Advocacy in Federal Policy**	**Ellsworth A**	This session will begin with a focus on federal agriculture policy and why the Farm Bill matters. The second part of the session will be interactive and work with participants on how they can get involved with sustainable agriculture advocacy on the local, state, and federal level as well as empower participants to engage their members of Congress and advocate for a more sustainable and resilient food and farming system.	Nick Rossi, *National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition* & Tyler Edwards, *National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition*
Friday 3:15 - 4:30	**Diversification Without Borders: Global Lessons in Building More Resilient Farm Businesses**	**Ellsworth B**	How are farmers around the world reducing their exposure to economic risk—and what can farmers here learn from them?	Tope Fajingbesi, *Dodo Farms*
Friday 3:15 - 4:30	**Beyond Compliance: Food Safety Systems That Strengthen Your Farm**	**Colesville**	Good recordkeeping is about more than passing an audit. Practical food safety systems help farms train employees, improve traceability, and strengthen buyer relationships. Participants will learn which records are most important, what information each record should capture, and how to build practical, sustainable systems using paper, spreadsheets, or digital tools that fit the scale and workflow of their farm.	Stasia Greenewalt, *SG Farm Services*
Friday 3:15 - 4:30	**Koiner Farm Field Trip**	**OFFSITE**	Meet at Registration, walk from the Civic Center to 737 Easley St. *Meet in the Main Lobby at 3:15 pm*	

Saturday Post-Conference

Presentation Time	Session Name	Room	Session Description	Speaker(s)
Saturday 9-10:30 AM	**FRESHFARM Downtown Silver Spring Farmers Market Tour**	**Main Ballroom**	Explore the FRESHFARM Downtown Silver Spring Farmers Market, located right in front of the Civic Building. Meet local producers, discover regional food, and enjoy fresh flavors before heading home. This tour will also go into Farmers Maket design, how to set up your booth for maximum efficiency and tools that can help you along the way	*Farmers Market Pros & FRESHFARM*
Saturday 9AM-5PM	**Produce Safety Rule (PSR) Grower Training**	**Spring Room**	This one-day training offers practical guidance on meeting the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. Participants will learn key practices for produce safety, worker hygiene, water management, and postharvest handling, and receive certification upon completion. Breakfast and lunch are included. Use code “FH50” for 50% OFF!	*ALEI & Maryland Food Safety Network*