

# KVGA Newsletter

March 2021

Vol. 2. No. 1



Hello to each and everyone of you. I'm hoping everyone is gearing up for a successful growing and marketing season in 2021.

The last 12 months have been very trying for all of us and has caused us to change and adapt to how we approach our interactions with others and how we conduct our businesses. Hopefully, we are seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. Personally, I have lost several friends and family to this pandemic and I'm sure each and every one of you have known someone that has been affected by the virus.

Getting to the vegetable season ahead, I have hope that the trend of buying local directly from growers is just getting started and with the continual trend of supporting local businesses the farmers market, roadside stands and CSA marketing efforts should continue to expand. On the wholesale side of sales, the chain store orders have been fairly consistent since last summer and with reopening of restaurants that business should expand steadily throughout our growing season.

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KVGA and the Kentucky State Horticultural Society (KSHS) held joint Board meetings in early March in Elizabethtown. It was decided if at possible we are going to have our annual Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference next January in Bowling Green. We had a favorable response to the virtual conference but it will be great to be able to get back to seeing all our friends in person.

Another item KVGA and KSHS discussed was the importance of the Kentucky Horticulture Research Initiative (KHRI), which will be used to fund research focused on the needs of Kentucky farmers. More details about KHRI can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

Once again, I'm hoping everyone has a very successful 2021.

*Joel Wilson*

President,  
Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association

## KVGA Officers

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Dr. Cindy Finneseth, Kentucky Horticulture Council (Lexington)

Dr. Rachel Rudolph, UK Department of Horticulture (Lexington)

Dr. John Strang, Ret. UK Department of Horticulture (Lexington)

Dr. Shawn Wright, UK Department of Horticulture (Jackson)

## Kentucky Commercial Food Manufacturers Fee Increase

Last summer, we let you know about the potential fee increase for Kentucky Commercial Food Manufacturers and how to submit comments if the new fee schedule would impact your business. More than 400 comments were submitted to the Kentucky Food Safety Brank helping them understand the potential effect a fee change would have on Kentucky growers who sell value-added products through wholesale channels and via internet sales. The new regulation and fee structure is primarily based on square footage of the facility and does take product risk into account. New fees go into effect July 2021 for newly permitted manufacturers. If you were permitted previously, then the new fee will apply when you renew for 2022.

For more information on Kentucky's Food Manufacturing laws and regulations, visit the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services' webpage: <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/fsb/Pages/foodmanufacturing.aspx> or contact the Food Safety Branch directly at 502-564-7181.

Note: If 75% or more of your product sales are retail (direct-to-consumer), your business is most likely not considered a food manufacturer and would only be permitted and inspected through the local health department. Keep in mind there are some exceptions.

### LOCAL FOOD MARKETING PRACTICES



## USDA Local Foods Census

Did you get an invitation to complete the 2020 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey from the USDA National Ag Statistics Service? Complete the survey online, using your unique Survey Code from the address label on the paper questionnaire or letter you received in the mail.

Complete the Census online: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide\\_to\\_NASS\\_Surveys/Local\\_Food/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Local_Food/index.php).

## 2021 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference Highlights

The Annual Fruit & Vegetable Conference went virtual in 2021. And, what a Conference it was!

We had 4 packed days in January of diverse and dynamic speakers, including several KVGA members.

More than 450 people registered for the virtual Conference and each session had high participation. The archived videos on the Kentucky Horticulture Council's YouTube channel have also been very popular. Conference registrants received links via email.

The survey links are still live, if you want to provide comments:

Day 1 (Jan. 5): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FVJan5>

Day 2 (Jan. 12): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FVJan12>

Day 3 (Jan. 19): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FVJan19>

Day 4 (Jan. 26): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FVJan26>

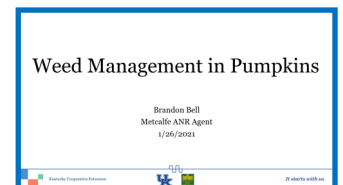
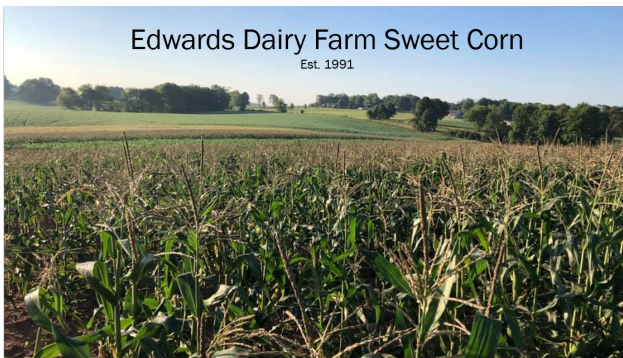
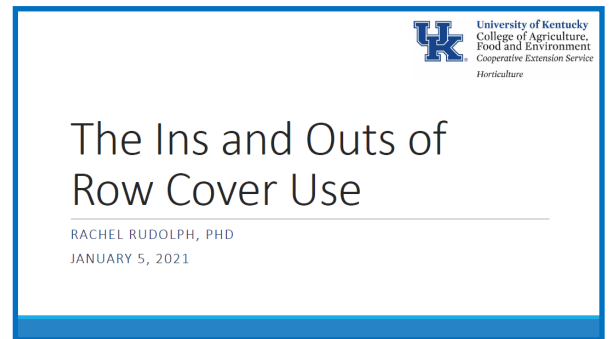
Our call for presentation proposals will go out this summer. If you have feedback for the planning committee or would like to suggest a topic for the 2022 Conference or future educational events, please let one of the KVGA Board Members know or send a note to [info@kyvga.org](mailto:info@kyvga.org).

A great, big thank you to the planning committee and all the speakers who helped KVGA provide an excellent educational event.



to the meeting sponsors listed on the following page

Be sure to support our sponsors when you can and tell them thanks for supporting our program.





SEE WHAT GOOD YIELDS<sup>®</sup>



## Thank You 2021 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Virtual Conference Sponsors!



Visit our WEB site: [MidwestVineyardSupply.com](http://MidwestVineyardSupply.com)  
**Midwest Vineyard Supply, Inc.** 2300 S. Twin Bridge Road  
 Decatur, Illinois 62521  
 Phone: 217-864-9896  
 SERVING ALL YOUR VINEYARD AND ORCHARD SUPPLY NEEDS!  
 EMAIL: [Sales@Midwestvineyardsupply.com](mailto:Sales@Midwestvineyardsupply.com)



### Vegetable Price Reporting and Risk Management

Price reporting helps provide accurate, Kentucky-specific information for crop insurance claims. If a grower doesn't have records, national wholesale prices are used which are substantially lower than the direct to consumer prices that Kentucky growers often get. Please complete our surveys to help us collect data!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020VegPrices>

All information is completely confidential and will only be presented as crop averages.

Have you been impacted by flooding or the recent winter storms? The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has programs that provide assistance to growers. This link will take you to a recent press release about risk management and disaster assistance for agriculture operations:

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/02/17/usda-ready-assist-farmers-ranchers-and-communities-affected-winter>

Farmers.gov is USDA's portal with information for growers on different programs. A recent blog post covered USDA programs for producers facing inclement weather: [https://www.farmers.gov/connect/blog/disaster-planning-and-assistance/usda-offers-disaster-assistance-producers-facing?utm\\_campaign=disasterassistance&utm\\_content=inclementweather&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.farmers.gov/connect/blog/disaster-planning-and-assistance/usda-offers-disaster-assistance-producers-facing?utm_campaign=disasterassistance&utm_content=inclementweather&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

Reach out to your crop insurance agent or local FSA office with questions about coverage and claims.

## Kentucky Horticulture Research Initiative



Please consider making a 2021 donation to the Kentucky Horticulture Research Initiative (KHRI). This tax-deductible funding goes directly to support research projects that provide new and valuable information to increase grower profitability.

All Kentucky farmers markets have been contacted to make contributions since KHRI is primarily funded by a voluntary check off (\$10 per vendor suggested) from each Kentucky farmers market, produce auction buyers and sellers, and other benefactors, including the Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association (KVGA) and the Kentucky State Horticultural Society (KSHS). If you sell at a market (or more than one), please encourage your market to participate. Each individual or market donating to the fund will be recognized in KVGA newsletters and on the KHRI webpage.

Make checks payable to:  
KVGA (write KHRI in memo box of your check)

This year, KVGA is matching (up to \$5,000) each farmers market donation and the funds raised will support specialty crop and market-based projects important to Kentucky producers.

Send to:  
Ron McMaine  
Treasurer, KVGA  
450 Hawkins Lane  
Salvisa, KY 40372

For more information about KHRI, visit <https://kyhortcouncil.org/kentucky-horticulture-research-initiative/>. To discuss market/vendor research needs, please contact Joel Wilson (KVGA; [cedarpoinfarm@aol.com](mailto:cedarpoinfarm@aol.com)) or Cindy Finneseth (KY Horticulture Council; [cindy@kyhortcouncil.org](mailto:cindy@kyhortcouncil.org)).

### KHRI Doners 2021

**AgSafe • Circle T Farms • Community Farm Alliance • FoodChain • Roby Forree • Glean Kentucky  
Hinton's Orchard & Farm Market • Kentucky Farm Bureau • KY Horticulture Council • ML Irrigation  
Midwest Vineyard Supply, Inc. • Monte Package Company • Nutrien • Reid's Orchard  
Rockford Packaging • Rupp Seed • Seedway • USDA NRCs**

## Kentucky Seasonal Eating Resource Hub

*Do you get questions from customers about how to use your produce?*

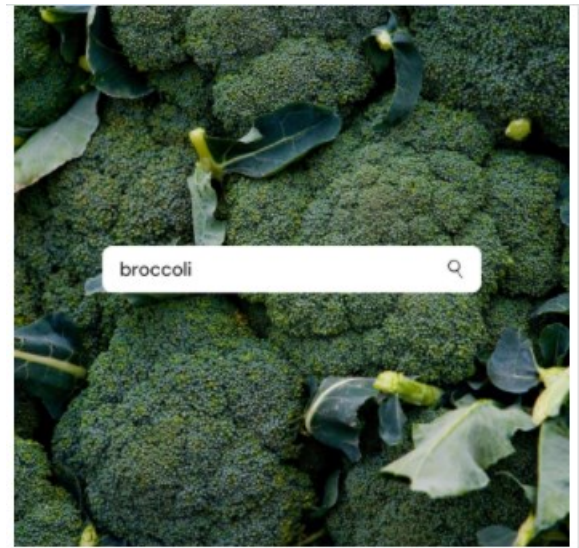
*Are you interested in providing recipes to your customers?*

*Have you been looking for attractive images to share on social media of produce commonly grown in Kentucky?*

The University of Kentucky Food Connection can help!

The Kentucky Seasonal Eating Resource Hub (<https://foodconnection.ca.uky.edu/seasonalhub>) has recipes, cooking videos and graphics you can use on social media, in newsletters, or emails featuring produce tips.

Many different crops are featured on the site including: Lettuce, Beet, Radish, Strawberry, Kohlrabi, Peas, Squash Blossoms, Tomatoes, Asparagus, and Broccoli. Each crop has a combination of recipes, social media graphics, downloadable photos, and videos that you can use to promote your products.



## Broccoli

- [Social Media Graphics](#)
- [Downloadable Broccoli Photos](#)
- [Broccoli Curry - Video](#)
- [Broccoli Twice Baked Potatoes - Video](#)
- [Garlic Roasted Broccoli - Video](#)

## Veg Notes from Dr. Rudolph

Hi, Kentucky Vegetable Growers!

Spring time is here and I wanted to give you an update on the University of Kentucky vegetable extension and research program. We have already been hard at work getting ready for spring and summer trials. Here's a list of trials planned for the next few months:



*Tomato grafting to manage root-knot nematode in high tunnels.* There are two on-farm trials, one in Knox County and one in Boyle County, where we'll be evaluating four different rootstocks grafted onto a scion of the growers' choice in high tunnels where root-knot nematode pressure has been confirmed.

*Utilizing planting date to manage pests and diseases in spring-planted broccoli.* This is the second year of a field study conducted at the UK Horticulture Research Farm. We are collaborating with Dr. Ric Bessin, extension entomologist, to scout for pests and evaluate if planting early can help avoid both pest pressure and unnecessary pesticide applications. Last year's results were promising.

*High tunnel lettuce and kale cultivar trials.* Spring and fall are popular times to grow greens in Kentucky. We will be evaluating 10 different cultivars of lettuce and six different cultivars of kale in high tunnels at the UK Horticulture Research Farm. Plants went out in early March.

Quite a few webinars were offered during the month of March. You can get more details on the Vegetable Extension and Research program's website, [veg crops.ca.uky.edu](http://veg crops.ca.uky.edu), but here's a quick list of what's been happening.

*Getting Ready for Market.* Every Monday in March in collaboration with Dr. Annette Wszelaki at the University of Tennessee, we presented on different topics requested by growers. Webinar topics and links to view are listed below:

March 1: Organic certification and production basics ([https://liveutk-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/awszelak\\_uk\\_edu/ESzqaToW7P9PufZoBY\\_w66cBIZqZNDnCFKW2DV8zBMXN6A](https://liveutk-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/awszelak_uk_edu/ESzqaToW7P9PufZoBY_w66cBIZqZNDnCFKW2DV8zBMXN6A))

March 8: Season extension basics (<https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/kzHq3a54nrhtSMS0Y6kg9c1SnqASnVVjYIGb3EUgg64InNR8rrAsqYbaJ5W1mgwO.ipIvoSl-uEy--z1K>)

March 15: Post-harvest and handling basics ([https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/C1MpiArOa9hYu-te79SWuF7p-S7wxf1f6yBG5ILiO5wH-56h3Ers\\_vHRko2w4oQS.Ch3TlwlwKVEVXZ6v](https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/C1MpiArOa9hYu-te79SWuF7p-S7wxf1f6yBG5ILiO5wH-56h3Ers_vHRko2w4oQS.Ch3TlwlwKVEVXZ6v))

March 22: Soil fertility in high tunnels ([https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/ZbGQpPA6UeA3TS3kNwTNb3vU0vkOcjbiTDI-QSebBcZqNcNKgEiD0\\_MOHghfotXY.G\\_ilX4G6ZWjAkpC3](https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/ZbGQpPA6UeA3TS3kNwTNb3vU0vkOcjbiTDI-QSebBcZqNcNKgEiD0_MOHghfotXY.G_ilX4G6ZWjAkpC3))

March 29: Food safety/GAP ([https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/4-JhzQqQ6SUnxA-HxkBvPky5gAyJB0LsHRIPf7SjxlddhRvayYfGj2FsfQSaMWQ.wgKKQt\\_gngXsdJjN](https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/share/4-JhzQqQ6SUnxA-HxkBvPky5gAyJB0LsHRIPf7SjxlddhRvayYfGj2FsfQSaMWQ.wgKKQt_gngXsdJjN))

*Introduction to Vegetable Production.* This is a short course hosted by the Kentucky Horticulture Council. It is geared towards new and beginning growers. Links will be available soon on the KHC event page (<https://kyhortcouncil.org/2021-intro-to-veggie-production-short-course/>).

Just as a reminder, especially for those of you planning to grow in high tunnels, if you haven't already collected a soil sample, it isn't too late. Collecting a representative soil sample every year is important for properly managing soil fertility and plant nutrition. If you have any questions about submitting a soil sample for testing, please contact your county extension agent.

I'll finish with an update on Actigard. A special use label has been approved for Actigard 50WG Plant Activator in Kentucky. This product can be used in sweet pepper production as a foliar application to protect against bacterial spot. As a control method, it has no direct activity on pathogens, but induces host plant resistance, often referred to as systemic acquired resistance or SAR. The active ingredient in the product is Acibenzolar-S-methyl. Always read and follow all label directions.

I hope you all have a very productive and successful spring!

Happy growing, Rachel Rudolph, PhD, UK Extension Vegetable Specialist



## Can I Take the FSMA Training Online?

Kentucky is offering the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) training online. The class is limited to the first 20 registrants on a first-come, first-serve basis. It is currently free for Kentucky produce growers.

Participants must have a computer with a microphone and speaker, reliable internet access, and a valid email address. You must be able to be present for all seven hours of instruction.

The deadline to register online is approximately one month before each course. To register for one of the classes, contact the UK's Food Systems Innovation Center at (859) 257-1546.

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## Homebased Processing and Microprocessing Training

HBM Virtual Workshops are going on now! Check the schedule online: [https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/homebased\\_processing\\_microprocessing](https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/homebased_processing_microprocessing) and sign up for a session near you. Wonder about the difference between a Home-Based Processor and a Home-Based Microprocessor? Check out this handy factsheet: [https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/files/know\\_the\\_difference\\_hbp-hbm.pdf](https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/files/know_the_difference_hbp-hbm.pdf)

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## Agriculture Water Testing

Are you currently using a pond, well, or other nonmunicipal water source to irrigate your produce crops? Or, now thinking about it after seeing your last water bill? The Kentucky Horticulture Council (KHC) is conducting an agricultural water testing program to help produce growers better understand the microbial quality of their surface and ground water sources used for production and post-harvest activities. KHC launched this program last year through a partnership with National Farmers Union's Local Food Safety Collaborative (LFSC). The FDA-funded initiative provided on-site technical assistance to Kentucky growers and hosted a regional field day in Clark County.

“We know it can be tough during the growing season to find time to take a sample and get it to a lab; however, sampling at this time is the best indicator of the water quality being used,” said Cindy Finneseth, KHC Executive Director. “Our program can help – we will come to the farm, take the samples, and deliver to the laboratory for analysis. We will also help you manage the test results – organizing the data and calculating the statistical thresholds. If there is a high risk associated with the water source, we can talk through options and help you select a management strategy.”

KHC is looking for a few additional sites to sample in anticipation of continued funding in 2021. Growers who participate in the program receive one-on-one sampling training, sample analysis, and individualized interpretation of test results. Water quality testing is a component of grower compliance with FDA's FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act). If you would like to participate in the program, please email KHC at [info@kyhortcouncil.org](mailto:info@kyhortcouncil.org).



## A Primed Seed Primer

Germination is dependent on water availability and *imbibition* is the first stage of germination where seeds rapidly take up moisture and increase in weight. It is followed by a plateau phase just before the radicle (root) emerges and germination is complete.

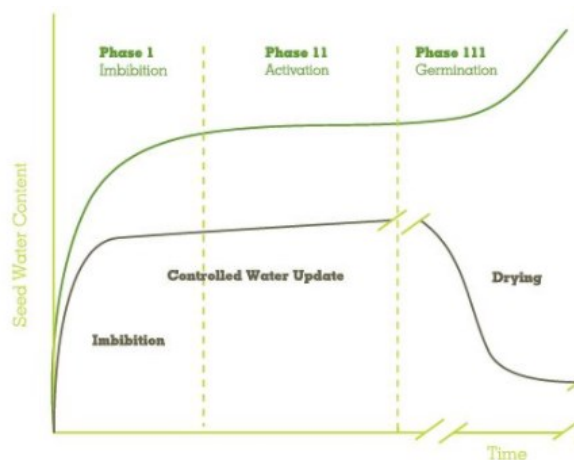
*Seed priming* is a treatment strategy where germination is started but halted through drying before the radicle has fully emerged. This technique is fairly common in bedding plants and vegetables and can improve germination and seedling development over a wide range of environmental conditions after planting.

Many different priming treatments are used commercially. Treatment used, temperature, and duration varies based on the seed kind.

*Osmopriming* uses a solution like polyethylene glycol (PEG), mannitol, potassium nitrate, potassium chloride, gibberellic acid, or hydrogen peroxide to hydrate seeds to a very specific water content. After soaking in the osmopriming solution, seeds are washed and dried before packaging and then offered for sale.

*Potential Pros: rapid germination over a wide range of environmental conditions; higher uniformity in seedlings*

*Potential Cons: reduced longevity in storage; higher price*



*Seed water content over time under standard germination conditions (top line) and with priming treatment (bottom line)*

*Credit: Germains Seed Technology*

### Farm to School Interest Survey

The Kentucky Horticulture Council is partnering with FoodChain, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Feeding Kentucky, and other community organizations on a KY Farm to School network.

Please help them gather information from growers across the state about what would be the most useful in helping you navigate this marketing channel.

Survey: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSee6tAOrgyPS-IDD2dWrh6VS0RYU6acehDzAGgADSE-DjRyTqA/viewform>



Are you growing crops in a greenhouse or other controlled environment system? Have you signed up for e-GRO (Electronic Grower Resources Online)? This is a collaborative effort of Extension specialists to create a new clearing house for alerts about disease, insect, environmental, physiological and nutritional disorders being observed in commercial greenhouses. Subscribe for digital alerts and blog posts at <http://e-gro.org/>



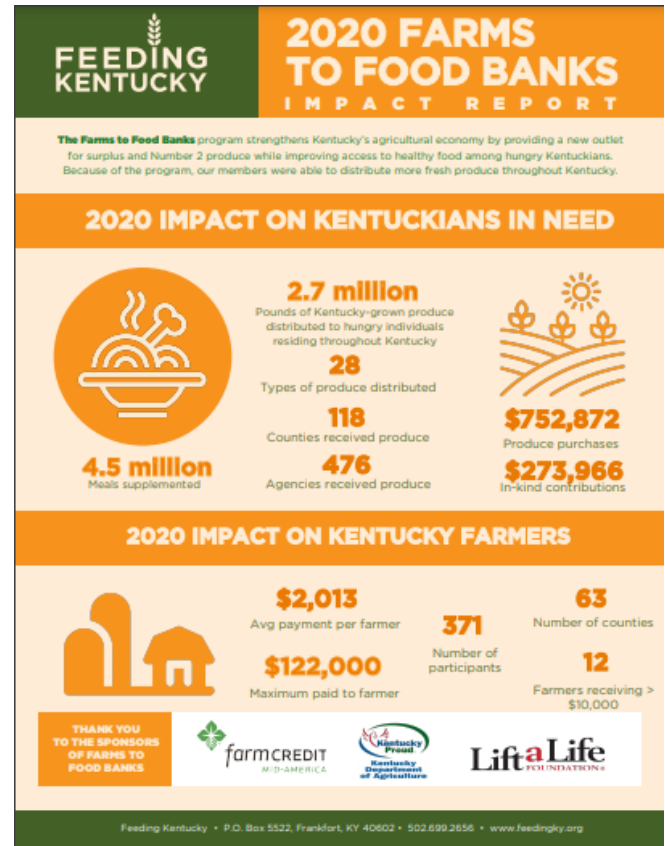


## 2020 Farms to Food Banks Impact Report

Many of our Kentucky growers and KVGA members sell (and donate) produce to Feeding Kentucky's Farms to Food Banks program. In fact, almost 375 growers across Kentucky in 2021 and 1,303 growers since the program started in 2011!

If you are not familiar with the program, be sure to check it out — <https://feedingky.org/farms-to-food-banks/> — to see if you are interested in selling surplus and number 2 produce to a facility near you to increase access to locally-grown healthy produce for food-insecure Kentuckians served by the program. The program is designed to cover your cost to harvest, package, and transport the approved list of 28 different crops.

For those of you already familiar with Feeding Kentucky, their annual report (shown at right) has recently been published and is available online for download: <https://feedingky.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2020-Farms-to-Food-Banks-Impact-Report.pdf>.



# 2022 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference

The annual Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference has outgrown the Lexington hotel where we've been the last several years and will be in a new location — the Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green — for 2022. KVGA is represented on the planning committee and working hard to organize an excellent event. One advantage of the new space is more room for additional educational tracks and exhibitors. We would love your input on pre-conference events, educational topics, speakers, or vendors you would like to see at the show. You can share your ideas with any of the KVGA board members to pass along or send an email: [info@kyvga.org](mailto:info@kyvga.org).

**Jan. 2: Pre-Conference Short Courses and Grower Roundtables**

**Jan. 3-4: Conference Sessions and Trade Show**

Sloan Convention Center at  
Holiday Inn University Plaza

1021 Wilkinson Trace

Bowling Green, KY 42103

270-745-0088

[www.HIBowlingGreen.com](http://www.HIBowlingGreen.com)



## Upcoming Industry Events

4/8 — Seed, Plant, Package, Sell! Specialty Crop Virtual Visit to Salad Days Farm (OAK Event)

4/16—Deadline to register for May 25 FSMA Produce Safety Alliance Training

4/19 — Local Food Systems Webinar

4/22 — FSMA Produce Safety Alliance Training (online)

5/17 — Local Food Systems Webinar

5/25 — FSMA Produce Safety Alliance Training (online)

6/2 — Virtual Farm Tour at Old Homeplace Farm (OAK Event)

Do you have a question about production, marketing or another veggie-

related topic? Send in your question and you may see it answered in a future newsletter!



**Info@KyVGA.org**

## Save-the-Date

2022 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference

Jan. 2 — Pre-Conference Events

Jan. 3-4 — Educational Sessions & Trade Show

