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**Yes!**  
WE'RE OPEN

# The Stalk

VOLUME I ISSUE VIII



APRIL 2021

## Cover Crop Workshop Scheduled

**A**ccomack and Northampton ANR Agent's, Theresa Pittman and Ursula Deitch will be hosting a Cover Crop Workshop (pre-registration is required) on Tuesday, April 20th at the Eastern Shore AREC. Topics covered at the event include – An Update from the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District on their Cover Crop Cost Share Program, High Residue Cover Crops, Nutrient Cycling for Sandy Loam Soils and Desiccation of Cover Crop Species.

*\*\*Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will host this event outside and registration is required. [Please see page 6](#) for more information.*

## From The Director



The sun is finally shining and rain has subsided, allowing for field work to commence! We have finished planting our potato plots and are looking forward to the East Coast Variety Trial results later this summer, where we are testing 48 potato clones for quality and yield for Eastern Shore growers. Polyethylene mulch was laid for several tomato and pepper trials. Cover crops are growing quickly and will soon need desiccation. Come check out our high-residue cover crop plots on April 20 to learn more! Lastly, I would like to welcome two new faces to the Eastern Shore AREC. Dr. Emmanuel Torres Quezada has moved to Virginia from the University of Florida and is now serving as our Horticultural Cropping Systems Extension Specialist. Dr. Lorena Lopez also joined us from the University of Florida and is serving as a Postdoctoral Associate in vegetable entomology and is working with Dr. Tom Kuhar's lab. Don't hesitate to contact Lorena and Emmanuel with your Extension needs and to welcome them to the Eastern Shore of Virginia!

– Mark

## Agents Corner

### **P**lanning for the Future:

This is always one of our favorite times of year when the weather has finally warmed up and the tractors are in the fields. An aspect of farming that is often deferred to a different time of year is estate planning for the future of your family farm. Some items to consider are the proposed changes by the new administration in Washington D.C. that affect the 'death tax' or better known as 'estate tax'. According to tax foundation, some of the policy changes President Biden has supported will ultimately impact agriculture and include reducing the estate tax exemption, doing away with step-up basis, increasing long-term capital gains and taxing an asset's unrealized appreciation at transfer whether an heir decides to sell the asset or not. With these potential changes in mind, consider having a conversation with your accountant, estate planner, and/or lawyer about what your options are to protect the future of your farm and your heirs.



Wanda & Theresa

### **Marijuana:**

A lot of talk has surfaced in the news recently regarding the legalization of marijuana. Currently, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) has not given Virginia Tech any guidance on how we will be a part of this movement. As of right now, Virginia Cooperative Extension has taken the stance of – “we do not advise on the production of marijuana because it is still illegal to grow federally and our agency receives federal funds”. This is the same approach that Colorado Extension has taken. This is all still very new and if you have any questions please contact the Virginia Secretary of Public Safety.

### **Soil Fertility Office Hours:**

Soil Fertility office hours are being offered at the Eastern Shore AREC with Dr. Mark Reiter on Wednesday, May 26th from 9am - 10am. Dr. Reiter will be on hand to answer questions regarding side dressing corn, fall nutrient applications, and manure application and the new transport program. Please stay tuned for additional information on this program.



Virginia  
Cooperative  
Extension

### **Public Education:**

Eastern Shore VCE is continuing our public education videos on agriculture and horticulture practices. Please check our Facebook pages ([Accomack VCE](#) / [Northampton VCE](#)) for videos and share with people you know.



What's  
that  
bug?

The Entomology Department at the Eastern Shore AREC invites you enter April's "What's That Bug?" contest. This month, you need to identify both the prey (insect pest) and predator (beneficial insect). Email responses to [hdougherty@vt.edu](mailto:hdougherty@vt.edu) for your chance to win a prize!

\*Quick tip, you can also email Hélène pictures of your field or garden pests to identify!

### MARCH'S BUG



Did you guess a European corn borer? Click [here](#) to learn more about this common corn & grain pest!

# Let Your Cover Crops Grow

Joseph Haymaker, Ph.D. student, SPES

**C**over crops provide many agroecosystem services and soil health benefits, such as improved nutrient retention, weed suppression, erosion control, soil moisture retention, soil temperature regulation, increased soil organic matter, alleviating soil compaction, reduced fertilizer need, and improved cash crop yield. So, allowing cover crops to grow as long as possible in the spring enhances these many benefits.



Cereal rye is a commonly promoted cover crop to be grown in our region due to its nitrogen (N) scavenging ability. Delaying termination increases both shoot and root biomass, which improves soil health, water infiltration and storage, and increases soil N retention. However, while terminating early prior to corn planting allows for earlier decomposition of residue that releases nutrients and makes it easier to plant, a recent study on early vs. late termination of cereal rye in no-till corn found that delaying termination improves summer soil moisture retention and N dynamics (Otte et al., 2019). Additionally, terminating too early can lead to nutrient losses from early decay if no cash crop is there to use them and provides less carbon inputs from plant biomass that can increase soil organic matter; i.e. less rye residue sitting on your soil surface.

Also, as a reminder for this fall, try to get your cover crops planted as early as possible allowing for better establishment and biomass accumulation; which is just as important, if not more than, delaying termination to receive the maximum agroecosystem services and soil health benefits from your cover crops.

And if you are still on the fence about the economic benefits of cover crops, check out this SARE Technical Bulletin:

- [https://ext.vt.edu/content/dam/ext\\_vt\\_edu/topics/agriculture/soil-health/Cover%20Crop%20Economics.pdf](https://ext.vt.edu/content/dam/ext_vt_edu/topics/agriculture/soil-health/Cover%20Crop%20Economics.pdf)

*Questions? Contact*

*Mr. Joseph Haymaker (joevh@vt.edu) or Dr. Mark Reiter (mreiter@vt.edu)*



## Happy Hellos and Sad Goodbyes



**A**fter 48 years of dedicated service, April 1st marked the first day of Mr. Tommy Hines' new life! Ahhhh, retirement. Tommy served as the Senior Research Specialist for the Weed Science department at the Eastern Shore AREC, working with Dr. Henry Wilson, Dr. Charlie Cahoon and Dr. Vijay Singh. During his career, Tommy has mentored over 20 graduate students, co-authored 140 peer-reviewed journal articles and extension publications, a recipient of the "Fellow Award" from the Northeast Weed Science Society, served as membership Chairman for the Virginia Soybean Board and 8-time "Top Recruiter"

award recipient for the Virginia Soybean Association. Tommy has been enjoying his time irritating his wife, tinkering in the yard, boating and as always, cooking his famous barbecue. We will miss you immensely Tommy and hope you find the time to come visit the station.



*Mr. Tommy Hines and Dr. Henry P. Wilson, Circa 1974*

**W**elcome Dr. Emmanuel Torres Quezada and Dr. Lorena Lopez to the Eastern Shore AREC! Dr. Torres earned his bachelor's in Agriculture from the Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña in the Dominican Republic and his MS and PhD in Horticultural Sciences from the University of Florida, where he worked extensively on water management practices for strawberries. He also worked as an associate professor at the Pan-American Agricultural School Zamorano in Honduras, where he integrated his teaching and research program to promote innovative management practices for vegetables in Central America. His research focuses on production practices for vegetable crops in both open field and protective systems, with an emphasis on water management as well as potential applications of precision agriculture technologies to vegetable production systems.



Dr. Lorena Lopez earned her bachelor's in biology from the University of Valley in Cali, Colombia, and her MS and Ph.D. in entomology from the University of Florida. Her research focuses on the development and application of sustainable management techniques for insect and mite pests in vegetable production systems. Lorena evaluated the performance of newly registered pesticides for the management of southern red mites and chilli thrips in highbush blueberries for the last 3 years. Additionally, she developed an interest in agricultural acarology during her graduate studies while working on the management of mite pests and monitoring spatio-temporal distribution patterns of predatory mites in squash production. She has been actively involved in the Acarological Society of America (ASA) and the Entomological Society of America (ESA). Currently, she is the President of the ASA and the Vice-Chair on the ESA's Early Career Professionals Committee.



## Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center

33446 Research Dr.

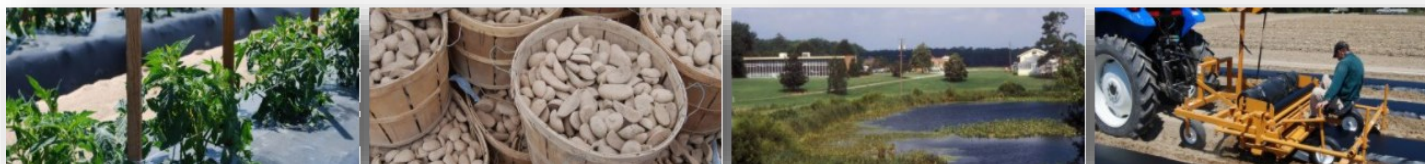
Painter, VA 23420

Phone: 757-807-6586

<https://www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/arec/eastern-shore.html>

The Virginia Tech, Eastern Shore AREC is committed to supporting commercial vegetable, grain, oilseed, and fiber production throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Centrally located on Virginia's Eastern Shore, the center conducts basic and applied research on more than 25 agricultural crops.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in any activity, please contact Lauren Seltzer at 757-807-6586\* (\*TDD number is (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations.



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# ESVA COVER CROP WORKSHOP

**DUE TO COVID-19  
REGULATIONS:  
PRE-REGISTRATION WILL  
BE REQUIRED  
RSVP TO YOUR COUNTY  
AGENT**

**APRIL 20, 2021**

**8:30 AM**

**EASTERN SHORE AREC  
33446 RESEARCH DR  
PAINTER VA**

- **8:30 - 8:50 AM**      **REGISTRATION/BREAKFAST**
- **8:50 - 9:15**        **ESSWCD COST SHARE UPDATES**
- **9:15 - 9:30**        **LOAD TROLLIES TO THE FIELD**
- **9:30 - 10:15**      **COVER CROP FIELD WALK**
- **10:15 - 10:30**     **QUESTIONS/RETURN FROM FIELD**

**TO RSVP CONTACT:**

**URSULA DEITCH ([ursula@vt.edu](mailto:ursula@vt.edu)/678-7946) or THERESA PITTMAN ([tpittman@vt.edu](mailto:tpittman@vt.edu)/787-1361)**

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