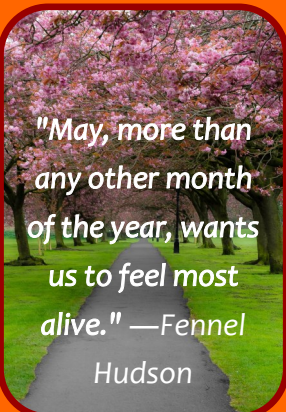




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"May, more than any other month of the year, wants us to feel most alive." —Fennel Hudson

# The Stalk

VOLUME III, ISSUE V

MAY 2022

## From The Director

**W**e hope your spring planting is progressing as the weather finally starts to warm. We are busy at the Eastern Shore AREC managing winter crops and planting projects for summer. We are also busy showcasing Eastern Shore agriculture as tours have returned to the Eastern Shore. Recently, we have hosted local elected officials from around the Commonwealth as part of the Local Government Advisory Committee's "Wandering Virginia Waterways" tour. We have also hosted students from Ferrum College, Montessori Children's House of Franktown, and Broadwater Academy while also participating in at-school events in both Accomack and Northampton Counties.



*Dr. Douglas Higgins*

We are also excited to announce that Dr. Douglas Higgins has agreed to join the Eastern Shore AREC as our new Applied Plant Pathologist and will soon move to the Eastern Shore to begin his position on August 10, 2022. Doug recently completed both his Ph.D. in plant pathology (December 2020) and postdoctoral researcher at Michigan State University in Dr. Mary Hausbeck's Vegetable and Ornamental Plant Pathology Lab. He has experience in applied plant pathology research and extension outreach for specialty crops including hops, vegetables, and bedding plants. Prior to completing his degree, Doug served as an Agroforestry Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay, South America. Doug is looking forward to developing a successful plant pathology program that produces novel, data-driven disease management recommendations for vegetable and grain crops of importance to the Eastern Shore.

Finally, we are still searching for summer interns to help us out with research projects. Please see the job posting within this newsletter if you or someone you know is interested. We hope you have a great month and let us know if you have any questions!

— Mark

# Agents Corner

Spring finally seems to be here and planting is in full swing. It is another busy month for Extension on the Eastern Shore.

## Ag Awareness Days –

During the last week in March and the first week of April Northampton and Accomack VCE partnered with the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District to host “Ag Awareness Days” at every public school in Northampton and Accomack Counties. The purpose of this event was to educate youth in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade on the importance of Agriculture, while targeting specific SOLs (standards of learning). During the event the students had the opportunity to gain an understanding of the commodity crops grown on the Eastern Shore, learn about the importance of soil, gain an understanding on what products we get from animals, learn about nutrition and eating foods grown locally, and learn about the importance of pollinators. We were all happy to see the students enthusiastic to learn about agriculture in a fun, out of classroom experience. A special thanks to NRCS, the Virginia Tech Eastern Shore AREC, and Virginia Farm Bureau’s Ag in the Classroom for hosting booths throughout the two weeks and helping make this event a success.

## Agritourism Workshop—

Agritourism is a growing part of the Virginia economy and was the focus of a local workshop held on April 13 at Eastern Shore Community College. The daylong workshop was organized by Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce (ESCOC) and was sponsored by the Virginia Agribusiness Council, Farm Bureau Insurance, and Virginia Tourism Commission. We would like to especially thank the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District for providing the lunch for our participants. The Workshop was well attended by both new and experienced farmers, along with agency representatives. The event included networking exercises as well as information from experts on marketing, farm safety, and insurance. Agritourism includes a range of farm-based activities— from festivals to farm-to-table dinners, corn mazes, u-pick operations, farm markets, weddings, breweries and wineries, trail rides, bed-and-breakfasts, and more. Agritourism in Virginia accounts for \$2.2 billion in economic activity, supports more than 22,000 fulltime jobs, and is responsible for \$134.7 million in state and local tax revenue, according to a 2017 study from Virginia Tech. We appreciate our partnering agencies’ support while hosting the event and encourage locals to visit our own Eastern Shore agritourism operations.

## COMING SOON – Northampton & Accomack County Bug Traps –

ANR Agents on the Eastern Shore will continue their annual insect trapping for the 2022 summer. This 12-week program starts in mid-June and runs through August and targets Corn Earworm and Fall Armyworm. Traps are checked every Tuesday in Northampton County and every Thursday in Accomack County to monitor the migration of the moth up the Eastern Shore. Impacts from corn earworm to soybeans include feeding on the foliage, flowers, and fruit. This in turn could lead to a reduction in soybean yield. These monitoring programs help alert growers as to when threshold is met and a pesticide application may be warranted. Hopefully, these weekly alerts prevent unnecessary spray applications. If you would like to see a trap located on your farm please contact either Theresa ([tpittman@vt.edu](mailto:tpittman@vt.edu)) or Ursula ([ursula@vt.edu](mailto:ursula@vt.edu)). Additionally, if you are not receiving these reports via email and would like to receive them please contact your county Extension Agent (either Theresa or Ursula) to be added to the list.



*Heliethus Trap*

## Homeowner Well Water Testing –

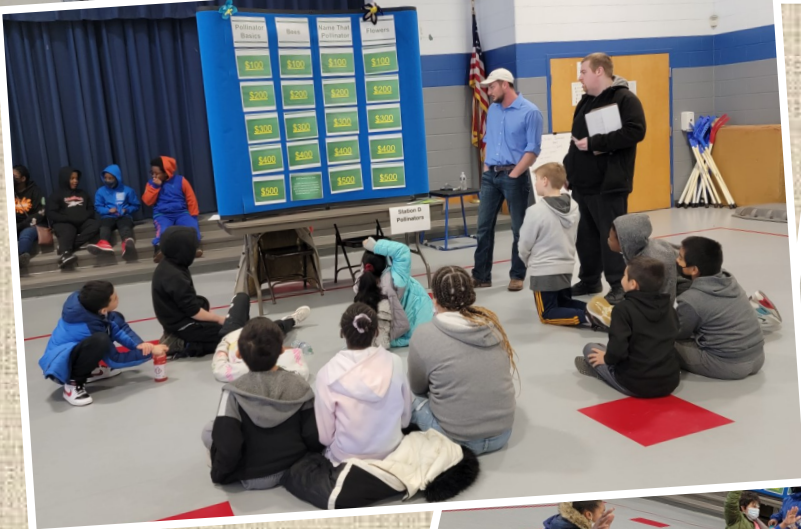
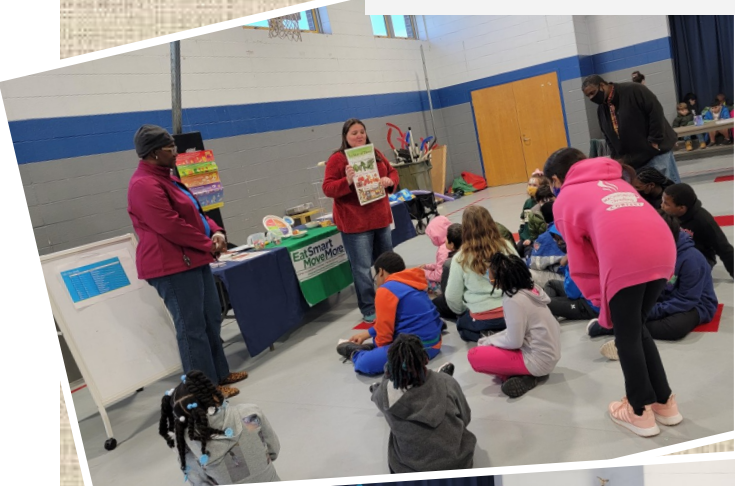
Registration is now **OPEN** for the Homeowner Well Water Testing event that will occur on June 27<sup>th</sup> – June 28<sup>th</sup>. Fortunately, this program has been subsidized by a SERCAP Grant and participants will only pay \$10 per sample for testing. Please see the attached [flyer](#) for more details on how to register and spread the word to encourage as much participation in this program as possible!

*Ursula & Theresa*



# Ag Awareness Days

Accomack & Northampton Counties







Mother's Day was officially started by Anna Jarvis in the early 1900's after her mother's death to honor the sacrifices a woman makes for her children. She worked hard to have the holiday added to the national calendar, and in 1914 President Woodrow Wilson officially established the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. However, it wasn't long before Anna Jarvis's vision of a personal celebration between mothers and families became a commercialized event, which disgusted her severely and she lobbied to have the holiday removed from the calendar.

*Did you know?*

- ◆ More phone calls are made on Mother's Day than any other day.
- ◆ In 2021, consumers in the U.S. planned to spend an average of \$220.48 for Mother's Day – that's \$28.1 billion.
- ◆ Mother's Day is the third highest selling holiday for flowers and plants.



The full flower moon occurs on May 15th-16th and coincides with a total lunar eclipse, which will make the moon take on a reddish hue. So, this month is also a Blood Moon. Flower moon gets its name from the abundance of flowers that bloom this time of year.

*Each month has a full moon theme and name, which is historically derived from Native Americans, Colonial or European sources, and used in the Old Farmer's Almanac.*

Memorial Day, which was originally known as Decoration Day, was celebrated after the Civil War to honor fallen soldiers and did not become an official holiday until 1971. It now honors all men and women who have died while serving in the U.S.

Military. Red poppies

are a symbol of remembrance and are a tradition that arose from a World War I



*“In Flanders Fields”*

*by John McCrae*

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

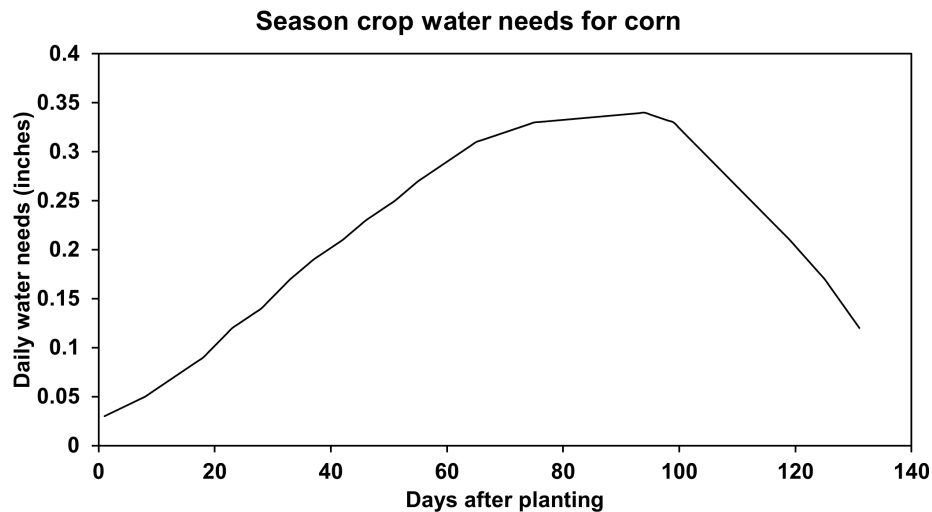
*Take up our quarrel with the foe  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

## **Corn Irrigation Considerations for 2022**

By Laljeet Sangha and Julie Shortridge, Virginia Tech Biological Systems Engineering

The eastern Shore has encountered abnormally dry and drought conditions for the last six months, resulting in lower than normal soil moisture levels. These conditions may also impact water levels in some farm ponds and shallow wells, resulting in less water available later in the growing season. Due to high crop prices, better yields from irrigated corn could result in good financial returns. However, over-irrigating could also result in increased fuel costs and wasted fertilizer lost to leaching and runoff. Consequently, irrigation management could have a considerable financial impact for growers this year.

Given current dry conditions, early irrigation may be beneficial for seed germination. A half an inch for sandy loam soils is adequate to wet the top 5-6 inches of soil and prevent uneven germination. For the remainder of the growing season, irrigation should occur when 50% of plant available water is depleted from the soil. Irrigated corn has its highest water need and potentially most significant benefit from irrigation and from V8 (3 weeks before tasseling) to a week after silking (R3). Corn is less susceptible to water stress after R3.



The accurate application of irrigation is essential for avoiding nutrient loss. Sandy loam soils can generally hold about 1.4 inches of water per foot of soil. Because of this low water holding capacity, a heavy storm event can cause leaching below the root zone, leading to elevated soil moisture but a lack of nutrients in the soil profile. Leaving extra "space" in the soil while irrigating to allow for precipitation will help prevent nutrient loss. Additionally, applying more than 0.5-0.75 inches of water at once will typically result in runoff. Therefore, it is better to water more frequently than increasing irrigation depth at the time of high-water demands. More detailed information on irrigation management can be found here:

<https://ext.vt.edu/agriculture/water.html>



## 2022 EASTERN SHORE Household Water Quality Clinic

*Does your water come from a well, spring, or cistern? • Do you want to learn more about the quality of your water and how to care for your water system?*

### How does it work?

1. At a brief informational meeting, pick up a sample kit and get instructions on how to collect your household water sample.
2. Collect a sample from your tap at home and complete a short questionnaire.
3. Drop off sample at a local designated place and time.
4. About 4 weeks later, receive your confidential test results, an explanation of what the numbers mean, and information about how to handle any problems that are present.



### What does the water test include?

**Limited kits available • sign up today!!!**

Iron	Manganese	Sulfate	Hardness	pH	Total Dissolved Solids	Fluoride
Sodium	Copper	Nitrate	Arsenic	Lead	<i>E. coli</i> bacteria	Coliform bacteria

### How much does it cost?

Due to a SERCAP grant, the cost of participation in the Eastern Shore Household Water Quality Clinic is **\$10.00 per sample kit purchased.**

**Registration is required** – Please visit [register.ext.vt.edu](http://register.ext.vt.edu), input your information online and pre-pay for your sample kit via credit card. A registration receipt will be required for pick-up of your sample kit on Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to purchase your sample kit via check, please visit your local Extension Office.

	Date and Time	Location	
Pick up sample kit	<b>June 27<sup>th</sup></b> 12:00 - 5:00 pm	Accomack Cooperative Extension 23185 Front St Accomac, VA 23301	Northampton Cooperative Extension 16392 Courthouse Rd Eastville, VA 23347
View Instructions for Sampling	<b>On your own time</b>	ONLINE	
Drop off samples	<b>June 28<sup>th</sup></b> 8:30 am – 4 pm	Accomack Cooperative Extension 23185 Front St Accomac, VA 23301	Northampton Cooperative Extension 16392 Courthouse Rd Eastville, VA 23347
Receive Results via mail/email	<b>July 10<sup>th</sup></b>	ONLINE	

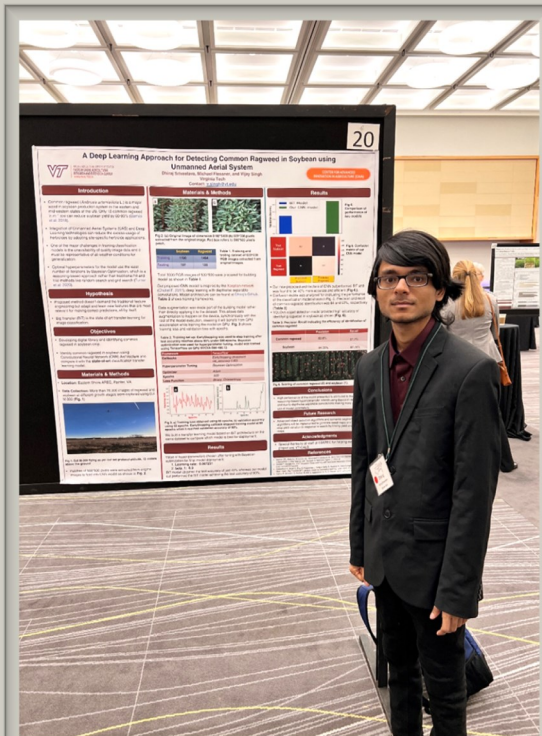
**Contact: Amanda Hurley: [amandalh@vt.edu](mailto:amandalh@vt.edu) /757-678-7946**

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Ursula at 757-678-7946 during business hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. \*TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

For more information, visit: <http://www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu/clinics.php>

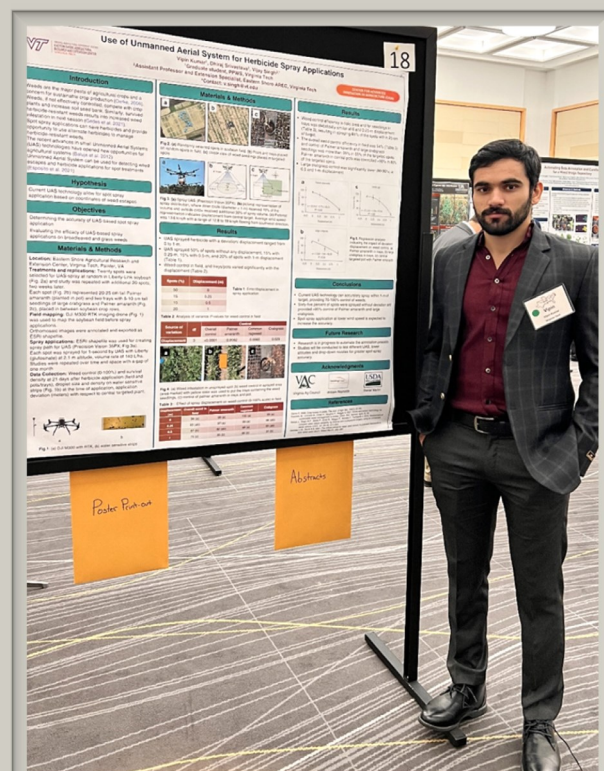


## Eastern Shore AREC Students Win Big at National Conferences



Mr. Dhiraj Srivastava won the 1st prize in the poster competition at the 75th Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS) conference held in January 2022 in Austin, Texas. His research title was 'A Deep Learning Approach for Detecting Common Ragweed in Soybean using Unmanned Aerial System'. In March 2022, he won the outstanding research award at 'Envisioning 2050 in Southeast: AI-driven innovations in agriculture conference 2022' organized by USDA at Auburn, AL. Dhiraj was awarded a winning certificate and a cash prize worth \$2000.

Mr. Vipin Kumar won 2nd prize in the poster competition at the SWSS Annual Conference and 2nd prize in the poster competition at the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) Annual Conference. The title for his poster was "Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems for Site-specific Weed Management in Soybean.





## Eastern Shore AREC Field Station Tour

On Friday, April 1, we had a great field tour at the station showcasing our applied research to support Eastern Shore growers. The group was composed of local elected officials from across Virginia with their two day Eastern Shore agenda being sponsored by the Local Government Advisory Committee with funds being utilized from the Virginia Environmental Endowment. Before venturing to the Eastern Shore AREC, the group ventured to the Barrier Islands Center, Lambert Shellfish, Chatham Vineyards on Church Creek, and Shore Breeze Farm.







## **2022 Summer Internships and Part-Time Employment**

The Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC) located in Painter, VA, is searching for summer interns and hourly workers. We encourage senior high school and college students and others that may be interested in learning more about Eastern Shore agricultural production to apply. Workers and interns will work directly with scientists and current graduate students on projects that relate to fertilizer use and environmental sustainability, cover crops, plasticulture, high tunnels, weed management, insect pest management, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), remote sensing, sensors, and other projects that have direct financial and environmental impacts for our Eastern Shore agricultural community. By the end of the summer, hourly workers, students, and interns will have first-hand experiential knowledge of many scientific components that will propel them in the workforce.

Interested applicants should submit a resume and cover letter stating your program interests to [esarec@vt.edu](mailto:esarec@vt.edu).

Virginia Tech is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer.

[www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/arec/eastern-shore.html](http://www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/arec/eastern-shore.html)



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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 16392 Courthouse Rd  
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 757-678-7946

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 23185 Front St  
 PO Box 60  
 Accomac, VA 23301  
 757-787-1361

*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.*

Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center

33446 Research Dr  
 Painter, VA 23420  
 757-807-6586



<https://www.ares.vaes.vt.edu/ares/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.*



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Vijay Singh	<a href="mailto:v.singh@vt.edu">v.singh@vt.edu</a>	757/807-6579	479/713-0094	Assistant Professor, Weed Science
Emmanuel Torres	<a href="mailto:etorres@vt.edu">etorres@vt.edu</a>		352/682-0708	Assistant Professor, Horticulture
Lorena Lopez	<a href="mailto:lorelopezq257@vt.edu">lorelopezq257@vt.edu</a>		954/529-9042	Postdoctoral Associate, Entomology

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*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.*



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

