



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Episode 370: Vertical Mushroom Farming in Florida

In this episode, NCAT Sustainable Agriculture Specialist Gabriella Soto-Velez talks with Russell Hollander from Care2Grow, a vertical mushroom farm located in Naples, Florida. Their discussion goes in-depth into the world of mushroom production and market diversification.



NCAT NEWS

Abundant Ogallala Project

When it comes to the Ogallala Aquifer, conservation needs are diverse, the stakes are huge, and the outcomes will be dire if we fail to meet the water challenges ahead. This aquifer supplies nearly all water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural uses in the Southern Plains region, and at its current pumping rate, it will NOT be able to support irrigation within the next 30 years. Playas, wetlands, grasslands, and wildlife such as the Lesser Prairie Chicken are rapidly declining, adversely affecting the agricultural economy of the region.

Through our new project, NCAT will work with farmers and ranchers to support the rapid, widespread adoption of regenerative agroecological practices in the Southern High Plains region. Why? Because we know that adoption of these practices is the most promising pathway to simultaneously conserve precious groundwater resources, enhance wildlife habitat, increase soil health, and improve resilience of ag operations and rural communities.

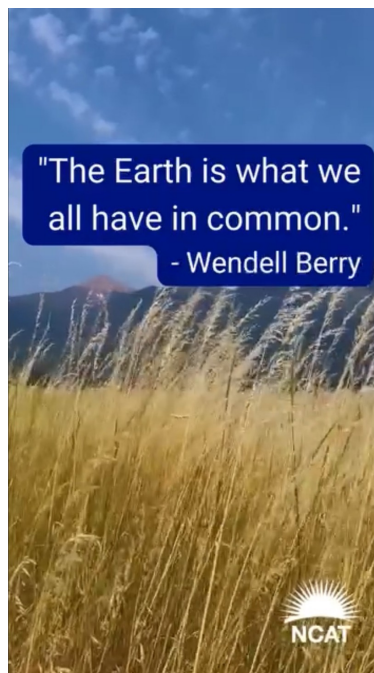
Watch for upcoming webinars on water-wise conservation planning and download our free workbook, [Conservation Planning in the Southern High Plains](#), to learn more about the Ogallala Aquifer and the wildlife, vegetation, and crops of the region. The workbook includes guidance on developing a monitoring

and drought plan.



Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

EARTH DAY



NCAT is committed to regenerative agriculture and clean energy solutions that, together, help us take care of the Earth for each other. Join us in continuing to celebrate Earth Day, every day.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is accepting applications to help established value-added dairy processors, producer associations, and dairy brands strengthen their brand and expand market reach. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with a cash and/or in-kind match requirement requirement of 25%.

Applications are due by May 8, 2025.

Virginia Agriculture Food Assistance Program

This program provides grants to charitable food assistance organizations in Virginia to purchase Virginia Grown agricultural products that must be distributed to food-insecure Virginia residents

Applications are due by May 9, 2025.

Oregon Climate Resilient Farmers Market Grant Program

Oregon Farmers Markets Association is accepting applications from farmers markets with fewer than 80 vendors for grants from \$5,000 to \$45,000 to reduce the impact of drought and natural disasters on local food systems.

Applications are due by May 12, 2025.

DON'T MISS IT

Kentucky Local Food Systems Summit

May 21-23, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky

This event brings together local food systems professionals, practitioners, and advocates for keynote conversations, dynamic breakout sessions, and solutions-oriented working groups around cultivating a more connected and vibrant local food system.

Soil Health Workshop

May 14-15, 2025

College Station, Texas

The Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts and partners are offering two-day workshops across the state. Learn how to improve the health and function of the soil and develop a conservation plan for your operation.

406 Grazing Academy

June 3-5, 2025

Havre, Montana

This workshop features educational speakers, ranch tours, and learning opportunities geared toward providing participants new grazing management skills to apply on their operations.

NEW ATTRA PUBLICATION

Poultry Meat Processing: Choosing an Approach for your Farm

NCAT is cooperating with Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) to produce a series of publications to aid small-scale farms in producing and marketing meat. This six-page publication by Ann Baier is the first in that series. It offers a brief overview of federal poultry processing inspection requirements and criteria for exemption. It includes questions and examples to guide producers in choosing between available options for how birds move from farm to final customer. It also provides a list of resources for additional information.



IN THE NEWS

- **National Survey Finds Advisor Interest in Cover Crops**

The eighth [National Cover Crop Survey](#), released by the Conservation Technology Information Center, SARE, and the American Seed Trade Association, focuses on how agricultural consultants advise farmers about cover crops. Approximately 70% of the respondents who farm themselves use cover crops on their own operations, and those cover crop users are more inclined to advise their clients on the practice. Among the survey findings, 56.9% of the farm advisors expect to see cover crop acreage continue to increase.

Related ATTRA publication: [Overview of Cover Crops and Green Manures](#)

- **Ethnic Vegetable Production Guide for Deep South Region Available Online**

Southern University's Agricultural Research and Extension Center has a new publication available online, [Ethnic Vegetable Planting Guide: A Guide for Planting and Harvesting Ethnic Vegetables for the U.S. Deep South](#). The authors note that many tropical vegetables can grow successfully in the sub-tropic portion of Louisiana. This 36-page guide helps small farmers and urban farmers learn to grow, harvest, and market ethnic tropical vegetables including hibiscus roselle, molokhia, sweet potato greens, amaranth, and many others.

Related ATTRA blog: [Adventures in Mirliton](#)

- **[NOSB Virtual Spring Meeting Begins with Public Comment Sessions](#)**

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is holding its [2025 Spring Meeting](#) virtually. The meeting begins with public comment webinars April 22 and 24, 2025, 12:00 pm until 5:00 pm Eastern. The public meeting will take place April 29 through May 1, 2025, 12:00 pm until 5:00 pm daily. The meetings are free, open to the public, and no registration is required. Instructions for joining the public comment webinars and the public meeting are available online.

- **[Virginia Verified Meat Branding Launches with Beef Label](#)**

A [Virginia Verified Meat](#) certification program for qualifying cattle, goats, sheep, and swine was created by the Virginia General Assembly. The program is administered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which has just unveiled its first brand line, “Virginia Verified Beef.” The brand demonstrates to consumers that the product was bred, born, raised, and processed in the state.

- **[Appalachian Grown Producer Survey Report Reveals Trends](#)**

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program’s Local Food Research Center [surveyed Appalachian Grown producers](#) about their experiences farming in 2024 and released a report summarized the responses to questions about farm sales, market outlets, land access, and the impact of Hurricane Helene. A majority of producers reported both growth in market opportunities for local food and increased sales in 2024. Also, 74% of respondents expressed interest in buying or leasing more land.

MORE NEWS

SUPPORT OUR WORK



About Us

NCAT has been helping people build resilient communities through local and sustainable solutions that reduce poverty, strengthen self-reliance, and protect natural resources since 1976. Learn more and become a friend of NCAT at [NCAT.ORG](#).

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