

Vol. 7 · February 2024

# The Stalk

Accomack & Northampton County Cooperative Extension  
Eastern Shore Agricultural Research & Extension Center

2024 ES AG Conf Trade Show

## 34th Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference & Trade Show Wrap-up!

The 34th annual Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference & Trade Show was a success once again this year! This event, hosted by the Association of Eastern Virginia Agricultural Producers in collaboration with Accomack and Northampton Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Tech Eastern Shore AREC, has exponentially grown with near 180 attendees on the first day as well as a record number of exhibitors in 2024.

We were honored to have Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Joe Guthrie, Dr. Cyril Clarke, Executive Vice President and Provost of Virginia Tech, Dr. Mary Burrows, Director of Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station as well as Dr. Dan Goerlich, Associate Director, Economy, Community and Food from Virginia Cooperative Extension, attend the conference to give updates.

Robert Harper from Virginia Farm Bureau, updated our audience on the crucial subject of commodity crop prices and their directions in 2024, followed by an excellent presentation by our keynote speaker, Greg Edwards from Virginia International Terminals, diving deeper into international economics, exporting and Virginia Ports.

The conference planning committee would like to thank all of our speakers for their support of Eastern Shore Farmers. There were 38 agribusiness booths on the tradeshow floor who were able to visit with approximately 325 attendees over the two-day conference. Speakers came from Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, and Colorado to speak to ES growers about timely agricultural topics.

This two-day conference would not be possible without the support from Northampton and Accomack Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Eastern Shore AREC, and the Association of Eastern Virginia Agricultural Producers, Inc.

We look forward to seeing you next year and hope to expand with more exhibits, high-value research presentations, and to further discuss issues that directly impact agriculture on the Eastern Shore.

*- Helene, Thereza and Mark*

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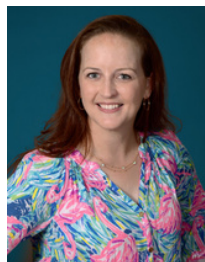
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# THE AGENT'S CORNER

Theresa Pittman - Accomack County ANR Agent

Hélène Doughty - Northampton County ANR Agent



In January, agriculture agents were busy with the 34th Annual Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference and Trade Show, and we are excited to report that this regional yearly event is improving every year, thanks to the great collaboration within our committee! Theresa and Helene are now in full swing completing 2023 year end reports demonstrating VCE impact in our communities, working on a comprehensive 2024 program planning. attending industry meetings, assessing needs, and much more. Virginia Cooperative agents will have their winter conference February 5th through 7th, gathering pertinent data, information and planning skills for our communities and stakeholders.

## Save the Date and Mark your Calendars!

### 2024 Small Farm Workshop

Based on results from an educational needs' survey conducted with our Eastern Shore small producers, we are planning a Small Farm

Workshop on March 20th and March 21st at the Northampton Parks & Rec Complex (old middle school) in Machipongo, VA.

### VCE Commercial Pesticide License Recertification Class

A commercial pesticide license recertification class is being planned for May 1st, 2024 at the Eastern Shore AREC. More information to come as the planning continues!

### Paraquat/Dicamba Training

We are currently in the process of planning a training day for those needing paraquat/dicamba certification. More details will be shared via email, posted to our websites and Facebook pages. Please make sure that we have your current email on file and you follow Northampton and Accomack social media pages. That is the best way for you to get the latest information on programming from our offices.



Hélène Doughty demonstrates proper usage of PPE at the Ag Conference

The planning never stops! Let us know your thoughts for next year's conference!

[https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ONZtARRX23bk8LA](https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ONZtARRX23bk8LA)

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EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

**WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!**

**TAKE THE SURVEY**

LET US KNOW HOW WE DID?  
SCAN THE QR CODE BY OPENING  
YOUR CAMERA APP ON YOUR  
PHONE

### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Northampton @vce\_northampton Accomack



# THE AGENT'S CORNER

Theresa Pittman - Accomack County ANR Agent  
 Hélène Doughty - Northampton County ANR Agent



## Scenes from the 34th Annual Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference & Trade Show



Conference attendees were able to attend breakout sessions focusing on different agricultural commodities and regulatory updates



Dr. Mark Reiter, Eastern Shore AREC



VDACS Commissioner of Agriculture Joe Guthrie



Provost Cyril Clarke

Visitors took time to visit with 38 different agribusinesses at the 2024 Trade Show



Provost Clarke, Dr. Reiter and Dr. Goerlich engage with attendees at the ES Agricultural Conference



There was plenty to eat at our Annual Oyster Roast

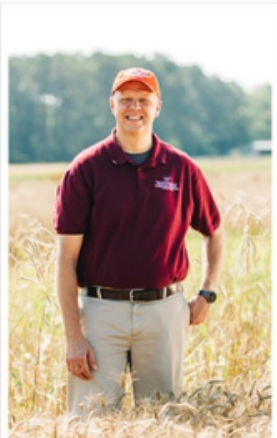


Trade Show attendees at the 2024 Ag Conference



Robert Harper from Virginia Farm Bureau presents on 2024 marketing forecasts

➤ RESEARCH   ➤ UPDATES   ➤ ENGAGEMENT  
 ➤ RECOGNITION   ➤ NETWORKING



## Virginia Tech Provost visits the Eastern Shore Agricultural Research & Extension Center

We were honored to showcase Eastern Shore agriculture and applied research being conducted at the Eastern Shore AREC with Dr. Cyril Clarke, Executive Vice President and Provost of Virginia Tech. On the first day of the Eastern Shore Ag Conference & Trade Show, Provost Clarke updated conference attendees on the commitment of Virginia Tech to continue serving the agricultural industry in Virginia and to ensure that we are interconnected and understand the global community. Prior to networking with stakeholders at the Ag Conference oyster roast, Provost Clarke toured Eastern Shore AREC facilities and met with faculty, staff, and graduate students to better understand our programs and how we interconnect in both the Virginia Tech and agriculture communities.



Picture from left to right: Emmanuel Torres (Horticulture), Mark Reiter (Soils and Nutrient Management), Mary Burrows (VA Ag Experiment Station Director), Laura Rasnick (VA Ag Experiment Station Research Program Assistant), Doug Higgins (Plant Pathology), Vijay Singh (Weed Science), Cyril Clarke (VT Provost), and Dr. Jean Clarke (retired, Fralin Life Sciences Institute)



Willie Elgin (left, President, VA Crop Production Assoc.) and Joseph Haymaker (right)

## Haymaker Receives Graduate Scholarship

Joseph Haymaker, Ph.D. candidate in Dr. Mark Reiter's Soils and Nutrient Management research group, recently received the 2024 Virginia Crop Production Association Inc. Graduate Scholarship. Joseph's research has focused on the impact of cover crops on nutrient cycling, soil health, crop yields, and the economics of implementing them into row crop production. You may have seen Joseph presenting some of his research findings at the Eastern Shore Ag Conference.

# WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

We are always looking to improve our applied research and extension programming at the Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center (ESAREC).  
What discipline do you feel needs more focus and local applied research to help with your farming system and land?



For more information, Contact Belinda at the ESAREC - 757-807-6586 or belindas@vt.edu



### ESAREC Forestry Management Plan

In partnership with the Virginia Department of Forestry, the ESAREC is harvesting timber in accordance with our Forest Management Plan. Eastern Shore Forest Products has been working diligently to cut and remove all the timber behind the grad student housing while leaving a 50-foot buffer along the pond. The next phase of the Forest Management Plan will be to do a controlled burn in the spring of 2025 and replant with pine saplings.



### Dr. Reiter attended the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources to brief legislators on the activities and budget priorities of Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Station

Dr. Reiter attended the legislative session on January 17th in Richmond to promote efforts by Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension to drive Virginia’s largest private industries - Agriculture and Forestry.

The need and impact of advanced equipment at the ARECs is part of the focus. Included on this page and page 6 are supporting documents and narratives to drive this effort.



VCE, VSU, and VT representing agriculture in Richmond

Continued support by the General Assembly allows the agency to provide a consistent link between research and community programming in the areas of agricultural innovation and community economic development.

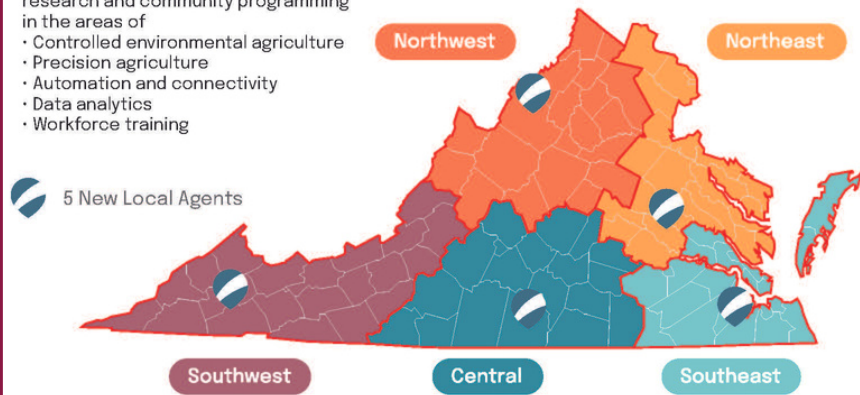
	2024-25	2025-26
Agricultural Innovation and Community Resource Development Support	\$709,540	\$1,419,080

#### Bridging Research Across the Commonwealth

The agricultural innovation cohort, comprised of the five local agents across the commonwealth, will be overseen by a state specialist housed within Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Investing in local agents allows us to bridge research and community programming in the areas of

- Controlled environmental agriculture
- Precision agriculture
- Automation and connectivity
- Data analytics
- Workforce training



The five new positions would enable Virginia Cooperative Extension to address and adapt to the needs of Virginia’s producers and its largest private industries.



Supporting documents provided to Virginia legislators

# Dr. Reiter attended the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources to brief legislators on the activities and budget priorities of Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Station - (continued)

### Advanced Equipment at the Agricultural Research and Extension Centers (ARECs)

	2024-25	2025-26
Advanced Equipment	\$750,000	\$750,000

Additional resources allow for minor (non-capital) facility upgrades to enhance innovation in:

- livestock systems
- crop enhancement
- controlled environment facilities

This ensures that the ARECs continue to lead innovative agricultural research to benefit the commonwealth's agribusiness community and our citizens. Investment in these upgrades will further attract new partnerships from public and private sectors.

**ARECs upgrade needs to enhance innovation**

### Immediate impacts from previous AREC investments

#### Eastern Virginia AREC



Reducing fertilizer inputs by preventing overapplication.

#### Hampton Roads AREC



Standardizing spray patterns for greenhouse and field pesticides to reduce environmental impacts.

**Immediate Impacts from previous AREC Investments**

#### Southwest Virginia AREC



Utilizing "Smart-Feeding" systems to measure individual daily feed intake of sheep and beef cattle.

#### Eastern Shore AREC



Leveraging new equipment in a partnership with USDA to focus on deep tillage and climate-smart agriculture practices on large-scale farms.

Supporting documents provided to Virginia legislators

**ESAREC Weed Science  
Department wins  
National Awards**



ESAREC Weed Science Department: Akash Brar, Rutvij Wamanse, Fred Sturgis, Fatemeh Esmaeilbeiki, Milos Viric, RC Cooley, Dr. Vijay Singh

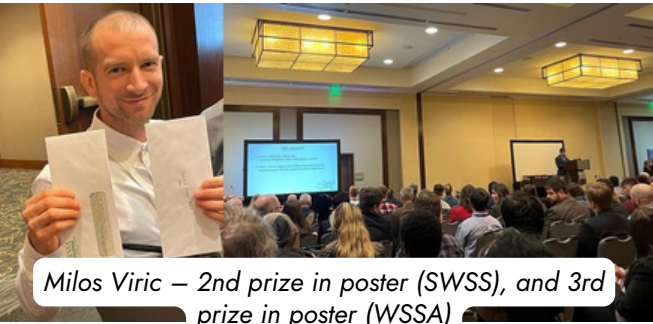
**Outstanding Researcher Award**

**Dr. Vijay Singh**  
Virginia Tech



✦ **Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist,  
Virginia Tech**

Dr. Vijay Singh is an Assistant Professor and Extension Weed Specialist in the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences at Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Virginia Tech. He received his BS and MS from the CCS Haryana Agricultural University, India. Dr. Singh began his weed science career as a Research Scientist with International Rice Research Institute and was involved with farmers' participatory research. Later, he moved to the US and obtained his PhD in weed science from the University of Arkansas, and a postdoctoral experience from Texas A&M University. Currently, he provides expertise on weed research and extension in row-crops (corn, soybean, cotton), small grains, and vegetables. He is also working on digital agriculture and data driven technologies under Virginia Tech's Smart Farming Initiative. Dr. Singh has authored/ co-authored 44 journal articles and book chapters, 21 extension publications, 1 book, and 80 abstracts in conference proceedings. Dr. Singh organized or contributed to around 20 extension events annually, which were attended by more than 7,000 stakeholders in the past 4 years. He has delivered 82 presentations at professional meetings and conferences, and has given keynote and invited talks at several occasions. As a PI/co-PI he contributed to \$8.5 million worth of grants, where his program received \$1.8 million in competitive funds. Dr. Singh graduated 2 students, currently advising 4 (2 PhDs and 2 MS), served on other 3 student committees, and mentored several undergraduate students. Dr. Singh's students have won numerous awards and scholarships, including top positions in the society's annual weed contest. Dr. Singh has served on the executive committee of the Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS) as an Editor, in addition to futures, and nomination committees. He judged students' oral and poster contests, and served as section chair at NEWSS, Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), and Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS) annual meetings. Dr. Singh is serving as an associate editor of Agronomy Journal and Frontiers in Agronomy, a reviewer for many other journals, and edited/reviewed more than 115 journal articles. Dr. Singh resides in Melfa, Virginia, with his beautiful wife Shilpa Singh and their lovely daughter, Anshika Singh.



Milos Viric – 2nd prize in poster (SWSS), and 3rd prize in poster (WSSA)

**2024 SWSS AWARDS**

**OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT, M.S. AWARD**

VIPIN KUMAR



Vipin Kumar was born and raised on a family farm in Haryana, a major agricultural state in Northern India. Vipin learned about crop production while working with his father on his own farm. What began as an unpleasant weekend chore of manual cotton picking soon turned into an appreciation for farmers and agriculture. With his interest in agriculture, Vipin earned a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences with a major in Agronomy from CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Haryana, India. Among different disciplines, what interested him the most, though, was weed science given its importance in crop production. After his bachelor's, he worked as a Junior Research Fellow at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, India for about a year before moving to the United States to pursue a master's degree. He completed his MS degree at Virginia Tech under the supervision of Dr. Vijay Singh. His master's research project focused on the evaluation of different cover crops and their termination timings for weed management in corn and control of volunteer cover crop plants. During his master's, he worked closely with industry representatives, extension agents, and local growers. Vipin enjoys talking with farmers about his research and has presented his research work on various field days. He has authored and coauthored six research articles during his MS. He received the Department's Outstanding Graduate Student award at Virginia Tech for his MS. Currently, Vipin is pursuing a doctorate degree in weed science at University of Nebraska, Lincoln under the supervision of Dr. Amit Jhala. He is hoping to continue working with farmers while pursuing his research interest in weed science.



Vipin Kumar: Outstanding MS Student Award – Southern Weed Science Society

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION  
EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL  
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER  
VIRGINIA TECH.

## Association of Eastern Virginia Agricultural Producers Awards



**Lifetime Achievement:**  
Tommy Custis (retired, Eastern  
Shore AREC Farm Manager)



**Outstanding Farmer:**  
WT Holland (received by  
Bruce Holland)

Awards at the  
34th Annual  
Eastern Shore  
Agricultural  
Conference and  
Trade Show

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Calling All Volunteers! We Need Your Help!

Northampton 4-H is looking for individuals who are interested in volunteering for the Real Money Real World simulation taking place on February 29, 2024 at Northampton High School. The simulation is geared to providing high school students with an understanding of the real world.

The simulation will begin at 8:15 am on Thursday, February 29 at Northampton High and should conclude by 11:30am. If you or anyone from your organization is able to volunteer please contact Erin Morgan by February 15. - call 757-678-7946 or email esill@vt.edu



# JOIN OUR TEAM

**Associate Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development - Accomack County**

The 4-H Youth Development Agent is a professional educator who provides leadership to the local 4-H program and manages its day-to-day operation. 4-H is a community of young people learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. The mission of 4-H is to develop youth, and adults working with those youth, to realize their full potential and become effective, contributing citizens. Must have a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree (BA or BS) in a relevant discipline from an accredited college or university. A master's degree and promotion to Extension Agent are required no later than the sixth year of employment. Shortlisting of candidates will start after February 16th, 2024 and continue until the position is filled. For questions, contact Janet Spencer - jaashle2@vt.edu

Careers at Virginia Tech - (Job no. 528372)

please visit this link and apply online: <http://tinyurl.com/papr98ek>



Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University





# GIVING DAY

VIRGINIA TECH.

**FEB. 21-22**  
**NOON TO NOON**

[givingday.vt.edu](http://givingday.vt.edu)



**Virginia Cooperative Extension**  
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University  
**NORTHAMPTON COUNTY**



VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION  
EASTERN SHORE AGRICULTURAL  
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER  
VIRGINIA TECH



*Giving Day is coming!  
Our AREC and Units  
have a chance to win  
additional funds  
based on leaderboard  
competition!*

*Can we count on you?*

*Yearly 24-hour  
donation event (noon to  
noon over 2 days)*

*Supporters from around  
the world select their  
favorite VT colleges,  
departments, programs  
organizations, and teams*

*Gifts of all sizes add up  
to a huge impact on  
our students and our  
community*



## VCE & ESAREC Contact Information

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	Amanda Hurley	Unit Support Staff	amandalh@vt.edu	757/678-7946
	Faculty/Staff	Title	Email	Work/Cell Phone
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	VACANT	4-H Agent		757/787-1361
	Rachel Barnes	Unit Support Staff	mrbarnes@vt.edu	757/787-1361
	Faculty/Staff	Title	Email	Work/Cell Phone
<b>Eastern Shore Agricultural Research &amp; Extension Center</b> 33446 Research Dr. Painter, VA 23420 <a href="https://www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/arec/eastern-shore.html">https://www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/arec/eastern-shore.html</a>	Mark Reiter	Director/Professor, Soils & Nutrient Management	mreiter@vt.edu	W 757/807-6576 C 757/693-2556
	Vijay Singh	Assistant Professor, Weed Science	v.singh@vt.edu	W 757/807-6579 C 479/713-0094
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	VACANT	Entomology Specialist		
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Virginia Cooperative Extension brings the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth. VCE provides education through programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development and Community Viability.

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.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in any activity, please contact Amanda Hurley at 757-678-7946\* (\*TDD number is (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss accommodations.