



Fall 2023



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

BATH-HIGHLAND NEWS



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE TOPICS

Becky Gartner, Extension Agent, Family & Consumer Science—rebes13@vt.edu—540 564 3080

Slow Cooker Season

The cooler weather is here and it brings thoughts of warm comfort foods and digging out our slow cooker to make some delicious meals. A slow cooker can save you time by having the meal cooking while you are away from home. They also use less electricity than an oven and don't introduce extra heat into your kitchen.

The slow cooker cooks food at low temperatures of 170°F to 280°F. The direct heat from the pot, lengthy cooking and steam created within the tightly-covered container combine to destroy bacteria and make the slow cooker a safe process for cooking foods. Slow cookers can make a less tender cut of meat tender because of this cooking process.



Here's a few more food safety items to follow.

Always thaw meat and poultry **BEFORE** putting it in a slow cooker. **NEVER** use frozen meat in a slow cooker. It takes too long for the meat to thaw and it makes the cooking process unsafe.

Keep perishable foods refrigerated until preparation time. If you cut up meat and vegetables ahead of time, store them separately in the refrigerator. The slow cooker may take several hours to reach a safe, bacteria killing

temperature. Constant refrigeration assures that bacteria, which multiply rapidly at room temperature won't get a head start during the first few hours of cooking.

Put your vegetables in first since they cook slower than your meat and poultry.

Choose the cooking setting, either high or low, and if possible the length of cooking. Several slow cookers will switch to a warm setting after cooking is complete. This keeps the food at a safe temperature until you serve the meal.

If you're not at home during the entire slow cooking process and the power goes out, throw away the food even if it looks done.

Store leftovers in shallow containers and refrigerate within 2 hours after the cooking is finished.

NEVER reheat leftovers in a slow cooker. Cooked foods should be reheated on the stove, in a microwave or in an oven to 165°F and then placed in a pre-heated slow cooker to keep it hot for serving. Use a food thermometer to check the temperature.

Happy Fall!

Source: *USDA Slow Cooker Fact Sheet*

ADDITIONAL PAGES INCLUDE

4-H UPDATES & EVENTS

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES TOPICS

EXTENSION STAFF SERVING YOU

If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or accommodations to participate in programs listed in this newsletter, please contact the VCE--Bath or Highland Unit Office at (540) 839-7261 or (540) 468-2225 during business hours to discuss accommodations. (TDD 800-828-1120)

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4-H HAPPENINGS

Ben Hindman, Associate Extension Agent 4-H, Bath/Highland—benjaminh@vt.edu—540 839 7261



Recent Highlights



- In mid-July, young 4-H members from Bath and Highland counties attended Junior 4-H Camp at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Center. It was an action-packed week of adventure filled with laughter, learning, and a whole lot of fun! Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of camp life is the strong and lasting friendships that form there. Campers from various backgrounds and communities come together to learn, play, and support each other. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the generous supporters from the community who helped to make Junior 4-H Camp a reality, providing an unforgettable experience for our young campers.
 

- In late July, Cash Chambers and Mary Anne Rogers, who are part of the Highland 4-H community, participated in a Virginia 4-H service trip to the Dominican Republic. Cash and Mary Anne came back with stories of the smiles on the faces of the children they worked with as well as the warmth and hospitality of the Dominican people. These experiences served as a powerful reminder of the positive impact that individuals can have on the world when they come together with a shared purpose.
 

- The 2023 Highland 4-H/FFA Livestock Show and Sale was a success! 35 exhibitors participated in this year's event.
 



Looking Ahead

- Highland 4-H is thrilled to share the exciting news about the formation of **a new livestock club!** This club promises to be an enriching and educational experience for young folks eager to dive into the world of agriculture, animals husbandry, and personal growth. Under the guidance of the club's experienced leaders, Katie Amirault, Emily Donaldson, as well as Tabitha and Keith Ulmer, club members will develop essential skills in animal care, nutrition, and handling. The Highland 4-H Livestock Club promises to be an incredible journey of growth, discovery, and community engagement.
 
- Bath and Highland 4-H have forged a strong partnership with the local public school systems across both counties. This year, **our collaboration has expanded to include third-grade classes** at Highland Elementary in Highland County, along with Millboro and Valley Elementary Schools in Bath County. These third grade classes will participate in a pen pal program with the goal of fostering connections, inspiring creativity, and promoting friendships amongst the participants. The hope is for this program to have a lasting impact, nurturing not only strong communication skills but also life-long friendships among the community's youth.
- In addition to in-school 4-H enrichment programs, **Bath 4-H will be offering once a month after school 4-H programs** as well at both Millboro and Valley Elementary schools. The goal of these programs is to provide youth with an exciting opportunity to explore a wide range of hands-on activities and engage in positive, enriching experiences outside of the classroom.
 

Contact Ben Hindman if you or someone you know is interested in any 4-H opportunity.



AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Kari Sponaugle, Extension Agent, Ag & Natural Resources, Highland & Bath—Cell: 540 679 9664—Email: karis@vt.edu

Fall is here and its time to make winter preparations for your garden spaces. If you haven't done so already, take a walk through your growing space to gauge what did and didn't do well this season. Make note of where you'll rotate plants next year for improved performance. Remove diseased plants before they spread problems to other plants. Tall perennials can be left to overwinter to provide habitat for wildlife, and reseed. Don't let leaves mat down grass; gather leaves for composting or for winter mulch around tender plants. Dig up those dahlia, gladioli and canna lilies and store in a cool dry place. Clean your growing containers with a 10:1 water/bleach solution. We've already had nights below 55°F, so don't forget to bring in tender perennials and tropical plants. Find out what else should be on your "Fall Garden Checklist", including how to start a compost pile, by visiting Illinois Extension here: https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/info_sheet_fall_garden_checklist.pdf

Upcoming Local Programs:

- Oct 17 & 24 – Pond Management & Fence Law – Warm Springs or Monterey
- Nov 14 – Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification, Highland Modular Conference Room (folks with licenses expiring in 2023 will receive a letter, other applicators are welcome to gain recertification credit and hear annual regulatory updates.)
- TBA – Winter Beef Producers Meeting



Since everyone is now in Pumpkin Mode, here are some pumpkin facts:

- ◆ Pumpkins are technically fruits, not vegetables – same goes for cucumbers, tomatoes, avocados and all squashes.
- ◆ Each pumpkin has ~500 seeds.
- ◆ Pumpkins take 90-120 days to mature
- ◆ The Atlantic Giant variety can grow up to 50lb PER DAY.
- ◆ Every part of a pumpkin is edible.
- ◆ Pumpkin is a great source of beta carotene, like carrots and sweet potatoes and seeds are low in calories and high in protein and iron.
- ◆ The U.S. produces 1.5 billion pounds of pumpkin annually, 80% of which are available in October.

Registration opens on Monday, October 9th, at 12:00 pm (Noon)!



Join fellow women (including Dr. Temple Grandin for Cattle WISE) in hands-on learning experiences such as: tractor driving, backing trailers, sprayer use, securing a load, fencing, cattle handling, chute side skills, calving troubleshooting, etc.

Equipment WISE

Friday, December 15th
Grave's Mountain Lodge
Syria, Virginia
9:00 am- 4:00 pm

Participants will receive a discounted rate to attend our dinner and program with Dr. Temple Grandin on December 16th!

Cattle WISE

Saturday, December 16th
Senterfitt Farm (near Grave's Mountain Lodge)
9:00 am- 4:00 pm

Registration Costs:

◆ \$40 for ONE DAY
◆ \$80 for TWO DAYS
◆ \$100 for TWO DAYS & Dr. Temple Grandin

For more details and to register, visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/VAWISE2023>

Space is limited, so register today!

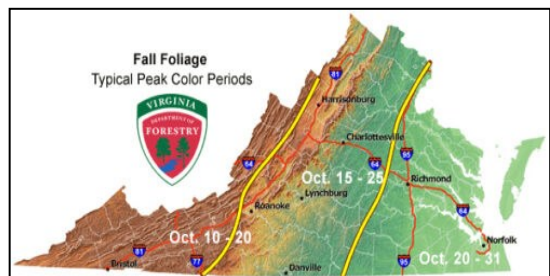
An Evening with Dr. Temple Grandin- Dinner & Program

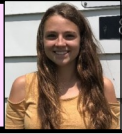
Saturday, December 16th
Senterfitt Farm Wedding Venue
5:30pm-8:30pm

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Lee County Extension at 276-546-2057 during business hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

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4-H & ANR PROGRAM EDUCATOR

Jordan Alexander, Bath & Highland—Phone: 540-839-7261—Email: jordan98@vt.edu

We officially welcomed the fall season on September 23rd with the Bath County Fair in Millboro at Millboro Elementary School. Fortunately, the rain held off just in time for our one-day county fair full of food, activities, and fun! The highlight of the day for me was watching our Bath and Highland 4-H Poultry Chain Project exhibitors participate in the show and sale of their flocks of hens. The 11 exhibitors each received 10 chicks that were only a day old on June 1st. The breeds offered this year were Americanas and Black Australorps. They raised and cared for them throughout the summer with the help of family and friends while recording the details in their project books. On fair day, 5 of their best hens made a trip to Millboro to be shown and then went up for bid in a silent auction. All flocks were required to be tested for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza that morning to participate in the show & sale. Thank you to VDACS and USDA for sending out employees to take the swabs and get them to the lab for testing! The 4-Her's participated in a showmanship class, breed class, and best flock of 5 class. Thank you to our judge, Jim King of Fireside at Oakley Farm, for his knowledge of poultry and working so well with the exhibitors! Overall, all flocks were sold to new owners and each exhibitor still had 5 hens back home to continue to grow for eggs, meat, hatch out new chicks and/or sold to other interested buyers. The silent auction was a great success and all of the profits went back into the Bath and Highland Poultry Chain fund to help subsidize costs for the next project! Lastly, I would like to thank the Bath and Highland 4-H members that participated this year, their friends and family that helped with the chicks, and the buyers that came out to the Bath County Fair and supported our 4-H program!

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Virginia Cooperative Extension

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