7th National Small Farm Conference
“Creating and Sustaining Small Farmers and Ranchers”
September 20-22, 2016
Hosted by Virginia State University’s College of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture
To be held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, Virginia Beach, VA

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: Deadline-April 15, 2016
The National Small Farm Conference, held every three to four years, brings together hundreds of stakeholders who work with small farmers and ranchers. The 2016 conference will include a number of preconference short courses, plenary sessions, oral and poster presentations, success stories, exhibits, and educational tours. This conference aims to bring together a diversity of professionals and leaders from academia, non-governmental organizations, governmental agencies, foundations, and the grassroots farming community whose goals and activities support the sustainability of small farmers and ranchers. The conference aims to strengthen collaborations and partnerships among stakeholders, and will provide an opportunity to share new ideas in research, extension, and outreach that aim to build resilient farming systems and the quality of life within communities.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Four presentation types are being invited for the 7th National Small Farm Conference program.

1) **Oral:** Presenters will report results from research, educational/outreach activities, or knowledge gained from professional experience. Oral presentations provide a platform for engaging the audience and sharing programmatic and/or research successes. Presentations will take place in concurrent sessions with each presentation lasting a total of 20 minutes (15 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for questions). A maximum of one proposal will be accepted from the same lead author. To the extent possible, submissions not selected for an oral session, due to lack of space, may be considered for presentation as posters.

2) **Posters:** Posters offer unique opportunities to present research, extension, and technical ideas and findings. All poster submissions will be expected to report on methods, approaches, summaries of results, and lessons learned from research and/or education/outreach activities. Posters will be displayed and presenters will be available to answer questions and explain their results and experiences to conference attendees at set times during the conference. If your abstract is selected as a poster presentation, please plan to create and display a well-designed 36” x 48” poster. Poster boards will be provided at the convention center.

3) **Success Stories:** These are “Making a Difference” stories that center on successes achieved working with small, beginning, immigrant, urban, socially disadvantaged, or limited resource farmers and ranchers, or farm workers. Your abstract for a success story should contain measurable (qualitative and/or quantitative) accomplishments which can be “told” by way of sharing images (e.g., photos) and text on a poster board for display. All images should have captions on what happened in various stages culminating in a success story being told. How your project or program has made a significant difference to the livelihood and/or sustainability of small farmers or ranchers is very important. In each story, therefore, please highlight the activities that have resulted in a significant and difference-making impact in a community with small farmers and ranchers. Please create your success story by using a 36” x 48” poster design; however, please note that a Success Story submission is different from a Poster submission.
4) **Exhibits:** Exhibits provide a venue for national, state, and local small farm program professionals from land-grant colleges and universities, community-based organizations, and other public and private sector organizations to share information about programs and services for small farmers and ranchers. If you would like to showcase your organization and resource materials, you will need to submit an abstract for an Exhibit display. Exhibitors will be provided with an 8 x 10 ft. fully draped exhibit space, one 6 ft. table, two chairs, and a sign. The organization name, contact information, and abstract will be listed in the conference proceedings.

For information about previous conference proceedings, please follow this link to past national small farm conferences: http://www.tnstate.edu/agriculture/national_small_farm.aspx

**SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

**PLEASE NOTE:** All abstracts—oral, poster, exhibits, and success stories—must be submitted through an online form under “Call For Abstracts” at: http://www.vsu.edu/nationalsmallfarmconference

The following information must be provided in all abstracts submitted:

* Title of presentation
* Presenting author and affiliation for lead author
* Complete contact information
* Other author(s) and affiliation(s)
* Selected topic area
* Abstract (250 words maximum).
* Please indicate in the abstract form if submission is oral, poster, exhibit, or success story. For oral or poster presentations, please be sure to identify the Conference Topic Area to which the submission is being made.

Oral and poster presentations must be based on work that is already completed. As such, abstracts must report purpose, objectives, methods, results, and conclusions to be presented.

**Submission Deadline.** A review committee will consider all abstracts submitted by the **deadline of April 15, 2016 (11:59 pm).** Decisions will be made thereafter and all successful applicants will be sent guidelines and deadlines to prepare conference presentations.

**CONFERENCE TOPIC AREAS**

We welcome abstracts for submissions (see previous page) that address one or more of the topic areas of emphasis outlined below. These emphasis areas are reflective of the ideas developed by the national small farm conference program committee. Each abstract should also address the 2016 conference theme of “Creating and Sustaining Small Farmers and Ranchers.” Please choose one of these areas when submitting an abstract. Although you may see intersections with many, we ask that you select the theme that best fits. Special consideration in the review process will be given to new insights, approaches, or techniques in addressing any of these areas:

- Traditional and alternative (e.g. niche & ethnic) farm enterprise development and practices, including Protected Agriculture (PA)
- Sustainable, organic, and locally grown food production and food safety
- Land grant universities’ role in sustaining small farmers and ranchers
- Outreach, training, and research priorities for underserved audiences, including young, beginning, limited resource, immigrant, refugee, and military veteran farmers; and farm workers
- The role of small farmers and ranchers in addressing food security and food deserts
- Innovation in collaborations and networking for small farm program development, research, and evaluation
- Urban agriculture opportunities for small farmers
- Risk management education for serving small farmers and ranchers
- Marketing opportunities and challenges, including value-added enterprises
- Agroecology and the design of climate change-resilient farming systems

**PRECONFERENCE SHORT COURSES**

Several sessions will be available as preconference workshops. A preconference program committee is developing those options. Selected topics for preconference short courses will be posted on the conference website for registration once finalized.
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Preconference Short Courses
Ms. Doris J. Newton
Email: dnewton@ers.usda.gov
Phone: (202) 694-5619

Oral Papers
Dr. Kim Niewolny
Email: niewolny@vt.edu
Phone: 540.231.5784

Dr. Reza Rafie
Email: rrafie@vsu.edu
Phone: 804.524.5840

Poster Papers
Dr. Laban Rutto
Email: lrutto@vsu.edu
Phone: 804.524.6781

Exhibits
Mr. Fidelis Okpебholo
Email: fokpебholo@vsu.edu
Phone: 804.691.1290

Success Stories
Ms. Kenya Nicholas
Email: Kenya.Nicholas@osec.usda.gov
Phone: (202) 692-0098

Evaluation Committee
Dr. Mary Peabody
Email: mpeabody@zoo.uvm.edu
Phone: 802.476.2003

Publicity Committee
Ms. Michelle Olgers
Email: molgers@vsu.edu
Phone: 804.524.6964

National Conference Co-Chairs
Dr. Denis Ebodaghe
Email: debodaghe@nifa.usda.gov;
Phone: 202.401.4385

Mr. William A. Crutchfield
Email: wcrutchfield@vsu.edu
Phone: 804.524.6245

Program Committee Co-Chairs
Dr. Kim Niewolny
Email: niewolny@vt.edu
Phone: 540.231.5784

Dr. Reza Rafie
Email: rrafie@vsu.edu
Phone: 804.524.5840

PLEASE NOTE: The 7th National Small Farm Conference cannot reimburse presenters for travel expenses to the conference. This includes authors and exhibitors. Submitting a request to present at the conference (oral, poster, exhibit or success stories) implies agreement to register for the conference at the appropriate fee, attend the conference, and make the presentation in person.

Registration will open in early 2016. For general information, please call (804) 524-5626 or email NSFC2016@vsu.edu

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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Mark Klingman at (804) 524-5626 /TDD (800) 828-1120 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations a minimum of thirty days prior to the event.