

ANR NEWSLETTER

Greensville-Emporia Spring 2021

PG. 2

- Upcoming Programs
- Families Taking Charge:
Dealing with Stress

PG. 3

- 10 Things to Know Before
You Get Chickens

PG. 4

- Chickens- Continued
- We Welcome Your Input

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

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information on research
and programs

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Pesticide Education Continues

Sara Rutherford

Virginia Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, provided private pesticide applicators with the annual pesticide recertification class at the Greensville/Emporia extension office on January 7, 2021. Because of current gathering restrictions, limiting non-formal education gatherings to 10 people or less, this year's class looked quite different. Usually 25 to 35 participants attend, as seen in the bottom right picture from January of 2020. The photo on the bottom left is how this year's class took place, socially distanced. Online recertification options continue to be available to private and commercial pesticide applicators who use restricted use pesticides.

Please contact Sara Rutherford if you have recertification questions.



WHAT'S THAT WEED?

Sara Rutherford



Corn Speedwell- *Veronica arvensis*

Corn speedwell is an annual weed that typically germinates from seed in the fall. It grows in lawns, ornamental areas and in winter grain crops. It does not thrive in areas where regular spring tillage is practiced. They are best adapted to dry or sandy soils and shady lawns.

Seedlings branch at the base, quickly forming a dense mat. Leaves are positioned opposite along the stem on young plants. On flower stalks, leaves are alternate, do not have leaf stalks and are more narrow with fewer teeth and sparsely hairy.

Flowers are produced in late spring and flowering continues through August. Flowers are tiny and can be found nestled in the leaf axils on the upper portion of the flowering stem. They are pale blue to white and produce a small, heart-shaped hairy seed pod. Each pod contains between 14 and 20 tiny yellow seeds.

- For help with weed identification or for control options, please contact Sara Rutherford with the Greensville-Emporia extension office.

Upcoming Programs

All program dates and formats are subject to change

VCE Ag Today Webinars are streamed live Thursdays at 9:00am via the Hanover Extension office's Facebook page and Zoom. Recordings of previous webinars can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/vceagtodayvideos> on YouTube. Past topics include weed management, corn and soybean fertility, cover crops, vegetable production, etc.

Drive-up Tobacco Production/GAP Grower Trainings- Drive-up locations: The Southern Piedmont AREC, Blackstone, Feb. 2nd @ 9:00am; Golden Leaf Tobacco Warehouse, South Hill, February 9th @ 8:30am. Contact Sara to register prior to your selected location date. 434-348-4223 or srutherford@vt.edu

Virtual Tobacco Production Series- Thursdays at 8:30am January 28th, February 11th and 25th. GAP Training credits are available when you attend all three virtual sessions. Contact Sara for registration information. 434-348-4223 or srutherford@vt.edu

Virtual Woods and Wildlife Conference- Feb. 19-20 - This popular conference has topics of interest for new and experienced owners of both large and small woodlots. Presentations will cover sustainable woodland and wildlife management activities.

- \$25 per device/terminal
- Register [on-line](#) or [by mail](#)

Virtual Fescue Renovation Workshop February 23-25 from 5:30pm-8:30pm each night- Converting toxic endophyte-infected tall fescue pastures to novel endophyte tall fescue. Sessions will be recorded and posted for those that cannot make it each evening. Register here: <https://NETFVirtual.Eventbrite.com>

UPCOMING NRCS & FSA DEADLINES

February 5, 2021: CSP Payment deadline
February 12, 2021: CRP general signup deadline
February 26, 2021: CSP Renewal Obligation deadline
March 15, 2021: CRP grassland signup begins
April 23, 2021: CRP grassland signup deadline

10 Things to Know Before You Get Chickens **Christina Ruszczyk-Murray, Extension Agent**

Spring is often the time of year when some consider introducing chickens to their care. Have you thought about getting chickens but are not sure where to start? With chickens you can't just get one to see how it goes. Chickens are not meant to be solitary creatures; they need company of at least two other chickens. When you have chickens, you have to make decisions for your flock as a whole. It is a commitment when you do get them. Here are ten things to think about before you acquire your chickens.

1- Local Ordinances

Many localities have regulations on the number of chickens you can have and how close you are to your neighbors. Some have ordinances not allowing roosters. It is a good idea to check before investing. Your neighbors may appreciate you checking with them too. Chickens, especially roosters can make a lot of noise. Hens are quieter than roosters. If you want to purchase young birds, they may turn out to be roosters, especially if you buy a straight run. Have a plan for what you will do with them if your ordinances do not allow roosters. Hens do not need roosters to lay eggs.

2- Breed Selection

Things to take into consideration: Why do you want chickens, for eggs, meat, do you want pets or purely for egg production? Different breeds have different strengths and even temperaments. Some breeds have friendlier temperaments, but each bird will have its own personality. It is a good idea to research this before you purchase chickens. For more information about breed selections <http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/choosing-the-right-breed-for-your-backyard-flock>

3- Age of Chickens

How old are the chickens you plan to get? If you plan on getting chicks, they will not be able to be outside right away- you will need a brooder. It will take 4 to 6 months before your hens begin to lay eggs (depending on breed). Hens can live to be 8-10 years old, but their egg production slows as they age and usually stops around 7 years of age.

4- Biosecurity

To protect the health and wellbeing of your flock, your neighbor's flock and your family, being conscious of biosecurity measures is important. Sanitizing, keeping your chickens safe from wildlife, and isolating sick birds are just a few of the things you need to do to establish a healthy/safe environment that prevents an avian disease outbreak. Do you have someone that can advise you if you have a sick bird? Do you have a place to quarantine birds showing signs of illness? Check with local veterinarians to see if any of them will treat chickens.

5- Recognizing Behavior

Are your chickens sick? Or broody? Or dust bathing? Gentle feather pecking is normal social behavior, severe pecking is not normal; it is a sign your chickens need more foraging time. Knowing what behaviors signify and how to handle them is important.

(Continued on page 4)

Families Taking Charge: Dealing with Stress

Celia Ray Hayhoe, PhD., CFP®- Virginia Tech



Photo: www.pixabay.com

All change produces stress, even “good” changes such as marriage or vacations. Sometimes it is hard to perceive the stress of “good” changes but easy to understand the stress caused by negative changes such as job loss. Common stressors in a transition are fear and uncertainty. For example, some of the fears a person may have about unemployment include fear of failure, the inability to manage debts, and the inability to learn new skills. The uncertainty of the job market may also be an issue. The family’s background and the individual personalities of its members will determine how they see the situation. The individuals’ senses of competency, self- esteem, values, needs, and

interest along with their health, past experience in handling stress, and financial and other resources will influence how the family views the situation. Some families will welcome the opportunity to make changes in their lives. Other families will be unable to act due to fear and uncertainty of the unknown. Their view of the situation may be keeping them from recognizing the resources available to them in the community and from relatives and friends.

People differ in the way they cope with stress. Coping influences how people adapt, and active coping strategies are related to less distress and fewer problems in the future. Avoidance coping strategies are associated with greater present and future distress (Holahan, Moos, & Schaefer, 1996). Denial and avoidance strategies mean the problem is ignored and make it difficult for the person to move on. Active strategies are designed to assist the person in moving on. The five Rs below are examples of good active coping strategies.

The Five R’s for Coping with Stress

Five strategies families can practice to remove the harmful effects of stress are: rethink, reduce, relax, release, and reorganize. Families need to rethink those attitudes and emotions that bog them down and keep them from acting. They need to think about what is really important to them and then set goals that that will help them attain those things. They need to reduce the amount of activity they do. They need to consider the amount of activity they can do without feeling overwhelmed or experiencing burnout. Families who manage stress successfully know their strengths and skills as well as their weaknesses. They don’t take on more than they can handle. Divide activities into what must be done, what would be nice to do if all the “must be done” items are finished, and those that you’ll do if there is any time left after the first two sets of activities are done. They need to relax. Meditation, deep breathing, and visualizing a quiet safe place are just a few techniques. They need to release the stress through physical activity. Families that have a variety of stress reducing techniques in their repertoire can apply them as the situation demands. Families need to reorganize so that their lives reflect what is important to them. Families that have less stress have many interests and do not define their lives by just one aspect of it. They are active rather than passive and make things happen. They develop social networks of relatives and friends that can provide help and comfort during stressful periods.

If you or someone you know is experiencing increased stress, there are resources and guidance available to you. Please contact the Greenville/Emporia extension office by calling, 434-348-4223 or emailing srutherford@vt.edu for a list of resources through the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Excerpts taken from VCE publication 7011-7016 (FCS-139P), 2008. Visit <https://resources.ext.vt.edu> for more information.

Programs & Reminders

VSU's College of Agriculture offers many educational programs, online webinars, Facebook live events, workshops and field days when possible. To find out more, visit: <https://ext.vsu.edu/calendar>

There is a \$50.00 fee for all returned checks.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in extension activities, please contact the Greensville-Emporia extension office, (434) 348-4223, during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00p.m. to discuss accommodations at least 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

The health of your soil is important! Routine soil sampling is encouraged for lawns, ornamental and vegetable gardens, row crops, specialty crops and pastures. Soil sample boxes and forms can be picked up at the Greensville/Emporia extension office Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Our address is 105 Oak St. Emporia, VA 23847. Call ahead for contactless pick up.



Chickens- Continued

6- Nutrition

Did you know birds at different stages have different nutritional needs? It is important to know how to feed your birds for their life stage and for what you are raising them. Layers need a different feed than pullets and chicks also need their own food.

7- Coop/Run Construction

There are all sorts of coop and run designs. The key things a coop must do is protect from the elements, predators and have enough room for each bird so that they are not overcrowded. Coops need to be free from drafts, but also have vents or windows to ventilate when needed. The space you need per bird is dependent on the breed of bird. A perch or roost could be incorporated into your coop. Chickens are 'forest animals' and prefer overhead cover in their run to feel safe. Laying boxes are important if you have hens for their eggs. For more information:

https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/2902/2902-1092/2902-1092.pdf.pdf

8- Animal Welfare

What will you do with a chicken that is injured, stunted in growth, not able to eat or drink? Sometimes chicks are born with severe issues. Are you going to euthanize it if you need to? At times, this is the best thing to do for the welfare of your flock.

9- Manure

Chicken manure and litter may contain harmful bacteria like E. coli and salmonella. It is important to handle it properly and have a plan for what you will do with it. Do you have a plan for your chicken manure and litter?

10- Myths

There are a lot of myths about raising chickens. It is best to use science-based information. For information about common chicken myths: <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/backyardpoultry/2016/10/13/backyard-poultry-with-the-chicken-whisperer-brought-to-you-by-kalmbach-feeds>

Excerpts taken from VCE Pub APSC-172NP (2020) from <https://resources.ext.vt.edu>

We Welcome Your Input

As we move into 2021, please help us improve the work we do in our community! We wish to deliver information in the best ways possible as we continue to navigate gathering restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to know what areas of agriculture interest you and what program formats you prefer to receive educational information through.

Please consider filling out our online questionnaire by [clicking here](#), or requesting the link be emailed to you. If you are on the agriculture and natural resources email list, you will receive a digital link to the questionnaire. Paper copies of the questionnaire are available for pick up or by mail at your request. The questionnaire contains eleven questions and will take around ten minutes or less to complete.

We hope to see you
in-person, or virtually,
in 2021!



2021 Greensville/Emporia Agriculture and Natural Resources Questionnaire

Virginia Cooperative Extension 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, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.