Extend the Fall Grazing Season and Manage Forage Stockpiling

by Troy Bishopp, Northeastern Region National Grazing Lands Coalition

Around the Northeast, August ushers in an abundance of produce, swimming and, for some, the commencement of stockpiling forage for extended grazing after the frost.

Hate to be the bearer of bad news, but Jack Frost will be arriving in October (we think) and putting the kibosh to plant growth.

If you don't plan for an extended grazing season, you won't have one.

The practice of allowing forage growth to accumulate for fall and winter grazing is well documented to help the bottom line, but is a lot more complicated in reality. This juncture in time is where the grazing chart/plan really shines (see grazinglands.org/grazing-charts) as you can pencil out 60 days or more ahead of time and see what decisions need to be made to achieve a reasonable result.

To figure out all the dynamics, you better put your forage inventory "observation cap" on and do some growth rate measurements with a pasture stick or plate meter to learn how much forage you're accumulating each week.

For me, it's the "money rain" that drives growth, along with fertility levels, and actually how you've managed the swards since the beginning of the grazing season.

Based on my grazing records, seven out of the last 10 years have had very limited moisture in August and especially September, which are really hard to plan for.

As a result, stockpiling efforts are diminished and alternate plans must be vetted.

For those of us that need to maintain a specific number of animals on a fixed land base, deferring cool-season forage for future grazing is the challenge. In an ideal situation, lowering the stocking rate as you go into a slower growth phase would be a great goal.

In my case, I'm going in the opposite direction as the animals are getting heavier and demanding even more forage.

So what do we do with limited resources? I've prayed for rain, with mixed results. I've used the Greg Judy method of just topping the standing forage early in the stockpiling phase and then coming back later in the season to take the rest of it, which is context driven, because as Steve Kenyon says, "You take as much as your bank account allows."

I've had the opportunity in the past to move animals to a rented pasture for fall grazing while my whole farm stockpiled (awesome).

Summer is a great time to revitalize a certain field with bale grazing while allowing the rest of the pastures more recovery days. The practice also plays nicely with a vacation. It's a good time to bolster soil fertility with amendments (as long as there's rain) and add more dry matter pounds. On other operations (dairy), adding more hay ground to the rotation is a positive.

Right now, many farmers are also adding cover crop mixes and fall annuals for future grazing opportunities.

As with any future decision, a sharp pencil is needed to weigh your options, even if you've heard grazing stockpile forage is next level. If you know your grazing numbers—and you should—calculate what strategy works best for you financially and environmentally.

It's not a zero-sum game; there are many ways to add valuable grazing days with combinations of strategies, which even includes not stockpiling, if that fits your context. And that's OK.

Don't let your mind or others' opinions be a trap. I didn't think extending the grazing season past Halloween was possible until I visited my peers doing it and got my hands on a copy of "Kick the Hay Habit: A Practical Guide to Year-Around Grazing," by Jim Gerrish. Along with watching practitioner's YouTube videos from all across the globe, I was hooked in planning for what I wanted and not taking what I got.

By adopting a stockpiling mindset, we've done a better job of grazing management throughout the year and increased revenue from more grazing days. The cool side benefit is we were growing our forage diversity and laden seedbank (especially clover) because of extended recovery times, and that, my friends, added two weeks of grazing opportunity the next spring.

It also has yielded more hunting lease opportunities because wildlife appreciate a longer grazing season.

Reprinted courtesy of Lancaster Farming, lancasterfarming.com. Troy Bishopp is a farmer and the Northeastern Region National Grazing Lands Coalition resource manager.

Cover Crop Grazing: Turning Conservation into Opportunity

by Elizabeth Beggins, American Farmland Trust

For many Virginia farmers, cover crops have become a valuable tool to protect soil, improve water quality, and build long-term resilience. But what if cover crops can do even more?

Across the Mid-Atlantic, a growing number of producers are discovering that the benefits of cover crops extend beyond the well-known advantages of erosion control, nutrient retention, and soil health improvement. When livestock are thoughtfully integrated into crop systems, cover crops become a forage-producing asset while continuing to deliver conservation benefits.

Through a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) funded by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), American Farmland Trust (AFT) is working with producers and advisors to explore practical approaches to integrating livestock grazing into cover crop systems.

Spring 2026 marked the first grazing season for the project, which includes four participating farms spanning Virginia from as far north as Loudoun County to as far south as Franklin County. The project brings crop and livestock producers together to evaluate whether and how cover crop grazing can generate conservation benefits like improved soil structure and enhanced nutrient cycling while also expanding forage resources and potentially strengthening farm profitability for both parties.

More Than a Winter Cover

Cover crops are planted between cash crop seasons to keep living roots in the ground when fields might otherwise be bare. Common species include cereal grains, legumes, and broadleaf forage species that can help reduce erosion, capture nutrients, suppress weeds, and improve water infiltration and retention.

Cover crops help protect soil, retain nutrients, suppress weeds, and improve water infiltration between cash crop seasons. For livestock producers, cover crops provide high-quality forage during periods when perennial pasture growth is limited. Additional forage helps reduce feed costs and allows perennial pastures time to recover. For crop producers, grazing livestock can accelerate nutrient cycling. Livestock consume cover crops and crop residues, converting plant material into manure and urine that return nutrients to the soil and support the next cash crop. This process helps move fertility through the system efficiently while also helping build soil organic matter. The result is an integrated system that seeks to benefit both the land and the farmer.

Demonstration plots at Green Sprig Ag in Franklin County, Virginia, provided producers with an opportunity to share ideas and learn about cover crop grazing, soil health, and livestock integration during a field day hosted by Daniel and Joel Austin in March 2026.

Learning from Producer Partnerships

A key component of the AFT project involves partnerships between crop and livestock producers. These collaborations allow producers to share resources while exploring mutually beneficial opportunities.

One participating livestock producer, Tyler Lineweaver of Ginger Creek Farm in Culpeper County, recently described the advantages of grazing cover crops:

"This allows our pastures at home to have a break and time to rejuvenate and grow and has taught us a lot about the ins and outs and importance of rotational grazing."

Similarly, row crop producer Daniel Austin, of Green Sprig Ag, notes positive outcomes.

"Being part of this project has allowed us to experience animal impact on land that has not seen livestock integration in my lifetime. ... In the short term, with livestock integration we have witnessed our weed species change, and it looks like it will be exciting to see those changes in the future."

The timing of this project has been particularly valuable during recent dry periods. Producers shifted cattle onto cover crop acres, reducing pressure on perennial pastures and preserving those acres for later use.

If the Benefits Are Clear, Why Isn't Grazing Cover Crops More Common?

Despite the advantages, cover crop grazing is not yet widely adopted across much of Virginia. One of the biggest hurdles is infrastructure. Many crop fields were not designed for livestock. Fencing, corrals, and water systems are uncommon in today's crop production landscapes. Decades of agricultural specialization have resulted in crop and livestock operations that are physically and operationally separated.

Timing also presents challenges for producers interested in grazing cover crops. To produce sufficient forage for grazing, especially in the fall, cover crops ideally need to be established earlier in the season. This requires seeding into standing corn or soybean crops, using aerial application, or adjusting crop management practices. Likewise, maximizing grazing opportunities in the spring demands flexibility in cash crop planting and fertilization schedules.

(article continues on page 3)

Crop producers also raise concerns about soil compaction, particularly when livestock graze fields during wet conditions. Effects can vary depending on soil moisture, stocking density, grazing duration, and management practices. One objective of the project is to better understand how those factors influence crop production outcomes.

"One of the first questions crop farmers ask is, 'Will cover crop grazing compact my soils and negatively impact my crop yields?'" said Jacob Gilley of JG Land & Livestock, a consulting advisor for the project. "Projects like this one lessen the risk to producers considering cover crop grazing and help them experiment with new techniques. It's truly eye-opening for them and has huge impacts for agriculture and conservation throughout the region."

One objective of the project is to better understand these concerns and determine whether managed rotational grazing can provide conservation and economic benefits while maintaining crop productivity. Participating producers are collecting observations, management data, and yield information to help answer these questions.

Finally, livestock producers may face management challenges associated with transporting and monitoring animals on land they do not own. While temporary electric fencing and rotational grazing systems have become increasingly efficient, grazing cover crops still requires producers to adopt new management approaches.

Testing Practical Solutions

In addition to focusing on key research questions, the project is evaluating solutions that farmers can realistically implement.

Taylor Adam, AFT's Mid-Atlantic Livestock and Grazing Manager, explains, "Grant funding can help demonstrate what's possible, but success depends on what works for producers. Our goal is to understand what practices and technologies make cover crop grazing practical and economically viable for producers while improving soil health and supporting farm profitability."

Project participants are testing a variety of fencing approaches, including permanent, semi-permanent, temporary, and virtual fencing systems. These technologies may help reduce infrastructure costs and simplify livestock management in crop fields.

Water access is another major focus. At one project site in Loudoun County, AFT worked with a producer to install a solar-powered water pumping system that moves water from an existing pond to grazing areas within a crop field. The team is demonstrating above-ground, removable water lines that can provide livestock access to water without requiring extensive permanent infrastructure.

Researchers and producers are also testing different methods of cover crop establishment, including aerial seeding, fertilizer spreaders, and no-till drills. Diverse cover crop mixtures featuring small grains, legumes, and forbs are being evaluated, and weather stations at each farm help track precipitation and temperature so researchers can better understand how conditions influence cover crop growth and grazing performance.

Looking Ahead

Although the project is still in its early stages, participating producers are already generating valuable insights about the opportunities and challenges associated with cover crop grazing.

AFT plans to continue sharing lessons learned through webinars, educational resources, a project website, and on-farm workshops.

Cover crop grazing is not a new idea, but modern technologies, changing economics, and interest in soil health are making adoption more practical for many producers. By bringing crop and livestock farmers together, this project aims to explore and demonstrate how conservation practices can generate value not only for soil and water resources, but also for the farms that steward them.

Interested in seeing cover crop grazing in action? American Farmland Trust plans to host a fall field day in Loudoun County, Virginia highlighting cover crop benefits, livestock integration, grazing infrastructure, and cover crop demonstration plots.

Watch for additional details in the coming months by following us on Instagram (@farmlandmidatlantic) and Facebook (facebook.com/AFTMidAtlantic) or on our website: farmland.org/mid-atlantic.

Regenerative agricultural consultant Doug Peterson shares insights with producers during an educational event. Access to experienced practitioners and technical experts helps farmers evaluate new practices, learn from real-world experiences, and reduce implementation risk.

Tyler and Beth Lineweaver's cattle from Ginger Creek Farm graze spring cover crops planted by Joe Gray of Piedmont Ag in Culpeper County, demonstrating the partnership between livestock and crop producers.

How Farmers are Adding Trees to Combat Heat, Diversify Income

by Chris Torres, American Agriculturalist

When temperatures climb into the 90s, Kathie Arnold's organic dairy cows know exactly where to go—into the shade of the black locusts and sycamores she planted five years ago.

"On a hot day, I've got them in a pasture that has some trees in it," said the farmer from Truxton, New York. "So, they'll be out grazing, then they'll go in the trees for a while, then they'll come back out and graze again, and then they'll go back to the trees."

Integrating trees with farming and livestock —whether called agroforestry, silvopasture, or alley cropping—is an ancient practice that's experiencing a modern revival.

But new techniques are allowing more farmers, like Arnold and Ohio's Keavin Hill, to establish successful silvopastures from scratch, even in active pasture.

Overcoming challenges

Growing new trees in pastures is notoriously hard, but Austin Unruh, founder of Lancaster County, PA-based Trees for Graziers, claims a 90% success rate in new tree plantings due, in part, to techniques he helped develop.

Tree shelters are now electrified, a process that's done by cutting a hole in the top of the shelter and connecting it with electrified polywire from an existing electrified fence. Another wire, typically aluminum, is wrapped around the tree to fully electrify it.

Another key is setting the wires high enough —typically 6 feet high—to allow livestock to graze underneath without getting zapped.

"That has made a world of a difference in terms of the management and also allowing these systems to be used without a whole lot of additional maintenance," Unruh said. "Because if you fence out the tree from the cattle, what happens is, one, you take a significant amount of space out of production, and two, grass grows up inside that area and competes with your trees and provides cover for rodents, so you have to cut that grass back.

"That is a chore that nobody wants to do in the middle of summer. So, by using a tube and electric fencing, we can cut the maintenance needs down a lot and get better growth from the trees."

Unruh said he's installed trees on more than 60 farms, mostly in Pennsylvania. Most farmers, he said, want trees that provide shade and feed, so he plants fast-growing varieties such as hybrid poplar, hybrid willow, or black locust, along with trees that grow slower but drop feed. These include persimmon fruit or thornless honey locusts for their high-sugar pods that drop in winter.

Some farmers see shade by the third year, enough for two head of cattle per tree.

Arnold is one of the farmers who has benefited from these new techniques. She planted three rows of trees five years ago, 80 feet apart, in a small rotational paddock on her farm. They included black locusts, honey locusts, and sycamores.

Some of those trees are now 20 feet tall and provide ample shade for her 165 organic dairy cows. She's hoping the black locusts will provide another use.

"They can provide fence posts for us because we can't use treated fence posts," Arnold said. "And the cedar fence posts that we put in several years ago are coming to the end of their life. So, it'll be nice to have some of our own posts that we can use as these mature. Because we don't need the black locust 3 feet apart to provide shade."

Betting big on chestnuts

Arnold's silvopasture approach focuses primarily on shade, a common approach for dairy operations. But silvopasture can also be designed with the trees themselves as the primary crop, with livestock or hay production filling the gaps.

That's the model Hill is pursuing, although on a scale that dwarfs most agroforestry projects. Hill converted more than 1,800 acres of corn and soybeans in southern Ohio and Kentucky to 200,000 chestnut trees, believed to be one of the largest single chestnut tree plantings in the world.

"It's a lot of trees," he said with a laugh. His project is a partnership between him and two companies, Propagate and Agroforestry Partners, who pay him a yearly lease for the trees. The trees, planted five years ago and owned by both companies, are expected to produce 4 million pounds of chestnuts, with the earliest commercial harvest coming in 2028. Since he is a minority partner in Agroforestry Partners, Hill expects to also earn money from chestnuts.

New techniques are allowing trees planted for silvopasture to survive. Tree shelters are now electrified, a process that's done by cutting a hole in the top of the shelter and connecting it with electrified polywire from an existing electrified fence. Another wire, typically aluminum, is wrapped around the tree to fully electrify it. Another key is setting the wires high enough—typically 6 feet high—to allow livestock to graze underneath without getting zapped.

Until then, he's making money in another way. The rows were planted wide enough to accommodate large haymaking equipment, and last year, he made 7,000 round and square bales that were sent to northern Ohio. This year, he's planning to make 10,000 bales that will be trucked mostly to Virginia livestock operators.

Converting the land from row crops to trees wasn't easy—he's been a row crop farmer his whole life—but lack of reliable labor, especially in Kentucky, and the potential demand for chestnuts piqued his interest.

"This will double the capacity of domestic supply of chestnuts. All that was very intriguing to me," Hill said. Converting to hay was something he had to learn quickly. He bought a hay swather, a Case IH baler, and quickly got to work.

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"It's worked out pretty well," Hill said. "Last year was a little rough with the weather, and this year, we're having to bush-hog a considerable amount of first cutting just because the weather we had this spring has not been conducive."

Most of the trees and hay acres are in northern Kentucky, and about 150 acres are in Ohio where he still farms 1,600 acres of corn and soybeans. He hopes to one day do silvopasturing with animals, but time will tell.

"The trees are too young right now," Hill said. "But down the road, that could be a possibility. We're kind of the guinea pig for this. We're going to get it under control before we get too much bigger."

Pricey alternative

Whether for shade or chestnuts, though, planting new silvopasture isn't cheap. The U.S. Forest Service estimates it can cost thousands of dollars an acre to establish new silvopastures, and that's before adding in maintenance costs.

Unruh said his company is unique in that it provides a full service, from planting to continuous maintenance, but getting cost-share funds to do it has been a struggle.

He said his company is working with Pasa Sustainable Agriculture on a three-year study to develop a practice standard so future farmers and landowners can tap Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding for silvopasture-by-addition projects.

Dylan Heagy, agroforestry program manager at Pasa Sustainable Agriculture, said one reason NRCS is hesitant to fund these projects has been the high failure rate.

"Obviously, you don't want high mortality rates, which is what made planting trees into pastures more difficult in the past," he said. "Protecting that tree from livestock damage was a relatively daunting prospect. But these new techniques have made this much more workable."

Do your homework

It's easy to get excited about something new, but Heagy stresses the importance of doing your own research before diving in.

"My experience has been that the primary way to fail at this is to just not adequately plan, and then also not adequately budget time to get the project done," he said.

Nelson Martin, owner of Country Sunrise Creamery in Myerstown, PA, started planting his own silvopasture for his dairy cows six years ago, but the survival rate was initially poor, he said, because he didn't adequately protect them.

"We had done a lot of trees ourselves already," Martin said. "As hard as we did work on it, we just didn't have much to show for it."

Through a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Martin said he worked with Trees for Graziers to plant additional trees that were protected. Most of the 1,400 trees are black locusts, but about 600 are chestnuts.

Some of the biggest trees are now 20 feet tall, and they provide ample shade for the cows.

"We don't have to bring the cows in like in the past," Martin said. "It's better for the cows to keep them out there longer; it saves on feed costs and manure hauling and bedding. We're definitely thankful for where we're at, and we're working on the next project now."

Resources for success

Websites like Canopy Compass, from Canopy Farm Management, can identify suitable trees based on the street address you put in.

Penn State Extension, the USDA National Agroforestry Center, and Cornell Small Farms Program also have online guides for silvopasture establishment.

Unruh said the key is to start small.

"So rather than starting with saying, 'I want to plant 100 acres of silvopasture,' let's start with 10 trees and use 10 trees of species that are easy to work with, that are easy to grow, that are cheap," he said. "Start with those. And then if that works, if you're able to keep those alive, then you can go on to a larger system once you have some experience.

"Take some time to familiarize yourself with what will do well based on your soil conditions, based on the aspect of the site and the slope of the site. Do that work ahead of time and give yourself the time to think it through."

Article first published on the American Agriculturist website and American Agriculturist magazine.

Funding Available for Maryland Farmers Interested in Regenerative Grazing

Interested in doing something similar to what Kathie Arnold and Keavin Hill did on their farms (see article to the left)? The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) has funding available for regenerative grazing infrastructure (establishing pasture, fencing, water system), silvopasture plantings, and opportunities to improve farm biodiversity.

Given our hotter summers, there is an increased demand for trees in pastures to provide shade for animals. CBF is partnering with Trees for Graziers to wire all tree tubes so that livestock can graze around tubes, meaning no mowing or herbicide around the tree tubes is necessary.

Fast-growing trees are provided and planted by CBF.

CBF is also partnering with the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership to provide raptor nesting boxes.

For more information, please reach out to CBF's Rob Schnabel at 443-482-2175 or rschnabel@cbf.org.

Austin Unruh checks trees on a recent visit to a planting on a farm in Lancaster County, PA. Unruh is founder of Trees for Graziers, a company that plants and maintains new silvopasture plantings on farms.

Does the New World Screwworm Pose a Threat to Pennsylvania?

by Katie Bohn, Penn State Extension

Over the past two weeks, there have been 12 reports out of Texas and New Mexico of new cases of the New World screwworm—a parasitic fly once declared eradicated in the United States.

Female screwworms lay their eggs in the wounds of mammals, which then serve as a food source for larvae. If left untreated, infections can be fatal. Screwworms can infest any warm-blooded animal, including wildlife, livestock, and horses, and domestic animals like dogs, but rarely humans.

In this Q&A, Erika Machtinger, associate professor of entomology in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, discusses the state of the current outbreak—and what risks the insect poses to Pennsylvania and beyond. Penn State Extension is also providing updates and resources about the outbreak.

Q: What is the New World screwworm and what danger does it pose?

Machtinger: New World screwworm is not actually a worm; it is the larval stage of the fly species Cochliomyia hominivorax. Unlike typical maggots that feed on dead tissue, screwworm larvae feed on living tissue. Female flies lay eggs in wounds, surgical sites, navels of newborn animals, antler velvet injuries, tick bites, or other openings. After hatching, the larvae burrow into the flesh like a screw, causing rapidly enlarging wounds, severe pain, secondary infections, and potentially death, if untreated.

The greatest concern is for animal health and livestock production, as infestations can spread rapidly if not detected and treated promptly.

Q: What's the state of the current outbreak and how is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) responding?

Machtinger: New World screwworm was eradicated from the United States in the 1960s, and since then, permanent populations have been contained south of the biological barrier in Panama. Although there have been occasional reinfestations over the years, the parasite has recently spread north through Central America and Mexico and has now re-entered the southern United States.

USDA and state animal health officials have responded aggressively through surveillance, quarantines, movement controls, and the release of sterile screwworm flies.

The sterile insect technique is the same strategy that successfully eradicated screwworm from the United States decades ago. Sterile male flies are released into affected areas, where they mate with wild females that generally only mate once in their lifetime, resulting in no offspring and gradual population suppression. USDA has expanded production and release efforts while increasing surveillance and response activities in affected areas.

Q: Does screwworm pose a threat to Pennsylvania?

Machtinger: At present, the threat to Pennsylvania remains low. There are no confirmed cases in Pennsylvania, and current detections are concentrated in the southwestern United States.

The risk is low for two main reasons. First, Pennsylvania is far from the current outbreak area, so natural spread to the Northeast is unlikely in the near term. Second, New World screwworm is a warm-climate fly. Its ability to survive, reproduce, and establish populations is limited by temperature, especially cold winter conditions. Pennsylvania's seasonal climate makes long-term establishment much less likely than in warmer southern regions.

The greatest risk to Pennsylvania would come from the movement of infested animals from affected areas rather than natural spread. Animal owners should know where livestock, horses, pets, and other animals are coming from, especially if they were recently transported from the South or from areas under animal health restrictions. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has also recently issued a quarantine order, limiting animal movements and urging tightened biosecurity measures to protect livestock and pets.

Even though the current risk is low, early detection matters. Owners should monitor animals for unusual wounds, wounds that worsen rapidly, foul odor, visible maggots, or signs of pain and irritation, and contact a veterinarian or animal health official if they see anything suspicious.

Screwworms can infest any warm-blooded animal, including wildlife, livestock, and horses, and domestic animals like dogs, but rarely humans, according to Machtinger.

Q: What does the average citizen need to know?

Machtinger: For most Pennsylvanians, there is no reason for alarm. New World screwworm is primarily an animal health issue, not a public health emergency. The food supply remains safe. Meat and milk sold through regulated food systems undergo inspection and food safety safeguards, and New World screwworm does not make properly inspected meat or dairy products unsafe to consume.

The most important thing the average citizen can do is stay informed through trusted sources, such as USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, veterinarians, and university Extension programs. Be cautious of rumors or misinformation on social media, especially claims that are not supported by animal health authorities.

Q: What do animal owners need to know?

Machtinger: Animal owners should pay attention, especially when purchasing, transporting, or receiving livestock, horses, pets, or other animals from affected regions. Know where animals are coming from and stay aware of any current animal movement restrictions or quarantine requirements. Inspect animals for wounds, especially ones that are worsening, have a foul odor, contain maggots or are not healing normally. Maintain good fly control and animal husbandry practices and contact a veterinarian promptly if anything looks suspicious. Early detection and rapid reporting are the best tools for preventing spread.

Join the Advanced Soil Health Training Cohort Today!


PHOTO: VFGC

American Farmland Trust is recruiting producers and agricultural service providers to participate in the Advanced Soil Health Training Cohort, part of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation-funded project, "Improving Soil Health Management and Clean Water Through Farmer-led Mentor Networks."

The project serves Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, and is designed to provide advanced-level soil health training and cultivate farmer-led mentor networks that accelerate adoption of advanced soil health practices, such as cover cropping and reduced tillage, among grain and row-crop farmers across the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

American Farmland Trust is leading this project with regional partners, including Black Family Land Trust, 2020 Farmers Cooperative, Future Harvest, Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance, and Virginia No-Till Alliance. Together, we will offer classroom-based and hands-on training, farmer-to-farmer learning, support for local mentor groups, assistance with the development of personalized Soil Health Roadmaps, and opportunities for farmers to share what they are learning across the region.

Building healthy soil takes time, practice, and the chance to learn from people who are trying these ideas in real time, on real farms. This project is built around farmer-to-farmer learning, advanced classroom and practical field experience, and honest conversations about what works, what does not, and what it takes to make soil health systems fit into a farm business.

By participating, cohort members will build their own soil health knowledge, connect with other farmers and service providers, and help bring practical soil health information back to farmers in their communities. The goal is to support better soil, cleaner water, and stronger farmer networks across the Chesapeake Bay region.

This opportunity will bring together 32 producers and agricultural service providers from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania who share a strong interest in soil health, peer learning, and farmer-to-farmer mentorship.

Farmers must have grain crops in their rotation. Examples of eligible grain crops include corn, wheat, rye, oats, rice, barley, sorghum, millet, amaranth, and teff. Agricultural service providers who participate must work with or provide support to grain farmers.

AFT and our partners will prioritize applicants who demonstrate strong interest in soil health, the ability to attend required sessions, and a willingness to share knowledge with other farmers through peer-to-peer networks. To support a broad distribution of knowledge, the project will initially prioritize one cohort member per farm. If space allows, additional farm representatives may be considered.

Join this small group of regional farmers (all scales welcome) and ag service providers to deepen your soil health expertise through hands-on training, peer learning, and farmer-led mentorship. Register today at tinyurl.com/ASHT2027.

Mountains-to-Bay Grazing Alliance

American Farmland Trust
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US

MARYLAND GRAZERS NETWORK

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

PAGLC Pennsylvania Grazing Lands Coalition

FUTURE HARVEST
Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech
Virginia State University
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SAVE THE BAY
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Pasture Soil Health Workshop
Thursday, October 1, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM
Mauzy, Virginia
Boost your pasture productivity and soil health at the Virginia Forage & Grassland Council's upcoming hands-on workshop! This intensive session led by Doug Peterson combines expert classroom insights with interactive field demonstrations to give you practical, regenerative grazing strategies you can implement immediately. Visit vaforages.org to register.

Fall Pasture Lambing
Monday, October 5, 1:00 PM–3:00 PM
Warfield, Virginia
Like any livestock management system, pasture lambing requires careful recordkeeping; knowledge of animal nutrition, health and behavior; and—just as important—attention to detail. Learn low-stress sheep birthing and flock management techniques with Dr. Dahlia O'Brian. Visit ext.vsu.edu/events to register.

Thanksgiving Turkeys Relationships
Thursday, October 8, 10:00 AM–1:00 PM
Open Book Farm
Middletown, Maryland
Since 2011, Andrew and MK Barnet have been raising animals on pasture—broilers, layers, turkeys, pigs, beef cattle—and vegetables in synthesis for healthy soils providing affordable, clean and delicious food through Open Book Farm. Join Future Harvest to hear how these farmers are managing their animals, rotations, and diversified sales channels. Register at futureharvest.org.

Shenandoah Valley Small Farm Summit
Thursday, October 8, 5:30 PM–7:30 PM
Keezletown Ruritan Club
Keezletown, Virginia
This engaging session invites you to provide input into the Shenandoah Valley Small Farm Network. Share emerging successes and highlight remaining work needed to support producers in the Shenandoah Valley region. Visit ext.vsu.edu/events to register.

Virginia Buffer Summit
Wednesday, October 14, 9:00 AM–4:30 PM
Hungry Mother State Park
Marion, Virginia
Join the Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium to explore unique approaches to buffer restoration and how to collaborate and create healthy streamside ecosystems for clean water. Register at jamesriverconsortium.org.

Regenerative Farm Tour
Thursday, October 15, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM
Frederick County, Maryland
Spend a beautiful day with Mobilize Frederick in farm country learning about how regenerative farming practices support our environment, water quality, and farm families. We'll visit two farms in Woodsboro where we'll have the opportunity to hear from experts. Register at givebutter.com/RegenerativeFarmTour2026.

Maryland Grazing School
October 29-30, 8:00 AM–5:00 PM
Queenstown, Maryland
Designed with producer interests in mind, this 2-day grazing school will offer a more in-depth education on pasture and grazing management. Come learn everything you need to know to better manage grazing on your farm! Register at go.umd.edu/mdgrazingschool.

Silvopasture Field Day
Thursday, November 12, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM
Bel Air, Maryland
Trees for Graziers will focus on providing basic training and resources for technical assistance staff to plan, design, and implement silvopasture systems.

Equine Conservation Summit
Saturday, November 14, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM
California, Maryland
Grow your knowledge on how to better manage your horse farm through our many sessions on pasture and nutrient management, equine nutrition, and technical and financial assistance. Visit whova.com for more information and to register.

2027 Annual Conference
January 26-29, 2027, 9:00 AM–2:30 PM
Wytheville, Buckingham, Warrenton, Weyers Cave, Virginia—and online option
Virginia Forage & Grassland Council's annual conference will focus on how to improve soil and animal performance and lower long-term input costs on your grazing operation. Visit vaforages.org to register today.

GROUNDWORK: Mid-Atlantic Soil Health Conference
February 24-25, 2027
The Central Hotel & Conference Center
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Built around farmer-to-farmer learning and group discussion, GROUNDWORK brings together farmers who'd rather learn from someone who's actually done it than someone who's trying to sell it. No hidden agendas, just real experience, openly shared, from farmers who are investing in the long haul. For more information, visit GROUNDWORKagconference.com.

Sign-up to be Part of a New Beef Grazing Network

Interested in joining a new farmer-led Beef Grazing Network? Producers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas are encouraged to sign up to receive information about this upcoming American Farmland Trust program focused on peer learning, mentorship, and grazing management.

Sign-up to receive more information at forms.office.com/r/4XN6DbA5Hy.

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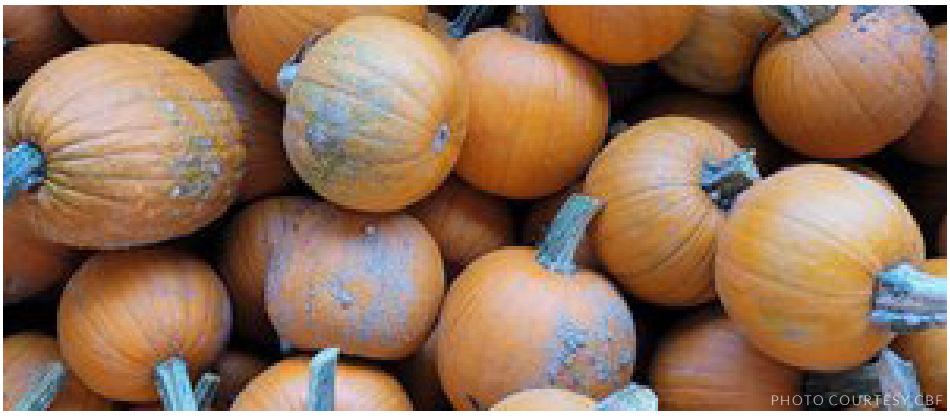
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