

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)  
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: [USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014- September 29, 2016
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Bonnie Riedesel
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	540-885-5174
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	bonnie@cspdc.org
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Shenandoah Valley Fields of Gold Agritourism Program
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-VA-0096
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2014
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Counties of Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, and Shenandoah; Cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, and Waynesboro, VA.
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$93,674.00

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

- Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).  
 Different individual: Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

i. Goal/Objective 1: Boost rural economic development through regional collaboration. The objective is for the agritourism industry to benefit from economies of scale, greater drawing power and impact, and increased competitiveness for scarce resources by participating in a regional program rather than many individual local programs.

a. Progress Made: We hired an Agritourism Coordinator who began work on January 6, 2015. This position was responsible for implementing the marketing and business support goals of this project.

We held a total of eight Steering Committee meetings. These meetings consisted of Fields of Gold Farm Trail members and local tourism and economic development staff. Meetings occurred quarterly with an average of 12-15 attendees.

We attended a total of 18 speaking engagements, workshops, conferences and meetings to tell the region’s agricultural story and disseminate our results. Additionally, we spoke about the program and its progress at two City Council meetings and three Board of Supervisors meetings.

We held an annual member event in April 2016, our Fields of Gold Spring Jubilee. The CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation was the keynote speaker. Two Farm Trail members, a lavender farm and an orchard and hard cidery, spoke about marketing efforts that have been successful for them as well as ways to add value to products and diversify the farm.

b. Impact on Community: These efforts allowed us to work with our partners in the community to collaborate and mainstream all of our efforts. It enabled us to increase our reach and offer more activities/efforts while decreasing the resources necessary to do so. Through sharing the Fields of Gold story we were able to inspire and encourage others in their efforts to establish their own agritourism program in other parts of Virginia.

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Recognition of the Shenandoah Valley as the #1 agritourism destination in the nation. The objective is to develop and deliver a concise and comprehensive Fields of Gold marketing message to collectively promote the abundance of the Shenandoah Valley’s agricultural products, destinations, and experiences.

a. Progress Made: We updated 203 individual member profile pages on the Fields of Gold website. This process added enhanced descriptions and engaging photos or logos, and confirmed the accuracy of members’ contact information.

We created a promotional display for use at events and conferences. This display consisted of a table runner with Fields of Gold logo; Farm Trail members' products such as pickles, maple syrup, waffle mix, lavender products, honey, wool, and jam; a table top pop-up banner; a visitor e-newsletter sign-up sheet; business cards for the Agritourism Coordinator; and our brochures and latest ad.

We regularly posted on Facebook and were able to increase our Facebook following by 257%, from 420 followers to over 1500. We also started an Instagram page that now has close to 200 followers.

We set up reciprocal website links. In addition to our having a link to every member's website or Facebook page on the Fields of Gold website, approximately 35% of our members have our logo and website link on their websites. Local tourism websites and many Inns in the Fields of Gold region also have it posted.

We maintained a monthly events and activities calendar on our website. These events are promoted regularly on Fields of Gold social media.

We promoted the Fields of Gold Farm Trail to consumers and vendors at 10 Farmers Markets and 15 agritourism-related events.

We purchased and delivered promotional totes and bumper stickers to Fields of Gold members for distribution to their customers. The promotion products also were given out at events and farmers' markets.

Brochures and rack cards were kept replenished and stocked at member business locations as well as at farmers' markets, visitors' centers, tourism offices, and some inns, hotels, campgrounds, schools and libraries.

In June 2015 we began distributing "*Adventure Awaits*," a monthly visitor e-newsletter highlighting 7-9 upcoming events on the Farm Trail. We distributed 14 *Adventure Awaits* newsletters. The list serve for this newsletter is currently at almost 1,000 email addresses and has an average open rate of 37% and an average click rate of 15%.

We added features to our website including mobile readiness and enhanced profile pages. Over 38% of all Fields of Gold website users are accessing the site from their cell phones or other mobile devices. Fields of Gold is also listed on [www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org)

- b. Impact on Community: Fields of Gold-Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail has increased community and visitor awareness of agriculture in our region and the options for fresh food as well as fun and educational activities. Fields of Gold provides a convenient place (website) to find farmers' markets, pick your own farms, farm to table restaurants, fun on the farm, festivals, and so much more. Several of our Fields of Gold members have reported that it has increased the number of visitors to their farms and farm businesses.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Assist agritourism businesses with increasing their sales and achieving their mission and goals. The objective is for Fields of Gold to create opportunities for entrepreneurs and existing businesses to grow through the support of an established agritourism program including connections to business resources, services, and training opportunities.

- a. Progress Made: We gained 56 new Farm Trail members, which is a 34% increase during the FMPP grant period. We started with 167 members and now have 223 members. This exceeded our goal of 200 members, and the program continues to attract new members.

Each member received a welcome packet which consisted of a letter welcoming them to the Farm Trail and explaining their benefits and responsibilities, a stack of brochures, bumper stickers, promotional tote, member signage, copy of the latest seasonal ad, copy of the latest *Adventure Awaits*, and a copy of the latest *Fence Talk* member newsletter.

We sent out 9 quarterly “members only” newsletters highlighting signature events, upcoming workshops and trainings, grant opportunities, networking opportunities, and reminders about the marketing and business support tools that Fields of Gold offers its members – like the member portal on the website or the identifying member signage. During the grant period, the newsletter shifted to a Constant Contact format.

The member portal was kept up to date with upcoming grant and training opportunities, logos, and web links to a variety of agritourism resources and partners.

We held 6 Meet & Greets and met with members from these localities: Botetourt, Bath, Shenandoah, Rockbridge, Lexington, Buena Vista, Rockingham, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro. These events were designed were held at a member’s location and were designed to emphasize networking among members. Members were reminded via a presentation of the website and social media sites of their member benefits and ways they could work together with Fields of Gold staff to promote each other and the program. It also gave members the opportunity to relationship build and network with those farms nearest them.

We partnered with KL Creative Media to provide complimentary, customized digital media sessions with our members in each region. We also partnered with tourism in each locality so that members would not have far to travel. Eight member businesses took advantage of this opportunity.

We participated on the FEED Grant (Food Education for Entrepreneurial Development) Committee with SCCF (Staunton Creative Community Fund). Over 15 farms and farm businesses in the region applied for the grant funds and one of our members, Red Hen Restaurant in Lexington, was one of the \$5000 grant recipients.

We were an integral part in the 2016 Farm2Fork Affair Expo for the Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro region. We were able to promote 23 of our farms to over 125 restaurants, groceries, food distributors, and schools from around the region and Washington, D.C. As part of this event, we offered our farmers training on how to set up their booth and engage potential clients, selling techniques, and marketing tools such as having a seasonal calendar and distribution schedule available in addition to brochures and business cards. We also participated in the January 2015 and January 2016 Love at First Bite events which were very similar to the Farm2Fork Affair.

We designed and produced member signage in two styles (one a weather proof sticker, one in a stand). Signs were delivered to all members in early 2016 to identify them as a member of the Fields of Gold Farm Trail.

A member satisfaction survey was distributed to members in June 2016. It was used to determine which of our efforts have been the most beneficial and successful. It also helped us to gather ideas around what they would like to see from the program in the future. We plan to use this survey at least two times per year.

Fields of Gold was mentioned over 20 times in newspaper articles in and around the region, twice in Agritourism World e-news, and 5 segments on the local TV news.

Fields of Gold won three of its awards during this grant reporting period for regional collaboration and best practices.

- b. Impact on Community: Farmers and business owners experienced increased opportunities for networking and relationship building, more exposure to the public via Fields of Gold marketing efforts, increased opportunities for training on topics such as marketing, use of social media, adding value to products, business services like having a brochure or business cards, and ways to diversify the farm and engage potential new clients. Many of these opportunities for growth and better business practices were made available through our collaboration with our community partners who specialize in such things and small business support organizations. All of this makes the farms and farm businesses more accessible and desirable for potential visitors and increases traffic to the area, thus assisting other local businesses in experiencing increased business and sales.
2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

Overall impact of the program was evaluated using the following measures:

- i. A Fields of Gold Agritourism Coordinator was hired.
- ii. The number of Fields of Gold Farm Trail members grew from 167 to 223, a 34% increase. This exceeded the project's goal of 200.

- iii. Facebook followers increased from 420 to over 1500, a 257% increase.
  - iv. Fields of Gold website traffic continues to increase. At the beginning of August 2016, we had nearly 4,000 page views and approximately 1,500. We have seen a correlation between advertising placement and user location as well as a connection between social media posts as well as shared participation at events with visits to member profile pages on the website.
  - v. *Adventure Awaits*, our visitor newsletter, was started during the grant period. The email distribution list for this newsletter has grown from 0 to over 1,000.
  - vi. Farm Trail members have indicated an increase in visitors and sales.
  - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project:
    - a. Percent Increase: All 223 Fields of Gold members have benefited from the project; 56 joined the program during the grant period, an increase of 34%.
3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how? We attended farmers' markets and many events and festivals that were accessible to and attended by a variety of ethnic groups and low income populations. At these events we made attendees aware of the program and how it increases the visibility of farms in their area, farmers' markets, and farm stands. We regularly made attendees aware of which farmers' markets in their areas also accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. In addition, we were able to share nutrition information related to buying products from local farms and promoting outdoor recreational activities. For new agritourism businesses, we could offer an immediate and established program through which they could promote their products and services. Most new businesses were connected to Fields of Gold through a Meet & Greet event, outreach by the Agritourism Coordinator, or on recommendation from local tourism/economic development staff or another Farm Trail member.
4. Discuss your community partnerships.
- i. Who are your community partners? Fields of Gold has numerous partners including it 200+ Fields of Gold members, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, local tourism and economic development offices, Karen Lawrence (KL Creative Media), Virginia Tourism Corporation, Farmers Market managers, festival organizers, Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center, Buy Fresh, Buy Local, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Farm Credit of the Virginias, Staunton Creative Community Fund, Chambers of Commerce, Farm Bureau and local government.
  - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project? It is through these partnerships that we were able to reach an increased number of Farm Trail visitors and supporters by collaborating on advertising, events, conferences, workshops/trainings, keeping brochures stocked, etc. We were also able to assist our members through a variety of grant opportunities, small business counseling, trade shows to highlight their products throughout the region and beyond, marketing trainings, and networking events.
  - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant? The work we have begun and the partnerships that we have built through our work with the FMPP grant will continue past this grant period. We also anticipate their support and feedback as we begin new projects and activities. The Steering Committee continues to meet quarterly.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? We contracted with 93 Octane to conduct all of our website updates and upgrades. As a result of our work with them through this grant, we were able to make our website mobile ready with enhanced member profiles. We saw a direct increase in traffic to our website with visitors staying longer on the site and visiting multiple web pages. We also contracted with a local graphic designer, Queen City Creative, to design our bumper stickers, member signage, and seasonal ads. Through this partnership we were able to ensure the production of a high quality product that was consistent with our mission and overall branding efforts.
6. Have you publicized any results yet?\* Yes
  - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We regularly shared the results of our efforts at Steering Committee meetings, Meet & Greet events, conferences, and the annual member event. We also shared information through various news outlets and our member newsletter.
  - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? There were many layers of information sharing including our members and localities, community partners and stakeholders, other regional organizations interested in starting a similar program, statewide Agritourism Conference, state agencies, ARC Development District Association of Appalachia Conference. The public was informed at conferences and events and through a variety of media outlets.
  - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? While there is no real way to tell how many in the public were reached, we estimate that with stakeholders, community partners and members combined we reached well over 1,500 people.

\*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
  - i. If so, how did you collect the information? We regularly obtain feedback from our tourism and economic development partners at the Steering Committee meetings. These comments are reflected in meeting minutes. We have obtained feedback from elected officials during presentations at their public meetings in addition to comments that are directed to us at events and conferences. We also conducted a member satisfaction survey with our Fields of Gold members.
  - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

From members: In survey results most felt that the website, specifically the Meet the Locals page, the Find events/activities page, and the Explore the map pages were the most beneficial. Following were the *Adventure Awaits* visitors newsletter, and use of social media. Most reported to have benefited from the program by having increased social media and web presence, increased partnering and networking with like businesses, and increased visitors to their businesses. Most members display the brochures and member signage and communicate upcoming events to the Agritourism Coordinator. In addition, they promote the Farm Trail by actively speaking to customers about the Fields of Gold. In the future they would like to see road signage, radio advertising, a Fields of Gold video for use on the website, and a region-wide trade show.

Tourism and economic development have shared regularly that we are doing a good job promoting the Farm Trail and the individual businesses through our efforts. We have also repeatedly heard that we are fair in promoting each of the 13 participating localities equitably.

From the community: They are proud to have the only Farm Trail in the state of Virginia. They think having one website where you can access all of the agritourism sites in the Shenandoah Valley is very convenient and “pretty cool.” We hear this consistently when speaking with people at events, festivals, and farmers’ markets. We have been told by a visiting site selector consultant that Fields of Gold is an economic development differentiator for our region.

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:
- ii. Did the project generate any income? No
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed). Having a “face” and single contact for the program, someone who is dedicated to its efforts and its members, is critical to the program’s growth and success. Hiring an Agritourism Coordinator was key to being able to move the program forward in a big way.

If you are going to have a website it must be mobile ready, conveniently accessed from both phone and computer, and easy to navigate. Once we added the mobile readiness and improved search options we saw an increase in visitors to the site.

Know your target market and how best to reach them. Do not waste valuable time at events, or money on advertising where you are having minimal contact with your ideal market. Some of this is trial and error.

Facebook was one of the most effective and affordable outlets for us to reach and communicate with Farm Trail fans and potential new visitors to the Trail.

Member events should be scheduled at various times of day, week, and year to reach the most people. Depending on the type of farm or farm business, their busy season can vary. We found that late November through February/early March tended to be the best time for communication with most of our members.

Member Meet & Greets were a highly successful means for communicating with members, getting them actively engaged in the program, and their networking and partnering with each other.

When Farm Trail businesses co-participated on events, they saw a spike in website traffic.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: Some of the performance metrics were a challenge to gather as our members were occupied in meeting the day-to-day demands of their small business. Reporting their data trends to the Fields of Gold program was a task with no time to meet.
- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project: We cannot identify anything we would do differently in the administration of the project.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project. We will continue to seek new funding streams for the program that will allow us to support and promote the Farm Trail and its members. We will also continue to request the monetary and in-kind support of our participating localities. Since beginning work through this grant, the Farm Trail has seen an increase in visitors, an increase in website traffic, an increase in social media attention, an increase in media coverage, and an increase in collaboration and communication among our member farm businesses.
- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals? We are using the results of our member survey to drive much of our work plan going forward with future projects, as well as looking at past successes. Much of the work we started with FMPP will continue. We are also looking at ways to be able to fund more Facebook post boosts, adding a blog to the website, offering professional photography services for those member businesses that need it most, and making an "About Us" video that can be used on the Fields of Gold website and member websites as well as on social media and at conferences. Assisting Farm Trail members with marketing remains a top need and priority for the program.



**ATTACHMENTS**

**Shenandoah Valley Fields of Gold Agritourism Program**

**Farmers Market Promotion Program**

**14-FMPPX-VA-0096**

**Report #4 - FINAL**

**September 1, 2014 – September 30, 2016**

# YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS HERE ON THE FIELDS OF GOLD FARM TRAIL



## DISCOVER SHENANDOAH VALLEY'S FARM TRAIL

### FARMERS MARKETS

Get fresh with the locals at one of our many Farmers Markets in the Fields of Gold region. Fresh produce in season year-round. Herbs, plants, meats, eggs, jams and jellies, baked goods and even local handmade items. **Check out our website for a list of the Farmers Markets in the area.**



### FARM TOURS AND EXPERIENCES

Find the inner farmer in you! Get lost in a corn maze, hitch a ride on a wagon, feed a goat, pet a sheep, root for your favorite pig, milk a cow and talk with a farmer. Fun for all ages and perfect for fields trips, too. **Don't forget your camera to capture that special family moment!**



### PICK-YOUR-OWN-FARMS

Whether you call it Pick-Your-Own, PYO, or U-Pick, you'll find a Fields of Gold farm near you. Pumpkins, apples, berries, peaches, vegetables, flowers and more. Mother Nature calls the shots, so always call ahead to confirm field conditions, dates and times. **Start Picking Your Own fun now!**



### WINERIES AND BREWERIES

You don't need to travel to the Napa Valley for great wine; we've got award-winning wines and craft beers right here in the Shenandoah Valley. In fact, *Wine Enthusiast* Magazine ranks Virginia in the top 10 in the world for wine travel destinations. Over 20 wineries, breweries and cideries are in the Fields of Gold region. Learn how wine, cider, and craft beers are made, stroll through a vineyard, and see a hop farm. **Cheers!**



PHOTO BY JOHN VALLS

### CHRISTMAS TREE FARMS AND NURSERIES

Start a family tradition this year! Choose and cut your own Christmas tree at one of our local Christmas tree farms. Our local nurseries offer fresh seasonal plants, flowers, wreaths and garlands or learn to make your own masterpiece at one of our workshops. **Isn't it time you brought the outside in?**



PHOTO BY NIGEL MANLEY

### AG VENUES/ FESTIVALS/EVENTS

Celebrate the heritage of agriculture in the Shenandoah Valley. From the Maple Festival in the spring to the many Harvest Festivals in the fall, you're sure to find a festival that speaks to you! If you're looking for a unique setting to have a wedding, celebrate a birthday or special occasion, our Ag Venues offer a variety of authentic settings for your special occasion. **Check out our calendar for a list of festivals, county fairs and agricultural events coming up.**



### FARM/PRODUCE STANDS

It doesn't get any fresher than this! Straight from our farms to your table. You'll find dozens of farm stands dotting our region. **Just follow the Fields of Gold Farm Trail to find your next roadside attraction!**



### FARM LODGING

Get up with the chickens and go to bed when the cows come home. Whether you're looking for a real farm experience or a relaxing getaway, you'll find a unique experience at one of our farm B&Bs, country inns, rural retreats and farm cottages. Expect a warm welcome and hearty home-cooked meal. **Make your reservations now!**



### FARM-TO-TABLE RESTAURANTS

Reap what we sow! Do you know where your food comes from? You will when you dine at one of our local farm-to-table restaurants. Savor the freshest ingredients and true local cuisine. For a list of farm-to-table restaurants and menus, go to our website. **Bon Appétit!**



### TROUT FARMS/ FISHING

Catch your imagination at one of our fee-to-fish farms. Take home a trophy fish or a fish fillet for dinner. **No license required, all ages welcome.**

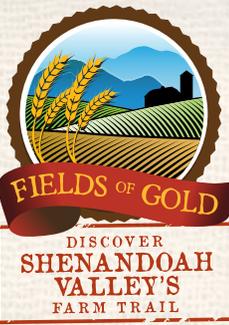


### FARM RETAIL AND GROCERY

Take home a slice of the Shenandoah Valley when you visit a Fields of Gold retail store or grocery that specializes in local products. Honey, cheese, maple syrup, baked goods, jams, jellies, pickles, lavender, wool and alpaca fiber, and much more. **All home-grown and made in the Shenandoah Valley!**



[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)



## YOU'RE ALMOST THERE...

On the Fields of Gold Farm Trail, you'll discover the home-grown side of Virginia in the Shenandoah Valley. After all, it's where agriculture got its roots.

Pick your own fruit in one of our orchards, stroll through a farmers market, savor a wine tasting, tour a working farm, celebrate at a farm festival, or feast on a locally-grown meal at one of our farm-to-table restaurants. Whether you are planning a day-trip with your family, a week-long excursion with friends or just a spur of the moment getaway, adventure awaits you on the Fields of Gold Farm Trail.

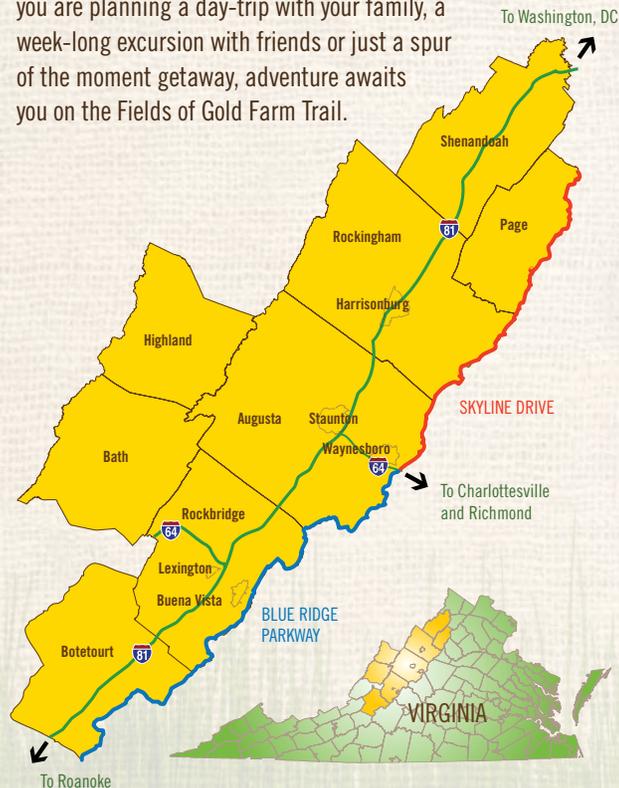
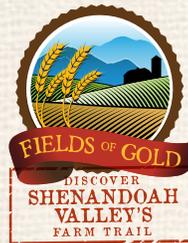


PHOTO COURTESY OF LEXINGTON AND ROCKBRIDGE AREA TOURISM

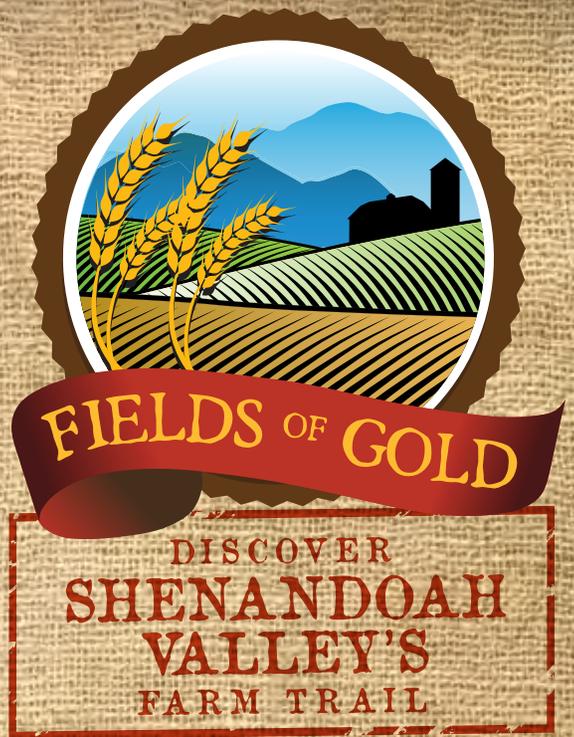
## THE FIELDS OF GOLD STORY



Since the early 1700s, farming has been central to the spirit and success of the Shenandoah Valley. It has sustained the citizens of the Valley by providing vital economic, agricultural, environmental, aesthetic and social benefits.

Today farming still plays an important role in the Shenandoah Valley and now you can be part of that story when you travel the Fields of Gold Farm Trail. Here you'll discover natural beauty, history, outdoor recreation, cultural attractions and lots and lots of agricultural. The Fields of Gold Farm Trail represents over 170 open farms, wineries and breweries, roadside stands, farm B&Bs, farm-to-table restaurants, farmers markets, festivals and so much more that's agriculture. Plan a day, a weekend, or even a longer trip to get your hands dirty (or not) as you travel along the Fields of Gold Farm Trail. Write your farm story now!

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)



Virginia  is for Lovers®

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY  
FIELDS OF GOLD

~ where agriculture got its roots ~



February 2016



## New Member Newsletter!

A big thanks to all of you that voted on the new, more "farm-friendly" newsletter name! As you can see, the winner was "Fence Talk". We love it, too. You have probably already noticed we have changed the format in which we send you the newsletter. It is now in Constant Contact, versus being sent as a separate email attachment. We hope you find this to be a much more user-friendly way to enjoy the newsletter. In addition to that change, the newsletter will now go out bi-monthly versus quarterly.

Our mascot for this edition of "Fence Talk" is Apollo. Apollo is a Suri alpaca. He was born on August 13, 2015, and lives at Misty Mountains Alpacas in Rockbridge County, home of Ralph and Sandra Muraca. To find out more about Apollo (he has an incredible "survival" story and a special place in the hearts of his owners) or Misty Mountains Alpacas [click here](#).

To have your own "fence photo" featured in our newsletter, along with information about your agribusiness, email photos and information to [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org).

---

## Save the Date for our Member Event! "Spring Jubilee"

*A Fields of Gold Celebration*

*April 21, 2016*

Join us for our special member event, the Spring Jubilee, on April 21, 2016, at the beautiful Cross Keys Barn, from 5pm-8pm to celebrate another successful year on the Farm Trail! This is our way to thank you, our members, for your participation and your support of the program. There would be no Fields of Gold without you. As a team we are working to market and promote the Shenandoah Valley as the #1 agritourism destination in the country. We are proud to be the only trail of its kind in the state of Virginia. [Read More](#)



Cross Keys Barn

## Signature Events

### *2016 Agritourism in Virginia's New Economy Conference*

April 5-6, 2016  
Southern Virginia Higher Education Center  
South Boston, VA 24592

The Virginia Agritourism Conference is back for two days filled with fresh ideas on farm events and business planning.

On Tuesday afternoon, take one of the four agritourism tours, and on Wednesday, meet agritourism leaders, share your successes, and explore your challenges during the afternoon's Agritourism Showcase.

For more information about the event including on-line registration, [click here](#).

### *58th Annual Highland Maple Festival*

Find your sweet spot in Highland County! This year the Maple Festival will take place the weekends of March 12-13 and 19-20.

The Maple Festival has been an annual event in Highland County, Virginia, since 1958.

For more information on the festival [click here](#).



## Grow Your Agribusiness

### *Blue Ridge Community College, Continuing Education Series for Agribusinesses*

Their short courses are designed to enhance farm production and profitability. They cover topics ranging from marketing your agribusiness to financial management to learning more about sustainable agriculture.

For a full listing of available courses, [click here](#).



### *Agritourism World eNews*

Are you listed? Do you get their newsletter? Agritourism World is a FREE world-wide directory of farms, ranches, farmhouses, wineries, and other country businesses open to the public. Offers agritourism farms or destinations a free listing that is an easy two minute task. Let them promote your website and business at no cost to you! Check out the other Virginia listings in their directory by [clicking here](#).



## Fields of Gold Toolkit

### *Fields of Gold Member Signage is Here!*

These signs will signal to guests and visitors to your agribusiness that you are a "Proud Member" of the Shenandoah Valley's Fields of Gold Farm Trail.

We are hoping that as more and more people start to see these signs around at various Fields of Gold Farm Trail businesses it will help to create more curiosity, knowledge and buzz about the program and assist in our branding efforts. We appreciate your willingness to display these, along with the brochures, at your place of business.

This signage can be used on windows, doors,

## Meet the Locals

### *Bluestone Vineyard*



Curt, RJ, Jackie and Lee Hartman, 2015

Bluestone Vineyard is located in the heart of the beautiful Shenandoah Valley and is named after the "bluestone" (a type of limestone) that is a main component within the local soil. The Hartmans

counters and tables and can be taken with you to events where you have booths!

have established themselves as a Virginia Winery producing well-crafted boutique wines.



Bluestone Vineyard is a family owned and operated vineyard and winery, committed to crafting small-batch wines from locally sourced and estate grown fruit that showcase the very best in each varietal and each vintage.

"Buying a bottle of wine is not a cost, it is an investment. Drinking a bottle of wine is a cost." - Curt Hartman

For more information about the vineyard, [click here](#).



## What's Fresh?

*Meet one of our new members*

Hott Apiary, one of our newest and freshest members, offers local raw honey, pollen, wax, comb, swarm removal, honeybee and queen sales. They can be found at 882 Bloomer Springs Road, McGaheysville, Virginia or by calling 540-383-3323. Check them out for all of your honey and bee needs!



### For More Information Contact:

Tracey Coltrain, Agritourism Coordinator

[tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

540-885-5174

### Funding for this program provided by:



United States Department of Agriculture



Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development



Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services



Virginia Tourism Corporation



To take advantage of more member information and benefits, explore the [Fields of Gold Member Portal](#)

### STAY CONNECTED





February 2016

## Save the Date for our Member Event! "Spring Jubilee"

*A Fields of Gold Celebration*

*April 21, 2016*

Join us for our special member event, the Spring Jubilee, on April 21, 2016, at the beautiful Cross Keys Barn, from 5pm-8pm to celebrate another successful year on the Farm Trail! This is our way to thank you, our members, for your participation and your support of the program. There would be no Fields of Gold without you. As a team we are working to market and promote the Shenandoah Valley as the #1 agritourism destination in the country. We are proud to be the only trail of its kind in the state of Virginia.

Rita McClenny, CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, will be our keynote speaker at the event. She is quite an inspiration and you will not want to miss her. In addition, we have invited two of our top agritourism businesses to share their encouraging stories and the ways that they have been able to add value to their products and services, as well as diversify their farms successfully. They include Julie Haushalter with White Oak Lavender Farm & the Purple Wolf Tasting Room and Shannon and Sarah Showalter of Showalter's Orchard & Greenhouse and Old Hill Hard Cider. Of course our event wouldn't be complete without serving you the bounty of the Shenandoah Valley. We'll have locally sourced foods for sample from Meadowcroft Farm, hors d'oeuvres catered by Full Circle Catering, and beverages from Three Notch'd Brewing Company, Old Hill Cider, and The Purple Wolf Vineyard.

We will have a table available for member information so please be sure to bring your brochures, fliers, and/or business cards to display at the event. Look for your official invite soon!



Cross Keys Barn





May 2016



### Who is this attractive guy?

Meet Chianti, our mascot for this edition of "Fence Talk." Chianti is a gorgeous, tri-color, Nigerian Dwarf Buck. Nigerian Dwarfs originated from West Africa. They are a very popular breed of goat due to their small size, good-natured personalities, and surprising amount of sweet milk for their small size. Nigerian Dwarfs also make gentle, lovable, and playful pets! From a very early age, Chianti bonded with Winnie, the farms miniature spotted donkey, he then was a definite keeper!

Cinda and George, owners of My Peeps Farm, have a 10-acre homestead along the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains that gives them the opportunity to spend lots of time playing and caring for their registered Nigerian Dwarf goats and other critters (aka "peeps"). In addition to goats, they have chickens, guinea hens, barn cats, and a miniature donkey. To find out more, visit their website: [www.mypeepsfarm.com](http://www.mypeepsfarm.com).

To have your own "fence photo" featured in our newsletter, along with information about your agribusiness, email photos and information to [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org).



### Member Event "Spring Jubilee" *Fields of Gold Celebration* April 21, 2016

A good time was had by all at this year's annual member event held at the "farm chic" Cross Keys Barn. A big thank you to all of you that attended and participated! It would not have been the same without you, our members.

This delightful event would not have been possible without our incredible and generous sponsors: Virginia Tourism Corporation; Rockingham County; Farm Credit of the Virginias; Virginia Cooperative Extension Shenandoah Valley Buy Fresh, Buy Local; Farmers & Merchants Bank; KL Creative Media; and Botkin Rose, PLC. Thanks to the Staunton Creative Community Fund for the beautiful photography, Mid-Valley Press for printing the invitations, and Cross Keys Barn for donating the breathtaking venue.



[Cross Keys Barn](#)



[Rita McClenny, VTC](#)

Rita McClenny, President and CEO for the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), was our event keynote speaker and one of the evenings main highlights. Rita treated us to a lively and motivational speech which left us all feeling pretty proud of the work we do, as a team, to promote agritourism in this splendid Valley we call home. There is indeed power in numbers! Proud members, White Oak Lavender and Showalters Orchard, also joined us for the festivities and presented together on the history of their businesses, and shared their best tips for marketing, growing and diversifying an agritourism business. They were quite an inspiration! A big thanks to Julie, Sarah &

Our palates were also treated to a fun night out as well. Full Circle Catering provided a divinely delicious and beautiful spread of Farm to Table goodies. Purple Wolf Vineyard, Old Hill Cider, and Three Notch'd Brewing had their quite tasty beverages available for our enjoyment. We are truly lucky to have the wealth of talented and high quality members that we do!



[Full Circle Catering](#)

## Exciting Website Updates

[www.FieldsofGold.org](http://www.FieldsofGold.org)

Visit the [Explore the Map](#) page to check out the new **Create Your Own Adventure Tool**. Ready to plan an adventure? You can. Click "Add" buttons for the farm venues you'd like to visit. Then click the "View Your Adventure" button to view and print driving directions for your entire adventure. You can now also



create your adventure or search for farms or farm experiences by county, city OR by keyword search.

**Please review your profile pages and make sure that the information presented there is correct.**

Because we now offer a **keyword search**, if you are no longer offering an item or service, or your hours have changed, PLEASE let us know. We do not want unhappy Farm Trail customers! On the flip-side if you are offering an item or experience that is NOT listed on your profile, let us know, and we will ensure it is included.

Here's another exciting update - You can now be listed in up to 3 **different venue categories**. For example:

- White Oak Lavender Farm & Purple Wolf Vineyard falls under "Experience the Farm" (lavender picking), "Farm Grocery/Retail" (the lavender store) and "Winery/Brewery."
- Hermitage Hill Stables and Brewery is an "Ag Venue" (weddings & festivals) and a "Winery/Brewery."

Please let us know if you need to be listed under an additional category or two by emailing [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org).

We are so excited about these improvements to the Fields of Gold website! Check out these updates and let us know what *you* think.

## Signature Events

### Old Middlebrook Village Days

**May 19-21, 2016**  
**3701 Middlebrook Road**  
**Middlebrook, VA**

This 3-day event will benefit the Middlebrook Fire Department. The festivities start Thursday night and go through Saturday night.

May 19th  
 Village and Fire Department History  
 6 p.m. @ the Library

May 20th  
 Colonial Tea Time, 3 p.m. @ Middlebrook General Store (reserve your spot; \$7/person)  
 Country Barn Dance, 7:30 p.m. @ Middlebrook Farms, LLC, 58 Kales Spring Road, Music by Freddie Thatcher and the Grassroots (\$10/person)

May 21st  
 Craft Show, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
 All day Tractor Show  
 Chicken BBQ - 4 p.m. @ the Firehouse  
 Goodson Band Concert - 6:30 p.m. @ the Ballfield (donations)

For more information about the event [click here](#)

### Botetourt Wine Trail Concert Series at Virginia Mountain Vineyards

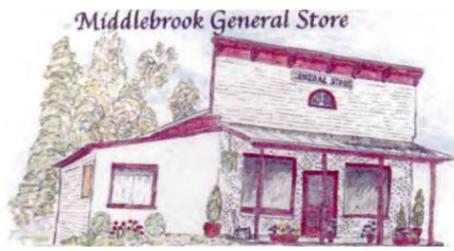
**Sunday, June 19, 2016**  
**4204 Old Fincastle Road**  
**Fincastle, VA**

Join Virginia Mountain Vineyards for the 2nd concert of the 2016 Botetourt Wine Trail Summer Concert Series. The food vendor on-site will be Mike and the Girls.

Enjoy the sounds of "True Cadence" as they entertain you with a little country rock and some classics. Play cornhole or checkers on the life-sized checker board.



Admission \$10; \$8 with a Botetourt Wine Trail or Virginia Mountain Vineyards wine glass; \$5 for designated drivers and teens; free admission for children under 12.



Please call 540-437-2979 with any questions. This is a rain or shine event under the tent.

For more information on the event [click here](#).

---

## Grow Your Agribusiness

### Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC)

#### Continuing Education Series for Agribusinesses

BRCC's short courses are designed to enhance farm production and profitability. They cover topics ranging from marketing your agribusiness to financial management to learning more about sustainable agriculture.

For a full listing of available courses, [click here](#).



### Virginia is for Lovers Online Directory

Is your business listed? Do you keep your events updated here? Virginia Tourism Corporation's website, [www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org), has a FREE and complete online directory of tourism destinations and happenings all over Virginia. Let's keep agritourism in the Shenandoah Valley front and center! Getting your business and events listed is an easy five-minute task. Let them promote your website and business at no cost to you. This powerful marketing tool is at your disposal - take advantage of it today!



---

### Fields of Gold Toolkit Fields of Gold Logo & Weblink

As part of our effort to educate the public about the Fields of Gold Farm Trail and to connect its many members to one another, we have our logos available for you to use on your website. You can access these logos by going into the [member portal](#) on the website and inserting the password *farm trail*. You can also contact us and we will be happy to send one to you via email.

Logos should ideally be used in conjunction with a link to the Fields of Gold website, [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org). This lends credibility not only to your agribusiness, but to the Farm Trail as well. Like the member signage, the more people see the logo and the name, the more recognizable it will be. There is power in numbers!



---

### Meet the Locals Hidden Valley Bed & Breakfast

We were fortunate to hold our April 28th Bath County member Meet & Greet in the Hidden Valley Bed and Breakfast dining room!



[Hidden Valley B&B](#)

Nestled between the pristine waters of the Jackson River and the rolling contours of the Allegheny Mountains, Hidden Valley Bed and Breakfast rises majestically out of the Valley floor and sits on 8,000 acres of George Washington National Forest land featuring river, mountain and pastoral landscapes that create a truly inspirational environment for your retreat. [Click here to read more...](#)



---

### What's Fresh? Meet one of our new members

For years The Village of The Valley has been a place for people to "Shop, Dine & Relax." The Village is a unique collection of shops and restaurants owned by a hard working group of local entrepreneurs. On May 7th, 2016, the Village added a Farmers Market to provide the people of the Massanutten Resort and eastern Rockingham County with readily available fresh produce and other locally made items.

This new market is being established to provide Farmers, Crafters and other Vendors access to a new market that has previously been underserved. They are currently accepting vendor applications. For more information, visit their website at [www.villageofthevalley.com](http://www.villageofthevalley.com).

**Farmers' Market Season is Here**

It is now Farmers' Market Season on the Farm Trail. For a full listing of Farmers' Markets, journey to our website and click on "Farmers Markets" on the [Meet the Locals](#) page.

**For More Information Contact:**

Tracey Coltrain, Agritourism Coordinator

[tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

540-885-5174

**Funding for this program provided by:**



To take advantage of more member information and benefits, explore the [Fields of Gold Member Portal](#)

**STAY CONNECTED**





May 2016

## Meet the Locals

### Hidden Valley Bed & Breakfast

We were so fortunate to hold our April 28th Bath County member Meet & Greet in the Hidden Valley Bed and Breakfast dining room!

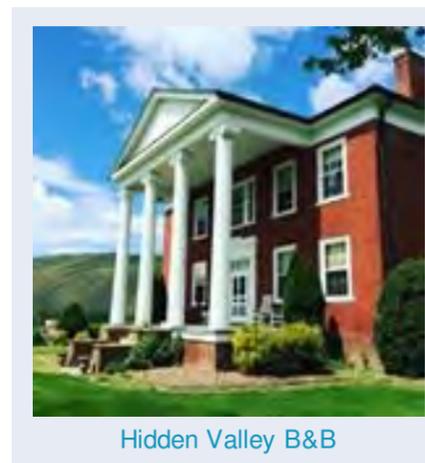
Nestled between the pristine waters of the Jackson River and the rolling contours of the Allegheny Mountains, Hidden Valley Bed and Breakfast rises majestically out of the valley floor and sits on 8,000 acres of George Washington National Forest land featuring river, mountain and pastoral landscapes that create a truly inspirational environment for your retreat.

Warwickton graces both the State of Virginia and National Register of Historic Places and originally served as a family plantation with roots in the 1700's. In 1848, James Woods Warwick constructed the magnificent 6,000 square foot brick mansion that hosts Hidden Valley Bed and Breakfast today. They continue to honor James Warwick's legacy and are pleased to call Warwickton their home. Most importantly, they are excited to share all that Hidden Valley B&B has to offer with you!

In the midst of the renovation, Warwickton was transformed into the set for the movie Sommersby, starring Jodie Foster and Richard Gere. The confluence of valley farmland, panoramic mountain vistas and historic architecture proved to be ideal for Hollywood and produced an acclaimed and much-loved classic.

Now a working "Old McDonald" farm, Hidden Valley B&B attracts visitors from as far as Japan, Germany, Scotland and Sweden (and as near as our own Bath County). Its idyllic setting and warm, cozy atmosphere perfectly suit the needs of those seeking tranquility, history, romance, recreation, adventure, or some combination thereof!

For more information about Hidden Valley or to book your stay, [click here](#).



Hidden Valley B&B





July 2016



### Snuggled A Goat Today?

Meet two precious new arrivals at A Better Way Goat Farm & Dairy. A Better Way is a small eco-farm and micro-dairy located in Waynesboro, Virginia. Owner Kathleen Mullins is committed to getting back to basics and managing the land and growing food utilizing sustainable farming methods that are in harmony with nature. They raise happy goats in a natural setting. Happy goats make sweet, delicious milk! A Better Way Goat Farm also offers herd shares, goats milk cheeses, goat's milk soap, goat's milk gelato and other goat's milk products in their "on farm" store. They are a licensed dairy, cheese and ice cream manufacturer. Everything is produced right there on the farm!

A farm and dairy regularly offers tours, workshops and classes on everything from goat raising to cheese making to goats' milk soap making. Have you snuggled a goat today? To find out more, or to schedule your tour or workshop, visit their website: [www.abetterwayfarms.com](http://www.abetterwayfarms.com).

To have your own "fence photo" featured in our newsletter, along with information about your agribusiness, email photos and information to [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org).



### Member Satisfaction Survey

We are proud to be able to partner with you to support and promote agritourism in the Valley through the Fields of Gold program. As many of you know, an online survey went out via email in early June 2016. We plan to use the results of this survey to inform and determine the actions we take to move the Farm Trail forward.

Our goal is to invest most of our resources into those tasks and opportunities that have proven effective and been of benefit to the program and its members. Gathering information from our members regarding what you feel is working or not working and what efforts you would like to see in the future is critical to the success of the program and the direction it takes. We plan to send this survey out to our members at least two times per year so that we can continue to keep a pulse on your thoughts and opinions regarding the program's marketing and business support activities.

Thank you to the 29 members that took the time to fill out the survey. It is so critical to our program and so helpful & appreciated! Look for another in early winter 2016. We are hoping for feedback from all 220 of our members at that time!

[Click here to see the survey results.](#)



### Fields of Gold Awarded Grant

On July 14<sup>th</sup> we formally announced that we will receive a \$98,625 grant from USDA Rural Development for our award-winning Fields of Gold Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail agritourism program.

This grant will allow us to continue to employ a part-time staff person dedicated to the program. It will also allow us to add blogging capabilities to our website, create an "About Us" video, and provide professional photography, just to name a few things. Needless to say, we are very excited about this opportunity!



Photo credit: Cool Breeze Farm, Mt. Sidney, VA



## Profile Page Categories & Descriptions

When polling our members in the Member Satisfaction Survey we asked - "Of all of our current efforts, what do you feel are the most beneficial and effective for you as a Fields of Gold member and for the overall promotion of the Fields of Gold program?" The answer, "Having a profile page on the Meet the Locals tab of the website" was number one.

We could not agree more, which is why we are asking our members to go to the website and determine whether they feel they are being accurately represented under their current category and description. As was mentioned in the last newsletter, you can now be listed under up to three categories.

We also have keyword search capabilities, which makes it very important that every item and service you offer is listed in your description. It is also important that every web address, phone number, and physical address is accurate.

To request updates to your profile page, contact Tracey at [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org) or 540-885-5174.



## Signature Events

### Rockingham County Fair

August 14-20, 2016  
8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.  
4808 South Valley Pike  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

### 6th Annual Taste of Highland Event

August 20, 2016, starting 5:30 p.m.  
The Highland Center  
61 Highland Center Drive  
Monterey, VA 24465

This is Ag-venture at its best, folks! The fairgrounds include a barn complex with more than 80,000 square feet under roof, providing for a capacity of hundreds of hogs, sheep, goats, beef cattle, and dairy cattle; a farm museum; a building for horticulture, flowers and farm crop displays; a building for poultry/rabbit exhibits; and numerous food concession buildings run by local civic organizations.

There will be plenty of ag-related events and activities each day for your enjoyment!

Check out the events calendar for details on the Rockingham County Fair website at <http://www.rockinghamcountyfair.com/events>.

Journey to beautiful Monterey, Virginia, also known as "Little Switzerland," for this very tasty and special event! Enjoy local delicacies, live music, and complimentary beverages. Tickets are \$60 per person.

Proceeds will benefit The Highland Center and can be purchased now at the Highland Farmers Market and the Highland Inn. For more information call 540-468-1922 or email [localfoods@htcnet.org](mailto:localfoods@htcnet.org).

While you are in town check out new member, [Big Fish Cider Co.](#), located at 59 Spruce St. We also have plenty of on farm lodging options in Highland County for your overnight stay. Simply visit our website, [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org) for a full listing.



## Grow Your Agribusiness

### **7th Annual Small Farm Conference "Creating and Sustaining Small Farmers and Ranchers"**

September 20-22, 2016  
Virginia Beach Conference Center  
2800 Shore Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to learn and network with local and national experts in agriculture and farming practices at the 7th National Small Farm Conference, the U.S.'s premier conference addressing the needs, challenges and successes of small farmers from Alaska to Alabama, from Maine to Maui, and even from countries far beyond our shores.

At the conference, you'll:

- Learn about innovative advances in research, extension and outreach
- Network and strengthen existing partnerships with other small farm professionals
- Take home new ideas that will help to ensure small farmers and ranchers in your region not only survive, but thrive in today's economy.

For more information about the conference, visit [www.vsu.edu/nationalsmallfarmconference](http://www.vsu.edu/nationalsmallfarmconference), email [NSFC2016@vsu.edu](mailto:NSFC2016@vsu.edu), or call 804-524-5626.

**REGISTER NOW!**

Discounted early registration ends at midnight August 5th. To save \$75 on your registration fee, register now.

### **Free Advertising!**

Agritourism World is not just an e-newsletter! If you are an agritourism farm or destination, getting added to their FREE listing is an easy two minute task. Let them promote your website and business at no cost to you. Get Listed!

Visitors to the site, can easily and conveniently plan their trip and enjoy new travel planning ideas with friends, family and groups. Agritourism World provides that place for everyone to have fun with farm travel. They cater to travelers from around the country and the world.

To set up your free account and listing, go to [www.agritourismworld.com](http://www.agritourismworld.com).



Photo credit: Riverview Farms and Stables, Toms Brook, VA

### **Fields of Gold Toolkit Social Media Marketing**

Be sure to follow or "Like" us on our [Fields of Gold Facebook](#) page. The more followers we have the more successful we will be in getting the word out to potential visitors about the many authentic and memorable experiences we have waiting for them on the Farm Trail. Regularly inviting your own followers to check out the [Fields of Gold Facebook](#) page will also go a long way in helping us to increase our visibility! We do not have direct customers so we rely on you to help us spread the word, especially on your websites and social media outlets. It takes a village to promote a Farm Trail.

Share your farm and agritourism snapshots, as well as photos of your member signage on display, on our Instagram page by using the hashtag **#shenvalleyfarmtrail** on your photos. If you have an Instagram account be sure to go in and follow us at [fieldsofgold\\_farmtrail](#). We cannot wait to start seeing your photos!



### **Meet the Locals Ratliff Tree & Blueberry Farm**



Ratliff Tree and Blueberry Farm grows Pick-Your-Own blueberries as well as choose-and-cut Christmas trees. They are a family owned farm in business since 1975. They have over 950 blueberry plants that have big, great-tasting blueberries ready for picking in early July.

Visit them for summer blueberry picking on Friday and Saturday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm.

In the winter, choose and cut your own Christmas tree. They grow the Canaan Fir, a popular tree in today's market. All trees are one price, regardless of the size.

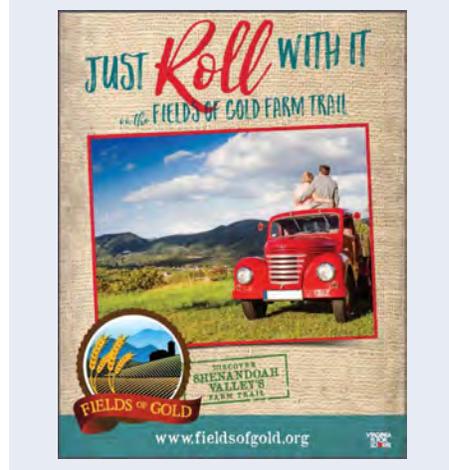
19101 Ratliff Lane  
Timberville, Virginia 22853  
540-896-2431  
[www.ratliffreefarm.weebly.com](http://www.ratliffreefarm.weebly.com)

### **What's Fresh? Summer Ad Campaign**

"Just Roll with It" on the Fields of Gold Farm Trail. Just this month we "rolled" out our summer ad campaign. It was featured in the June edition of [Recreation News](#) and is being featured in the summer Road Trip edition of [Blue Ridge Outdoors](#). It has also made its debut on our Facebook page.

As always, please feel free to share these ads on your own social media sites or print and display in your place of business!

There is power in numbers and it takes all of us to promote the Farm Trail! Just "Roll" with It!



**For More Information Contact:**

Tracey Coltrain, Agritourism Coordinator

[tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

540-885-5174

**Funding for this program provided by:**



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



Virginia Department  
of Housing and  
Community  
Development



Virginia  
Department  
of Agriculture and  
Consumer Services



Virginia Tourism  
Corporation



To take advantage of more member information and benefits, explore the [Fields of Gold Member Portal](#)

**STAY CONNECTED**



# Adventure Awaits!

## Fields of Gold Farm Trail News



### Adventure Awaits you on the Farm Trail!

**Fields of Gold** is the Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail. It extends through eight counties and five cities in the Valley. All of the farms and farm businesses on the trail are open to the public and fall into at least one of the following categories: pick your own, on-farm lodging, experience the farm, trout farming & fishing, ag venues (weddings/festivals), grocery, farm-to-table restaurant, farmers markets, winery or brewery, Christmas tree/nursery, or farm stands. We are excited to share the following events and activities that will be happening on the trail in the next month or so! For more information about our Farm Trail and its members visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

#### Champion U-Pick Berries

When: Sunday, May 1

Where: 100 Bindery Rd., New Market

Info: <https://www.facebook.com/Championberries>

Ready for the taste of spring? It is time to pick your own strawberries! Get out your recipe books folks.

#### Triple Crown Series at Kindred Pointe Winery

When: Saturday, May 7 and May 21 from 3-7pm

Where: 3575 Conicville Rd., Mt. Jackson

Info: [www.kindredpointe.com](http://www.kindredpointe.com)

Kentucky Derby - 5/7 - Music by Randy Black. Race time approximately 6:30pm.

The Preakness - 5/21 - Music by Davis Bradley Duo. Race time TBD.

## **Mother's Day Brunch at North Mountain Vineyard**

When: Sunday, May 8 from 11:30am-2:30pm

Where: 4374 Swartz Rd., Mauertown

Info: [www.northmountainvineyard.com](http://www.northmountainvineyard.com)

Served on the decks or in the great room. Honor mom with this spring delight: freshly prepared quiche; choice of swiss and country ham or roasted red pepper and crab, petite salad with vinaigrette, fresh fruit, puff pastry with berries and chocolate drizzle, and sumptuous coffee bar!

\$25 per person. Please call for reservations. 540-436-9463

## **May Workshops at A Better Way Goat Farm & Dairy**

When: Throughout the month of May

Where: 839 East Side Hwy, Waynesboro

Info: [www.abetterwayfarms.com](http://www.abetterwayfarms.com)

There are several workshops being offered though out the month of May on topics such as Goat Keeping 101 & Meet the Goats, Soap Making, and Cheese Making. Classes are donation based. Pay what you can. For more information on dates and times of classes please visit their website.

## **Music in the Garden at Boxerwood Nature Center & Woodland Garden**

When: Friday, May 13 5:30-8pm

Where: 963 Ross Rd., Lexington

Info: [www.lexingtonvirginia.com](http://www.lexingtonvirginia.com)

Free outdoor music concert series every second and fourth Friday of the Month - April through September. Bring a picnic basket and enjoy great music and the Boxerwood Nature Center's Woodland Garden. Picnicking starts at 5:30pm and music from 6:30 to 8pm. Parking at the end of Munger Lane.

## **Sundays on the Deck at the Purple WOLF Vineyard**

When: Every Sunday beginning May 15

Where: 2644 Crosskeys Rd., Harrisonburg

Info: [www.whiteoaklavender.com](http://www.whiteoaklavender.com)

Relax with Celtic and Appalachian inspired folk music on harp by Elizabeth Fanning and Elfann Music. The music program will be every Sunday from May 15th until September 9th.

## **Free Range Saturdays at Polyface Farm**

When: Saturday, May 28 from 10am-2pm

Where: 43 Pure Meadows Lane, Swoope

Info: [www.polyfacefarms.com](http://www.polyfacefarms.com)

Free event - enjoy local artisans, seasonal produce, live music, local herbs, local cheese AND do not forget fresh air and sunshine! Farm tours available by reservation. For more info or to reserve a spot visit their website.

## Farmers Market Season is Here!

For a full listing of our farmers markets and a link to their websites or FB pages click [here](#).

For a full listing of Farm Trail events, visit our events calendar at [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

Share your favorite Farm Trail photos onto our [Instagram](#) page!

[#shenvalleyfarmtrail](#)



See you on the Farm Trail!

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for daily information!



Virginia   
*is for Lovers*

# Adventure Awaits!

## Fields of Gold Farm Trail News



### Adventure Awaits you on the Farm Trail!

**Fields of Gold** is the Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail. It extends through eight counties and five cities in the Valley. All of the farms and farm businesses on the trail are open to the public and fall into at least one of the following categories: pick your own, on-farm lodging, experience the farm, trout farming & fishing, ag venues (weddings/festivals), grocery, farm-to-table restaurant, farmers markets, winery or brewery, Christmas tree/nursery, or farm stands. We are excited to share the following events and activities that will be happening on the trail in the next month or so! For more information about our Farm Trail and its members visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

#### Market Grand Opening at Cool Breeze Farm

When: Saturday, June 4 from 12-4pm  
Where: 273 Salem Church Rd., Mt. Sidney  
Info: [www.coolbreezefarms.com](http://www.coolbreezefarms.com)

Please join Cool Breeze Farm in celebrating the GRAND OPENING of their farm market. A great afternoon for the entire family! FREE pony rides from 12-2pm, a pig roast, and live music!

#### Toast the Weekend at Bluestone

When: Friday, June 10 from 6:30-9:30pm  
Where: 4828 Spring Creek Rd., Bridgewater  
Info: [www.bluestonevineyard.com](http://www.bluestonevineyard.com)

The 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month May thru September. 6:30-9:30pm. \$10 cover. Music from Full Moon Saloon.

## **Fresh Fest 7 at J & L Green Farm**

When: Saturday, June 11 from 10am-4pm

Where: 4010 Swover Creek Rd., Edinburg

Info: [www.jlgreenfarm.com](http://www.jlgreenfarm.com)

A fun day on the farm! Farm tours, kids activities, live music, local exhibitors, smoked pork BBQ, workshops! See schedule and purchase tickets online. Advance tickets: Adults \$40 and Children: \$20. 5 and under FREE.

## **1st Annual Farm Golf Tournament**

When: Saturday, June 11 from 2-7pm

Where: 340 Old Quarry Rd., Greenville

Info: [www.springdalewatergardens.com](http://www.springdalewatergardens.com)

At Springdale Water Gardens. Dinner & live music by Refuge Band. This event benefits the 2016 Baja Mission Trip of the Shenandoah Presbytery. Enjoy the gardens and play a Par 3, 18 hole farm golf course. Bring your clubs or use theirs. A potluck dinner, door prizes, and silent auction will follow the tournament.

## **Pebble Hall Wildflowers Open House**

When: Saturday & Sunday, June 11 & 12 from 12-6pm

Where: 11 Pebble Hall Ln, Weyers Cave

Info: [www.pebblehallwildflowers.com](http://www.pebblehallwildflowers.com)

Free admission. Hunt's Vineyard will be on site with their tastings and wine sales. Imagine strolling the picturesque grounds with a glass of wine in hand. Valley Pike BBQ will be there on the 11th and Mama's Caboose on the 12th. Enjoy the nature museum, select artisans, wildflower & herb picking, historic home tours, Plein Air artist and children's activities.

## **Workshop at New Country Organics: Raising Hogs Organically**

When: Saturday, June 18 from 10am-12pm

Where: 801 2nd St., Waynesboro

Info: [www.newcountryorganics.com](http://www.newcountryorganics.com)

If you're interested in producing your own organic pork, go out & learn the ins and outs of hog management with Jillian. Topics discussed will include farrow-to-finish and feeder-to-finish operations as well as general maintenance of breeding stock. 10am-12pm. Call today to reserve your spot - 540-784-1956

## **Botetourt Concert Wine Trail Series**

When: Sunday, June 19 from 1-5pm

Where: 4204 Old Fincastle Rd., Fincastle

Info: [www.vmvines.com](http://www.vmvines.com)

Join them at Virginia Mountain Vineyards for the 2nd concert of the 2016 series. Mike and the Girls is the on-site food truck vendor. Enjoy the sounds of "True Cadence" as they

entertain you with country rock and classics. Admission \$10. \$8 with wine series wine glass or BMV wine glass. Rain or shine under the tent. Call 540-473-2979 with questions.

## Check out our new website upgrades!

Search adventures by locality and key word now by going to the [Meet the Locals](#) page and typing them into the correlating box on the left hand side. Give it a try!

[Create Your Own Adventure Tool](#) - Ready to plan an adventure? Using the list of Fields of Gold members provided on the Explore the Map page of the website, click the "Add" buttons for the venues that you'd like to visit. Then click the "View Your Adventure" button to view and print driving directions for your entire adventure!

For a full listing of Farm Trail events, visit our events calendar at [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

## Share your favorite Farm Trail photos onto our [Instagram](#) page!

[#shenvalleyfarmtrail](#)



## See you on the Farm Trail!

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for daily information!



# Adventure Awaits!

Fields of Gold Farm Trail News



## Adventure Awaits you on the Farm Trail!

**Fields of Gold** is the Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail. It extends through eight counties and five cities in the Valley. All of the farms and farm businesses on the trail are open to the public and fall into at least one of the following categories: pick your own, on-farm lodging, experience the farm, trout farming & fishing, ag venues (weddings/festivals), grocery, farm-to-table restaurant, farmers markets, winery or brewery, Christmas tree/nursery, or farm stands. We are excited to share the following events and activities that will be happening on the trail in the next month or so! For more information about our Farm Trail and its members visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

### Pints & Ponies at Hermitage Hill Farm and Stable

When: Wednesday, July 6th from 5-7pm  
Where: 375 Madrid Rd., Waynesboro, VA  
Info: [www.stablecraftbrewing.com](http://www.stablecraftbrewing.com)

Enjoy a pint (or two) from Stable Craft Brewing with the ponies! Visit with the horses of Hermitage Hill Farm! (Children must be supervised by adults for this event)

### Pints for Paws at Stable Craft Brewing

When: Wednesday, July 27th from 5-10pm

This is a fundraiser to support Shenandoah Valley Animal Services in Lyndhurst, Va. This wonderful organization re-homes cats and dogs in the Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County Region.

### Picking Party at Pebble Hall Wildflowers

When: Saturday & Sunday, July 9th-10th from 8am-1pm  
Where: 11 Pebble Hall Lane, Weyers Cave  
Info: [www.pebblehallwildflowers.com](http://www.pebblehallwildflowers.com)

Pick all of the flowers you can for \$20! At the same time enjoy coffee & tea in the garden. Go on out and put together some beautiful flower bouquets-enough for every room in the house. They make beautiful gifts too. There is nothing better than a fresh bunch of wildflowers!

### Pampered Chef Party at All Things Virginia @ the Farmhouse

When: Sunday, July 10th from 1-3pm  
Where: 125 N Main St. Woodstock, VA  
Info: [www.allthingsva.com](http://www.allthingsva.com)

You're invited! The focus of this Pampered Chef party will be grilling accessories! It is July and it is time to get your grill on!

All weekend July 15-18 they are having a Peach Wine Tasting; and all weekend, July 29-31 they are having a Riesling tasting.

### **Old Time Music Jam at the Virginia Horse Center**

When: Tuesday, July 12th from 6-8pm.

Where: 487 Maury River Rd., Lexington

Info: [www.horsecenter.org](http://www.horsecenter.org)

Bring an instrument and jam with the crew or just sit back and enjoy the tunes! Every 2nd Tuesday of the month.

### **Children's Days at the Market**

When: Saturday, July 16th from 8am-1pm.

Where: Broadway Farmers Market, 161 S Main St., Broadway

Info: <http://www.town.broadway.va.us/farmers-market.asp>

Go on out to the Broadway Farmers Market for a wide array of children's activities and giveaways! Should be a super fun and family friendly morning out. Stock up on edible goodies for the week while you are there!

When: Saturday, July 30th from 9am-1pm

Where: Botetourt Farmers Market, 90 Town Center St., Daleville

Info: <http://www.visitbotetourt.com/locations/botetourt-farmers-market/>

Join the Botetourt Farmers Market in Daleville Town Center for Children's Day! There will be a balloon artist on-site, a musical instrument petting zoo, pinch pottery, a real life fire truck, snow cones, and more! Go on out for a morning of family fun!

### **Ethical Meats Guest Speaker, Meredith Leigh**

When: Saturday, July the 23rd from 10am-12pm

Where: New Country Organics, 801 2nd St, Waynesboro, VA

Info: [www.newcountryorganics.com](http://www.newcountryorganics.com)

Ethical Meats Workshop with the Author of the Ethical Meats Handbook at New Country Organics. Get your tickets today!

"At this point in time, the people who will make the greatest difference in the lives and deaths of animals are the people who eat meat, not the people who don't." - Meredith Leigh, author, The Ethical Meat Handbook.

### **Wine Glass Painting at the Pointe**

When: Saturday, July 23rd from 2-4pm

Where: 3575 Conicville Rd., Mt. Jackson

Info: 540-477-3570 or [www.kindredpointe.com](http://www.kindredpointe.com)

Join Suzanne at Kindred Pointe Winery and paint your own wine glasses! Participants each select up to 2 out of 8 designs to create your own wine glass masterpieces.

Please note you must pre-pay for this event when you sign up as seating is limited!

Fees: \$47.50 + tax includes all supplies needed to create 2 wine glasses, and a glass of cider, sangria or wine (non-reserve). Make your reservations today!

### **Bluegrass Festival & Butterflies at Back Home on the Farm**

When: Saturday, July 30th

Where: 2915 Willow Run Rd., Harrisonburg

Info: <http://backhomeonthefarm.com/special-events/>

Go on out to the farm and get your Bluegrass music fix! Bands all day; Barbeque, great homemade food and it all goes towards missionary work in Kenya!

## Butterfly House

Saturday June 18 - August 21

Go out and enjoy their one of a kind Butterfly House! Native species are released into their specially designed gardens and live there all summer before being released to make their way south for the winter. Enjoy these beautiful creatures, learn about their life cycles and plants they like to munch - all in a setting of enchanting miniature fairy gardens.

## It is Blueberry picking season! Hooray!

### Swover Creek Farms

Offering: 4 acres of small fruits, raspberries, black raspberries, blackberries, some blueberries. Value added products from berries are sold at the farm stand.

4176 Swover Creek Road  
Edinburg, Virginia 22824  
540-335-7101

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

### Ratliff Tree Farm & Blueberries

Pick-Your-Own Blueberry Farm. They have over 950 plants that have the biggest and the best-tasting blueberries in the Shenandoah Valley. Blueberries are only \$3.50 a pound. Hours of operation: Starting July 1. Friday and Saturday 9:00 am-6:00 pm. They start picking at 9:00 am and pick till the berries are all so come early.

19101 Ratliff Lane  
Timberville, Virginia 22853  
540-896-2431

[www.ratliffreefarm.weebly.com](http://www.ratliffreefarm.weebly.com)

For a full listing of all of the Fields of Gold members and events visit: [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

Share your favorite Farm Trail photos onto our [Instagram](#) page!

[#shenvalleyfarmtrail](#)



See you on the Farm Trail!

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for daily information!



See you on the Farm Trail!



# Adventure Awaits!

Fields of Gold Farm Trail News



## Adventure Awaits you on the Farm Trail!

**Fields of Gold** is the Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail. It extends through eight counties and five cities in the Valley. All of the farms and farm businesses on the trail are open to the public and fall into at least one of the following categories: pick your own, on-farm lodging, experience the farm, trout farming & fishing, ag venues (weddings/festivals), grocery, farm-to-table restaurant, farmers markets, winery or brewery, Christmas tree/nursery, or farm stands. We are excited to share the following events and activities that will be happening on the trail in the next month or so! For more information about our Farm Trail and its members visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

### Summertime with Arabians at Amethyst Acres

When: Saturday, August 6 from 11am-4pm  
Where: 9195 Springwood Rd. Buchanan, VA  
Info: [www.amethystacres.com](http://www.amethystacres.com)

Treat yourself to a day in the country learning about the oldest and rarest breed of horses, the Egyptian Arabian. Find out what makes them so valuable, and how you can get involved, even if you do not own a farm. Special guest speaker: Shawn Crews of Arabians Limited out of Waco, TX.

FREE admission includes lunch, refreshments and all materials. Seats are limited and reservations are required. Call 540-254-1017 or email [deb@amethystacres.com](mailto:deb@amethystacres.com)

### Flowers..Joy for Days Not Hours at Pebble Hall Wildflowers

When: Saturday & Sunday, August 6 and 7, sun up to sun down  
Where: 11 Pebble Hall Lane, Weyers Cave  
Info: [www.pebblehallwildflowers.com](http://www.pebblehallwildflowers.com)

Flower picking special! All day at Pebble Hall Wildflower Farm from sun up to sun down on August 6 & 7. Get a \$25 bucket of flowers for only \$15. Bring your a.m. coffee or a picnic. Visit the nature museum and the pixie garden and soak up some country air while you are at it.

### Yoga & Wine at Virginia Mountain Vineyards

When: Sunday, August 14 from 2:30-4:30pm  
Where: 4204 Old Fincastle Rd., Fincastle  
Info: [www.vmvines.com](http://www.vmvines.com)

Join Virginia Mountain Vineyards for an afternoon of stress relief! Your well being is important, so join yoga instructor Debbie Stevens as she takes you on a meditative walk through the vineyard followed by an hour of yoga instruction. Next enjoy a boxed lunch and a wine tasting. Price per person, \$35. Reservations required, so call 540-473-2979 to save your space.

## Farm to Table Dinner at Showalter's Orchard

When: Friday, August 19 from 7-9pm  
Where: 17768 Honeyville Rd., Timberville  
Info: [www.showaltersorchard.com](http://www.showaltersorchard.com)

Showalter's Orchard and Greenhouse, Home of Old Hill Hard Cider presents "Dinner on the Orchard". Locally sourced produce prepared to perfection by Kristen Moore and her team. Meal paired with Old Hill Cider. Visit their website for more information.

## Taste of Highland Fundraiser

When: Saturday, August 20 at 5:30pm  
Where: The Highland Center, 61 Highland Center Dr., Monterey  
Info: 540-468-1922

Journey to beautiful Monterey, Virginia, also known as "Little Switzerland," for this very tasty and special event! Enjoy numerous local food delicacies, live music, and complimentary beverages. Tickets are \$60 per person. Proceeds will benefit The Highland Center and can be purchased now at the Highland Farmers Market and the Highland Inn.

While you are in town check out new member, [Big Fish Cider Co.](http://BigFishCiderCo.com), located at 59 Spruce St. We also have plenty of on farm lodging options in Highland County for your overnight stay. Simply visit our website, [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org) for a full listing.

## Yappy Hour Fundraiser at Seven Arrows Brewing

When: Friday, August 26 from 4-8pm  
Where: 2508 Jefferson Hwy #1, Waynesboro  
Info: [www.sevenarrowsbrewing.com](http://www.sevenarrowsbrewing.com)

In honor of VA Craft Beer Month, Seven Arrows Brewing is hosting a fundraiser to benefit Cats Cradle and Augusta Dog Adoptions. Drink delicious brews and donate to furry friends in need at the same time! It is a win/win for all! An entire week of fundraising celebrations will end this day, Friday, August 26th. They will be donating \$1 for every pint sold, and accepting donations - monetary, food, toys all week prior. For details visit their website.

## Parasite Management Workshop at New Country Organics

When: Saturday, August 27 from 10am-12pm.  
Where: 801 2nd St., Waynesboro  
Info: [www.newcountryorganics.com](http://www.newcountryorganics.com)

Learn effective, holistic approaches to parasite management, learn how to do fecal flotations and parasite egg counts. Feel free to bring your own microscope to look at slides.

## August is Craft Beer Month in Virginia!

There is no better way to keep cool and enjoy the dog days of summer than with an ice cold craft brew. They are the perfect accompaniment to a book on the porch, a locally grown burger at a backyard barbecue, or a soak in your local swimming hole.

Celebrate summer and the delights of craft beer on the Farm Trail this August! In honor of craft beer month many of our breweries are offering a variety of events and specials. For a full listing of our breweries and a link to their websites check out our Meet the Locals page on our website: [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org) and choose the category "Winery or Brewery". You can now even filter by locality. Cheers!

Share your favorite Farm Trail photos onto our [Instagram](#) page!

[#shenvalleyfarmtrail](https://www.instagram.com/shenvalleyfarmtrail)



**See you on the Farm Trail!**

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for daily information!



**See you on the Farm Trail!**



# Adventure Awaits!

Fields of Gold Farm Trail News



## Adventure Awaits you on the Farm Trail!

**Fields of Gold** is the Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail. It extends through eight counties and five cities in the Valley. All of the farms and farm businesses on the trail are open to the public and fall into at least one of the following categories: pick your own, on-farm lodging, experience the farm, trout farming & fishing, ag venues (weddings/festivals), grocery, farm-to-table restaurant, farmers markets, winery or brewery, Christmas tree/nursery, or farm stands. We are excited to share the following events and activities that will be happening on the trail in the next month or so! For more information about our Farm Trail and its members visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

### Murder in the Vineyard

When: Saturday, September 3 starting 6pm  
Where: 4204 Old Fincastle Rd., Fincastle  
Info: [www.vmvines.com](http://www.vmvines.com)

At Virginia Mountain Vineyards. Everyone is a suspect and a participant! Ticket cost is \$55 per person and includes two glasses of wine and heavy hors d' oeuvres. Reservations are required. Call 540-473-2979

### Purple Foot Competition

When: Sunday, September 4 from 1-5pm.  
Where: 1027 Shiloh Dr., Eagle Rock  
Info: [www.blueridgevineyard.com](http://www.blueridgevineyard.com)

At Blue Ridge Vineyard. Free admission. Event to benefit Angels of Assisi Animal Rescue. Bring a 16 pound bag of Purina One Dog or Cat food and sign up for the Big Bear Wine Club. All animal food proceeds will go towards the organizations request for emergency food supplies. Visit the website for more details.

### Big Fish Cider at the JMU Arboretum

When: Friday, September 9 starting at 5pm  
Where: 780 University Blvd., Harrisonburg  
Info: [www.jmu.edu/arboretum/](http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/)

Wine & Cheese on the Ernst Terrace. Reception at 5:00 pm, demonstration by the Executive Sous Chef at 5:30 pm, guest speaker at 6:00 pm. Cost: \$20 per person and includes chef prepared tastings, international cheeses and two alcoholic beverages of choice per guest other than JMU students.

Speaker: Kirk Billingsley from Big Fish Cider in Monterey, VA, speaks on antique and heritage

varieties of apples, grafting techniques and the cider making process using apples from unkempt, organically grown orchards. RSVP: Online pre-registration is needed by 5:00 pm September 6

## 22nd Annual Rockbridge Beer & Wine Festival

When: Saturday, September 10 from 12-7pm  
Where: The Lime Kiln Theater, 607 Borden Rd., Lexington  
Info: [www.lexrockchamber.com](http://www.lexrockchamber.com)

Taster tickets \$20 in advance and \$25 at the gate, non-taster \$10 in advance and \$15 at the gate. Music from PG-13, Moossa, and Fatty Lumpton. Local food and drinks from The Best Kombucha, Pure Eats, Mano Taqueria, Jamrock Grill and Kind Roots. To find out more about the wine and beer that will be on offer or to purchase advance tickets, visit their website.

## Squash Festival at 2 Pond Farm

When: Saturday, September 10 from 2-10pm  
Where: 300 Craig Shop Rd., Mt. Sidney  
Info: <https://www.facebook.com/2pondfarm/>

Bring your favorite squash dish to share (optional) and go on out to hear tons of great live music, hike, play yard games, drink good beer, eat good food, shop the local farm vendors, learn how to make apple butter and more! Bring the kids and make a day and evening of it. It is a beautiful, fun setting and you will not be disappointed!

## Autumn Days Craft Festival & Farm Market

When: Saturday, September 10 from 9am-3pm  
Where: North Main St., Broadway  
Info: <http://www.town.broadway.va.us/farmers-market.asp>

At the Broadway Farmers Market. Enjoy shopping for food, crafts, gift items and meeting local business owners. There will be live music as well. The annual Sam Whetzel 5K Run/Walk event will be passing through as well. After the race there will be a dunk tank fundraiser! Visit the website for more information.

## National Alpaca Farm Days

When: Saturday, September 24 from 10am-5pm.  
Where: Ridge Valley Alpacas, 1458 Sterrett Rd., Fairfield  
Info: [www.ridgevalleyalpacas.com](http://www.ridgevalleyalpacas.com)

Experience the fleece! Feel the fleece! Tour the farm and experience live spinning demonstrations. Learn about raising and breeding alpacas and about alpaca products. Enjoy a fun day at the farm for the whole family!

## Apple Picking Season is Upon Us!

We have a large variety of apple orchards all over the Farm Trail, and we even have a hard cidery that makes the best cider around! Apples can be crunchy, sweet, tart, crisp, fragrant, big or little or something in between, they can come in pink, red, green, and even yellow. Some apples are best for cider, some for pies, some for lunch boxes, and others for frying or apple sauce. The Shenandoah Valley has no shortage of variety when it comes to apples, nor does it have a shortage of high quality orchards!

For a full listing of our apple orchards visit our website [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org) and type "apples" into the keyword search.

For a full listing of our September events visit our monthly events calendar on the website.

Share your favorite Farm Trail photos onto our [Instagram](#) page!

[#shenvalleyfarmtrail](https://www.instagram.com/shenvalleyfarmtrail)



**See you on the Farm Trail!**

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for daily information!



**See you on the Farm Trail!**



# Adventure Awaits!

Fields of Gold Farm Trail News



## Adventure Awaits you on the Farm Trail!

**Fields of Gold** is the Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail. It extends through eight counties and five cities in the Valley. All of the farms and farm businesses on the trail are open to the public and fall into at least one of the following categories: pick your own, on-farm lodging, experience the farm, trout farming & fishing, ag venues (weddings/festivals), grocery, farm-to-table restaurant, farmers markets, winery or brewery, Christmas tree/nursery, or farm stands. We are excited to share the following events and activities that will be happening on the trail in the next month or so! For more information about our Farm Trail and its members visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

### Hands & Harvest Festival

When: Friday, September 7 & Saturday, September 8

Where: Monterey, VA

Info: <http://www.highlandcounty.org/events/hands-harvest-festival/>

Celebrate the beauty of Autumn at Highland County's annual Hands & Harvest Fall Foliage Festival. Held on the second weekend in October, this event offers two full days of activity and entertainment. Come and observe for yourself the mountain forests of Virginia's Western Highlands transformed into a rich palette of russet, gold, and scarlet.

Seasonal foods, including apple dumplings, apple butter, barbecues, Allegheny Mountain Trout, and homemade baked goods will be available in the historic districts of Monterey and McDowell. Take time to explore the back roads by enjoying one of Highland County's Scenic Driving Tours or Barn Quilt Trails.

### 16th Annual Oktober Wein Fest

When: Saturday, October 8 from 12-5pm

Where: 4374 Swartz Rd., Maurertown, VA

Info: <http://www.northmountainvineyard.com/>

At North Mountain Vineyards. Live German music performed by talented musicians, delicious German food prepared by Swover Creek Farms, exceptional local vendors, new wine releases, prizes for best Bavarian Dress and Hat, and more! No admission fee.

### Fields of Gold Farming in the Valley Festival

When: Sunday, October 9 from 12-5pm

Where: 107 Creative Works Lane, Waynesboro, VA

Info: 540.324.1133

A Fields of Gold Celebration! Children 2 & under FREE. Children 3 & up \$3. The Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Farming In the Valley interactive community festival which will include a petting zoo, a corn maze, pumpkin picking, and much

more Fall fun on the farm.

### **Taste of Shenandoah at Cave Ridge Vineyards**

When: Saturday, October 15 from 12-4pm

Where: 1476 Conicville Rd., Mt. Jackson, VA

Info: <http://caveridge.com/events/>

A Farm-to-Table Food, Wine, Beer, & Cider Event!

\$25 Tickets include all food and wine pairings- Proceeds from the 2016 Taste of Shenandoah will support the work of the Shenandoah Forum to ensure our county's agricultural heritage, conserve our natural resources and build a stronger future for our county.

Pairing assorted tasting samples from LOCAL producers with delicious Cave Ridge Wines, Beers from LOCAL Breweries (Swover Creek Farm Brewery & The Woodstock Brewhouse), as well as Cider from Old Hill Cider!

Contact Cave Ridge Vineyard with questions at (540)477-2585 or e-mail at [Caveridgewines@caveridge.com](mailto:Caveridgewines@caveridge.com)

### **17th Annual Apple Harvest Festival**

When: Saturday, October 15 from 10am-5pm

Where: 17768 Honeyville Rd., Timberville, VA

Info: <http://www.showaltersorchard.com/>

At Showalter's Orchard and Greenhouse, and home of Old Hill Cider. Live Music, Hayrides, Cider Tastings/Sales, Apple Cider Donuts, Apple Dumplings, Local Food Trucks, Apple Picking, and many Children's Activities.

### **Fields of Gold Fat Tire Loop - Fall Foliage Bike Fest**

When: Sunday, October 16

Where: Middlebrook, VA

Info: <http://shenandoahbike.org/about/routes/>

Shenandoah Fall Foliage Bike Fest - NEW for 2016! The Fields of Gold Fat Tire Loop-leaving from Middlebrook Community Center, this loop passes by a number of the Fields of Gold Farms (Including Sunrise Orchards and Meadowcroft Farm) and includes a rest stop at Joel Salatins renowned sustainable family farm, Polyface Farms.

### **Wade's Mill 21st Annual Apple Butter Festival**

When: Saturday, October 22 from 10am-4pm

Where: 55 Kennedy Wade's Mill Loop, Raphine

Info: 540.348.1400

Go out and celebrate Autumn at Wade's Mill! Learn how to make apple butter the old fashioned way, enjoy music by the New Corner Grocery and Bluegrass Band, and munch on some freshly roasted chestnuts and food from Puffs BBQ. There will also be basket weaving, wine, maple syrup, craft cheese, bread baking, blacksmithing, wood turning and pottery! Go on out with your chair and make a day of it!

### **1st Annual Cool Breeze Fall Fling**

When: Saturday, October 29 & Sunday, October 30

Where: 297 Salem Church Rd., Mt. Sidney

Info: [info@shenandoahconcerts.com](mailto:info@shenandoahconcerts.com)

Visit this beautiful farm and enjoy live mountain music, pony rides, craft beer, fried apple pies, bratwursts, hay rides, vendors & crafts. a trail walk and much more! Craft and seasonal vendors still needed.

### **Pumpkin Picking Season is Upon Us!**

We have a large number of farms that offer a variety of different kinds of pumpkins all over the Farm Trail. You can pick your own or purchase on-site. Pumpkins are commonly used this time of year to carve and as seasonal decorations, in pies and soups (they are very nutritious!) and spiced in hot drinks. In the Shenandoah Valley we have no shortage of variety when it comes to pumpkins!

For a full listing of our pumpkin farms visit our website [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org) and type "pumpkins" into the keyword search on the "Meet the Locals" page.

For a full listing of our October events visit our monthly events calendar on the website.

**Share your favorite Farm Trail photos onto our [Instagram](#) page!**

[#shenvalleyfarmtrail](#)



**See you on the Farm Trail!**

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for daily information!



**See you on the Farm Trail!**



# Home Grown Fun

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)



**FIELDS OF GOLD**

DISCOVER  
**SHENANDOAH  
VALLEY'S  
FARM TRAIL**

**VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LOVERS**

Visit our website to enter to

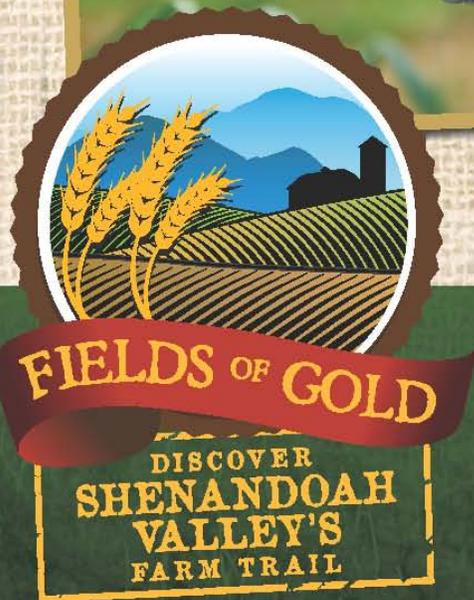
## WIN A GIFT BASKET

full of "home grown" goodies  
from some of our 180 farm trail members!

DRAWING TO BE HELD IN MAY.

# Find Your Inner Farmer

ON THE FIELDS OF GOLD FARM TRAIL



[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

Visit our website to enter to win

## GIFT CERTIFICATES

From several of our 185 farm trail members.

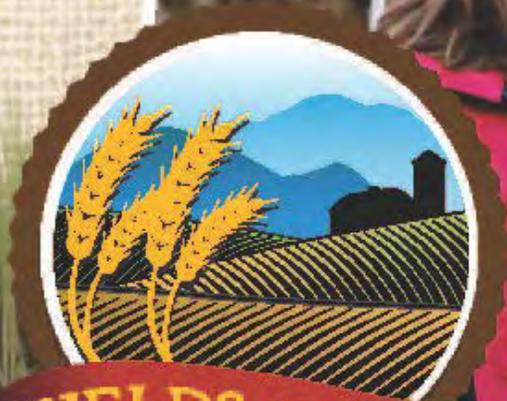
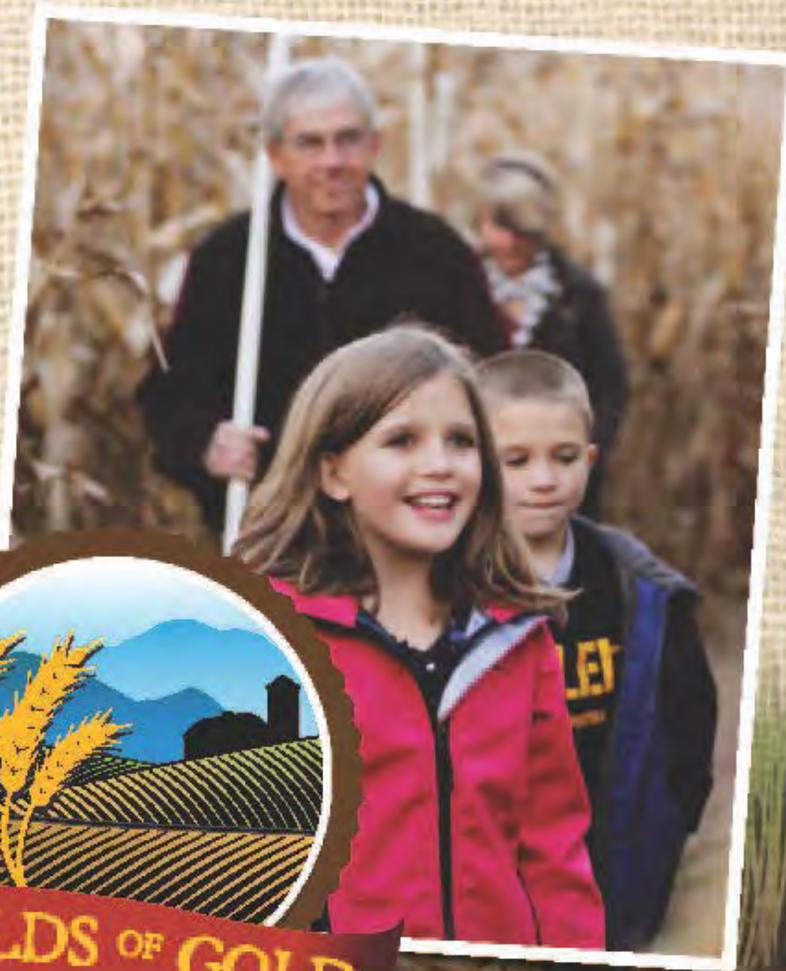
Valued at over \$200.

Drawing to be held in August.

VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LOVERS

# Be "A-mazed"

ON THE FIELDS OF GOLD  
FARM TRAIL



**FIELDS OF GOLD**

DISCOVER  
**SHENANDOAH  
VALLEY'S**  
FARM TRAIL

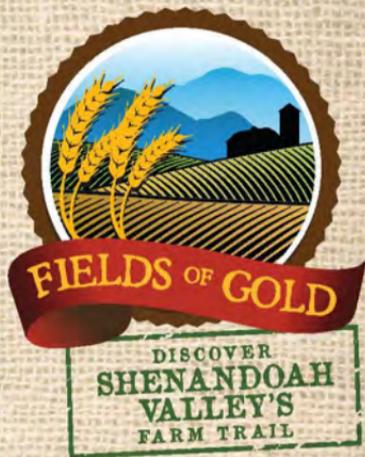
VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LOVERS

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

GET YOUR

# LICENSE TO CHILL

ON THE FIELDS OF  
GOLD FARM TRAIL



[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LOVERS

# Love IS IN THE Air

on the FIELDS OF GOLD FARM TRAIL

A circular logo with a brown scalloped border. Inside the circle, there is a landscape illustration featuring golden wheat stalks in the foreground, a field of rows in the middle ground, and blue mountains under a clear sky in the background.

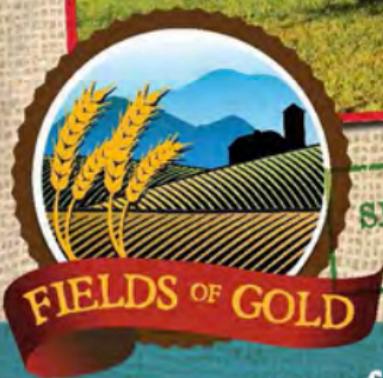
DISCOVER  
SHENANDOAH  
VALLEY'S  
FARM TRAIL

**FIELDS OF GOLD**

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

VIRGINIA  
A FOR  
LOVE

JUST *Roll* WITH IT  
on the FIELDS OF GOLD FARM TRAIL



DISCOVER  
SHENANDOAH  
VALLEY'S  
FARM TRAIL

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LOVERS



---

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Elizabeth McCarty, (540) 885-5174, [elizabeth@cspdc.org](mailto:elizabeth@cspdc.org)

### **Fields of Gold Agritourism Program Awarded USDA Grant**

*Funds will provide promotion and services in support of local farmers*

**STAUNTON (October 6, 2014)** —A growing group of agritourism operators in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia recently received a significant boost in promotional and technical support with the award of a \$93,674 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant to the Fields of Gold Agritourism Program. Authorized through the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill), over \$52 million in funding was distributed nationwide through five USDA grant programs. The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission will administer the [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) grant on behalf of the Fields of Gold program. Funds will be used to boost rural economic activities by increasing marketing and promotions of the Fields of Gold Farm Trail.

Congressman Bob Goodlatte, 6<sup>th</sup> District Virginia commented on the award: “Agriculture is at the core of our region’s economy, and the Shenandoah Valley Fields of Gold Agritourism Program is doing innovative, collaborative work to benefit this important industry. I look forward to the job creation, small business development, and increased agritourism that this grant will help to generate across the CSPDC.”

Fields of Gold is a regional agritourism promotion program in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia that both markets member farms and businesses and provides agritourism focused business support services to encourage farm/business expansion, diversified revenue, and increased sales of local and regional agricultural products. The program covers an eight-county, five-city region in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley and currently serves 180 member farms and agritourism businesses including wineries, breweries, cideries, pick-your-own farms, farmers markets, farm tours, farm-to-table restaurants and on-farm lodging.

Leveraging partnerships between local governments, tourism and economic development entities and the farming community, the Fields of Gold program aims to increase the number of visitors to Shenandoah Valley farm destinations and build farmer capacity for starting or expanding an agritourism venture. Since its inception in 2011, Fields of Gold has received state-wide recognition for innovation and execution of regional partnerships.

For more information on the Fields of Gold agritourism program and upcoming events, visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

###



---

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

### **Fields of Gold Hosts Meet & Greet for New Coordinator**

*Networking, Information on Agritourism in the Valley on Tap*

**STAUNTON (February 10, 2015)** — Fields of Gold, the Shenandoah Valley’s Farm Trail, will host an informational “Meet & Greet” Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm in the tasting room at Bluestone Vineyard in Rockingham County. The event is being organized by the Fields of Gold Agritourism Program and the tourism departments of the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, and sponsored by the Friendly City Food Coop, located in Harrisonburg, VA.

The purpose of this event is to introduce Tracey Coltrain, the program’s first Agritourism Coordinator for the Fields of Gold program. The session will also provide information on the purpose, goals and benefits of the program to farm visitors, existing farm trail members, and prospective farm trail members. In order to be a member of the farm trail a business must be located in the Fields of Gold region, be open to the public, and produce or sell local agricultural products. There are many member benefits and these will be presented during the informational session.

The event is free and open to anyone interested in agritourism in the Shenandoah Valley. From 5-6pm attendees will enjoy refreshments while networking with Fields of Gold staff and other Fields of Gold members. From 6-7 pm there will be an informal discussion and presentation.

The Meet & Greet is free and open to the public. Bluestone Vineyard is located at 4828 Spring Creek Rd. in Bridgewater, VA. For more information about the Fields of Gold program, contact Tracey Coltrain, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org) (540) 885-5174 or visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

###.

Contact: Martha A. Walker, Specialist  
[walker53@vt.edu](mailto:walker53@vt.edu) / 434-766-6761

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Shenandoah Valley hosts Virginia's first Agritourism Summit**

Agritourism farmers, economic development staff, and local government leaders will gather on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 10-11, at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton, Virginia, to explore innovative ideas on agritourism at the 2015 Virginia Conference on Agritourism in the Creative Economy. This state level conference offers attendees two days filled with fresh ideas on event planning, marketing, regional networks, zoning and conservation, financing, legal structures, farm craft breweries, profitability outlook of wineries, bed and breakfast operations, food safety, and experience-based tips to make agritourism businesses a success in the rural economy.

Special guests include the Honorable Maurice Jones, Secretary of Commerce and Trade; the Honorable Todd Haymore, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry; Ms. Mary Rae Carter, Special Advisor for Rural Partnerships; and Dr. Ed Jones, Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension. On Tuesday afternoon, Shenandoah Valley's Fields of Gold will sponsor farm tours featuring Cestari Sheep and Wool Company, Mt. Crawford Creamery, Polyface Farms, Meadowcroft Farm, and White Oak Lavender Farm. On Wednesday, attendees will meet agritourism entrepreneurs, share successes, and explore the challenges during the afternoon's Agritourism Showcase. "We are delighted that our region was chosen to host the state's first agritourism conference and for us to showcase our award-winning agritourism program known as Fields of Gold," said Bonnie Riedesel, Executive Director of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.

"Every session is packed with engaging speakers and tools for Virginia's agritourism industry" said Martha Walker, community viability specialist for Extension. "Our team is thrilled to have Martha Glass, executive director of the National Agritourism Networking Association and North Carolina's Annie Baggett along with Tennessee's Pamela Bartholomew on the list of session presenters," said Chris Cook with Virginia FAIRS.

Register on-line by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/AgritourismConference2015> and completing the registration form before February 26. You may register for one day (\$95) or both days (\$135). For more information, contact Dr. Martha A. Walker, Virginia Cooperative Extension, by phone at 434-766-6761 or by e-mail at [walker53@vt.edu](mailto:walker53@vt.edu).

The conference is sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, Farm Credit, Virginia Association of Counties, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia FAIRS, Virginia Tourism Corporation, and USDA Rural Development.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Martha A. Walker, Central District

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family, or veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)

Office, at 434-766-6761 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.

###



---

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

### **Shenandoah Valley Hosts Virginia's First Agritourism Conference March 10-11**

*Fields of Gold sponsors farm tours and Agritourism Showcase*

**STAUNTON (March 3, 2015)** — Agritourism farmers, economic development staff, and local government leaders will gather on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 10-11, at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton, Virginia, to explore innovative ideas on agritourism at the 2015 Virginia Conference on Agritourism in the Creative Economy. This state level conference offers attendees two days filled with fresh ideas on event planning, marketing, regional networks, zoning and conservation, financing, legal structures, farm craft breweries, profitability outlook of wineries, bed and breakfast operations, food safety, and experience-based tips to make agritourism businesses a success in the rural economy.

Special guests include the Honorable Maurice Jones, Secretary of Commerce and Trade; the Honorable Todd Haymore, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry; Ms. Mary Rae Carter, Special Advisor for Rural Partnerships; and Dr. Ed Jones, Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension. On Tuesday afternoon, Shenandoah Valley's Fields of Gold will sponsor farm tours featuring Cestari Sheep and Wool Company, Mt. Crawford Creamery, Polyface Farms, Meadowcroft Farm, and White Oak Lavender Farm. On Wednesday, attendees will meet agritourism entrepreneurs, share successes, and explore the challenges during the afternoon's Agritourism Showcase. "We are delighted that our region was chosen to host the state's first agritourism conference and for us to showcase our award-winning agritourism program known as Fields of Gold," said Bonnie Riedesel, Executive Director of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.

"Every session is packed with engaging speakers and tools for Virginia's agritourism industry" said Martha Walker, community viability specialist for Extension. "Our team is thrilled to have Martha Glass, executive director of the National Agritourism Networking Association and North Carolina's Annie Baggett along with Tennessee's Pamela Bartholomew on the list of session presenters," said Chris Cook with Virginia FAIRS.

The conference is sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, Farm Credit, Virginia Association of Counties, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia FAIRS, Virginia Tourism Corporation, and USDA Rural Development. Register on-line by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/AgritourismConference2015> and completing the registration form. You may register for one day (\$95) or both days (\$135). For more information, contact Dr. Martha A. Walker, Virginia Cooperative Extension, by phone at 434-766-6761 or by e-mail at [walker53@vt.edu](mailto:walker53@vt.edu).

###



---

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

### **Fields of Gold Farm Trail Kicks Off Spring Season with Giveaway** *Winner will receive basket filled with local farm products*

**STAUNTON (May 7, 2015)**—The Fields of Gold Farm Trail, the first trail in the state of Virginia, kicked off the 2015 agritourism season by sponsoring a giveaway featuring a basket filled with items donated by farm trail members. Over 250 people registered to win gift certificates, a cook book, wine, honey, jam, lavender products, pickles, salsa, wool products, maple syrup, goat cheese and more, all made and grown in the Shenandoah Valley.

With more than 30 farmers' markets, 12 "pick your own" farms and dozens of farm festivals and special events on tap with the arrival of spring, the [Fields of Gold Farm Trail](#) is home to over 185 farms that are open to the public for educational and recreational purposes. The trail traverses five cities and eight counties in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. Residents and visitors can experience everything from farm-to-table dining, barn/farmhouse lodging, wildflower and herb picking, cow milking, sheep shearing, goat milk soap making, llama trekking, wine, craft beer or cider tastings or trout fishing just to name a few activities.

The winner of the gift basket is Greta Kreider of Rockingham County. Fields of Gold Farm Trail coordinator Tracey Coltrain will present the gift basket to Greta at [Pebble Hall Wildflowers](#) farm located at 11 Pebble Hall Lane, Weyers Cave, Virginia on May 12 at 3pm. The media and the public are invited to attend.

"Marketing is critical to the success of my agritourism business," says Pebble Hall owner Kathy Tourje. "By joining a program like Fields of Gold we have an easy and efficient way to get the word out about what we offer. Showcasing the abundant agricultural activities in the Shenandoah Valley in a Farm Trail allows individual businesses to have a much greater impact in reaching interested visitors."

For more information about the Fields of Gold program, contact Tracey Coltrain, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org) (540) 885-5174 or visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

###



---

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)



### **Fields of Gold Presents State Officials with Farm Trail Products** *Governor & Secretary of Agriculture receive samples of the region's agritourism bounty.*

**STAUNTON** (July 28, 2015) —Central Shenandoah Planning District Executive Director, Bonnie Riedesel, presented Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe with a harvest box of Fields of Gold Farm Trail products. Secretary of Agriculture Todd Haymore was given a framed photo of a Rockbridge County landscape depicting the region's beauty and the importance of farming in the Fields of Gold region. Ms. Riedesel presented the items to the Governor and Secretary following the Shenandoah Valley Partnership's (SVP) Annual Meeting held at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel & Conference Center on July 22, 2015. The harvest box contained locally grown and produced items from each of the eight counties that participate in Fields of Gold – Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail.

The Governor was the keynote speaker at the meeting, which showcased SVP's accomplishments in promoting and attracting business to the Valley. Gov. McAuliffe talked about recent agricultural expansions, growth in the state wine and craft beer industries, increased tourism, and the urgency of job creation as the Commonwealth's economy experiences significant changes in the coming years.

For more information about the Fields of Gold program, contact Tracey Coltrain, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org) (540) 885-5174 or visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).



---

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

### **Fields of Gold Receives Regional Community Economic Development Honor** *Southern Economic Development Council recognizes the Shenandoah Valley's innovative program.*



Bonnie Riedesel accepts CEDA award from Mike Philpot, SEDC Chairman

**STAUNTON (August 13, 2015)** — The Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) has announced the recipients of its annual Community Economic Development Awards (CEDA). The Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP) submitted a business expansion and community development effort known as the Fields of Gold Agritourism Program. The entry was the winner in the category of communities with more than 100,000 in population. Winners were recognized at an awards luncheon held in their honor Monday, July 27, at SEDC's annual conference in Savannah, Georgia. Bonnie Riedesel, Executive Director of the Central Shenandoah Planning

District Commission (CSPDC), which oversees the Fields of Gold program, accepted the CEDA award. “I was honored to accept this award on behalf of the Fields of Gold program and to share our story with economic development leaders across the Southeast,” said Riedesel. “Thanks to the contributions of our many regional partners, Fields of Gold once again has been recognized for innovation, collaboration and program execution in the area of economic development.”

“The CEDA program recognizes communities throughout a seventeen-state region for outstanding efforts in building their strength and viability through economic and community development programs,” said Mike Philpot, SEDC chairman for 2015. “These programs have a profound impact on the economic vitality and quality of life in their communities.”

The Shenandoah Valley won for the creation of a partnership across eight counties and five cities that protects and enhances the Region’s agriculture as part of their cultural heritage and leverages it as a catalyst for tourism—specifically agritourism that capitalizes on the growing interest in locally sourced food, farm-to-table eating experiences and visits to wineries, breweries, orchards and farms. The creation of “Fields of Gold” as a brand for the region’s “farm trail” and as an umbrella over a wide array of activities has created a strong identity for the region and helped it generate more than \$1.2 billion in travel and tourism expenditures in 2013.

“We are honored that Fields of Gold received this prestigious recognition from the Southern Economic Development Council,” said Carrie Chenery, Executive Director of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership. “The Shenandoah Valley is home to four of the top five agriculture-producing counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia, representing an impact of over \$1 billion to our regional economy. This innovative marketing tool, with over 190 farm trail participants and numerous public and private partners, has allowed us to sustain and enhance agritourism’s influence in our economic future.”

SEDC is the oldest and largest regional economic development association in North America, with more than 1,000 members representing a variety of backgrounds. From local, regional and state economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, business and industry, utilities, transportation, finance and education, members share a common interest: the promotion and enhancement of the economic development profession.

For more information about the Fields of Gold program, contact Tracey Coltrain, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org) (540) 885-5174 or visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

###

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)



### **Fields of Gold Farm Trail Celebrates Summer Success with Giveaway** *Winner received gift certificates for farm products*

**STAUNTON (September 22, 2015)**—The Fields of Gold Agritourism program celebrated another successful summer season along the expanding Fields of Gold Farm Trail by sponsoring a giveaway featuring gift certificates from member farms and businesses.

Keith Grant, a professor of political science at James Madison University, is the Summer Ad Campaign Gift Certificate winner. Keith has been in Harrisonburg for a little over two years. Prior to that, he lived in Pennsylvania near Valley Forge. He is a wine enthusiast and has been slowly making his way through the many Virginia vineyards and wineries. He is also a bit of a foodie and enjoys cooking and exploring new cuisines. He has also recently taken up gardening as a new hobby. Keith is excited to have been selected and looks forward to further exploring the Valley, gift certificates in tow.

Fields of Gold member businesses that donated to the give-away included Pebble Hall Wildflower Farm, Fort Valley Ranch, Bluestone Vineyard, A Better Way Goat Farm and Dairy, Friendly City

Food Co-op, Blue Ridge Vineyard, Frontier Culture Museum, and the Harrisonburg Farmers Market. Over 250 people registered to win the gift certificates.

With more than 30 farmers' markets, 12 "pick your own" farms and dozens of farm festivals and special events on tap throughout the summer and fall, the [Fields of Gold Farm Trail](#) is now home to over 200 farms that are open to the public for educational and recreational purposes. Membership on the trail has steadily increased in 2015, with more than 20 new businesses joining the program. The trail traverses five cities and eight counties in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. Residents and visitors can experience everything from farm-to-table dining, barn/farmhouse lodging, wildflower and herb picking, cow milking, sheep shearing, goat milk soap making, llama trekking, wine, craft beer or cider tastings or trout fishing just to name a few activities.

For more information about the Fields of Gold program, contact Tracey Coltrain, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org) (540) 885-5174 or visit [www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org).

###



---

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

### **Fields of Gold Receives Virginia Tourism Grant** *Funds will support “See You on the Farm Trail” promotion.*

STAUNTON (October 5, 2015) — Governor Terry McAuliffe announced that the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) will receive \$9,995 from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Marketing Leverage Program grant fund. In total, VTC awarded more than \$796,000 for [45 tourism marketing projects](#) across the state to help increase visitation and revenue for Virginia’s localities through tourism. The grants are designed to help local and regional tourism entities attract more visitors by leveraging local marketing dollars, and will ultimately impact at least 173 other statewide tourism entities.

“These Marketing Leverage grants provide businesses with the tools and funding they need to thrive and succeed in an overly-competitive market,” said Governor McAuliffe. “Investing in these tourism businesses positively contributes to the New Virginia Economy, and helps to make the Commonwealth the best place to live, work, and raise a family.”

The CSPDC received the grant for its *Fields of Gold – See You on the Farm Trail* project. CSPDC partnered with area tourism businesses and departments to supply \$9995 in matching funds for the project. These funds will be used to enhance the Fields of Gold website, <http://www.fieldsofgold.org>, and make it mobile-friendly, provide advertising and promotional materials for the program and marketing support to agritourism member businesses. Fields of Gold promotes more than 190 farms and agritourism businesses in the Shenandoah Valley, and includes pick your own farms, wineries, breweries, farmers markets, trout farms, farm lodging, farm to table restaurants, and more.

Tracey Coltrain, Agritourism Coordinator for the Fields of Gold program described what the grant will facilitate: “This grant will allow us to make upgrades and changes to our website that will make it even more user friendly and accessible for visitors to the Farm Trail. It will also allow us

to promote the program, not only within the Valley, but also in those locations outside of the Valley, like D.C., Richmond, and Charlottesville, to name a few. We are super excited to be able to make it easier for potential visitors to the Trail to navigate our website while planning their adventure! We are also thrilled to be able to share the Trail with those outside of the Valley region. Visitors and residents alike are looking for “authentic” experiences” and what better way to have these than on the Farm Trail in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley?”

Jenna French, Tourism Director for Shenandoah County, which partnered on the grant said, “We are thrilled to be a part of Fields of Gold. With many of our visitors coming from more urban areas, Fields of Gold provides our visitors with truly unique experiences that embrace the agricultural heritage of the Shenandoah Valley, something they often can’t achieve in their own back yards.” The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce was also a partner on the grant.

For more information about the Fields of Gold program, contact Tracey Coltrain, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org) (540) 885-5174 or visit <http://www.fieldsofgold.org/>.

###

## **For Immediate Release**

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, [bonnie@cspdc.org](mailto:bonnie@cspdc.org)  
Tracey Coltrain, (540) 885-5174, [tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

### **Fields of Gold Farm Trail Awarded USDA Rural Development Grant** *More than 200 agritourism businesses to benefit.*



**STAUNTON (July 14, 2016)** — The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) today announced it will receive a \$98,625 grant from USDA Rural Development to provide technical assistance to rural agricultural producers in the central Shenandoah Valley. The funds will go towards programs developed for members of the award-winning [Fields of Gold – Shenandoah Valley’s Farm Trail](#) agritourism program.

The Fields of Gold Farm Trail was initiated in 2012 as a way to promote the region’s farms and their products. By visiting farms on the Fields of Gold Farm Trail, visitors and residents can enjoy, learn about, or participate in local agriculture. The Fields of Gold Farm Trail also includes off-farm activities such as farmers’ markets, farm-related festivals, farm-to-table restaurants, and stores that feature local farm products. Funding through this grant will assist in marketing the program’s over 200 Fields of Gold Farm Trail businesses, and will support the

start-up and growth of these ag-related businesses through comprehensive market planning, educational workshops, and business support services.

Fields of Gold member Valerie Crummett of [Cool Breeze Farm](#) in Mount Sidney, Virginia reacted to the grant award: “The opportunity to work with the Fields of Gold Farm Trail program has been a boost to our ability to get the word out about our farm business, our events, and our newly opened market that features forest/pasture grazed pork, grass fed beef, free-range eggs and seasonal produce. As a rural business...getting noticed is often challenging. We like the fact that Fields of Gold encourages partnerships and collaboration among a wide-range of agricultural businesses and helps us be more visible to residents and visitors to the Valley. It’s given us an additional avenue for building our customer base.”

Since its inception, the Fields of Gold Farm Trail program has leveraged partnerships and grant funding to establish a robust experience for visitors interested in local food and the farm experience. New navigation tools were recently installed on the website enabling visitors to customize their Farm Trail trip planning. A “Create Your Own Adventure Tool,” can be found on the website where visitors can get printable information and driving directions for the itinerary they have created. The site also is capable of filtering Fields of Gold members by locality and keyword search as well, allowing easy access to a list of farms in a desired area, or that carry specific products/services that the user wants to locate.

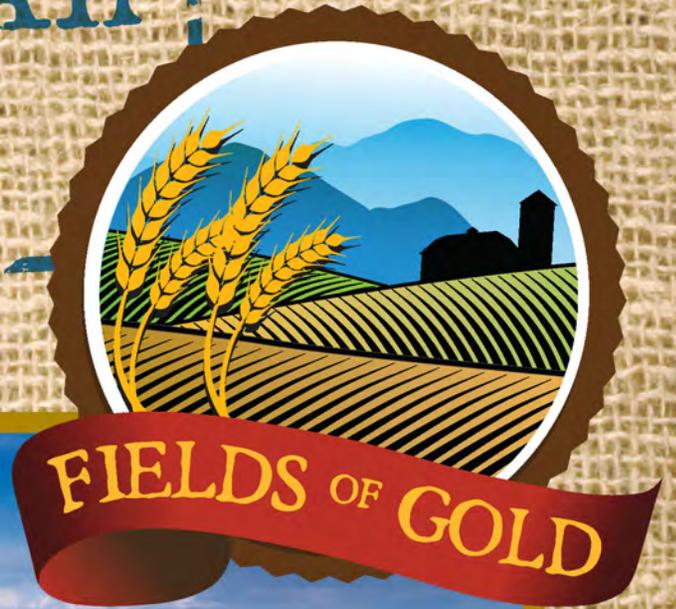
New grant funds announced today were made available through the USDA Rural Business Development Grant program, which is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues.

“Our mission is to improve the economy and quality of life in rural Virginia, and working with organizations like the Central Shenandoah PDC is one of the best ways to accomplish that goal,” said Basil Gooden, Ph.D., Virginia State Director, USDA Rural Development. “The small businesses this grant will support are essential to the Valley’s and the state’s economies, so empowering them to grow and build capacity is something we’re all very proud of.”

###

# PROUD MEMBER

SHENANDOAH  
VALLEY'S  
FARM TRAIL



Discover your next destination on the trail by visiting

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)



**PROUD MEMBER**  
**SHENANDOAH**  
**VALLEY'S**  
**FARM TRAIL**

**FIELDS OF GOLD**

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

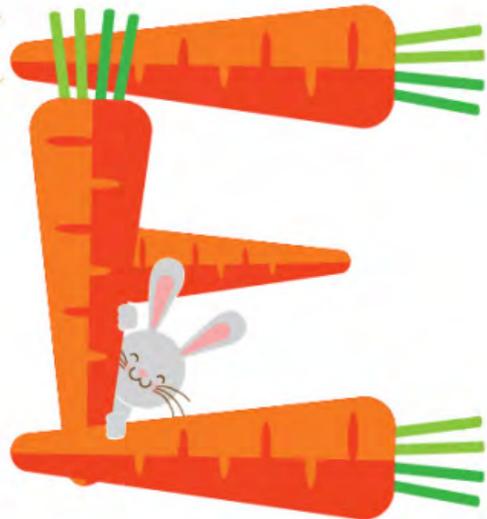


**PROUD MEMBER**  
**SHENANDOAH**  
**VALLEY'S**  
**FARM TRAIL**

**FIELDS OF GOLD**

[www.fieldsofgold.org](http://www.fieldsofgold.org)

# FALL IN



*on the*

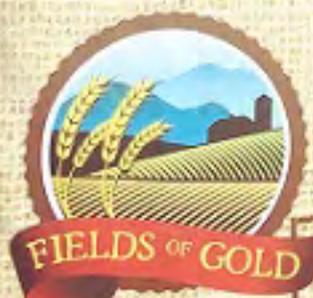
# FIELDS OF GOLD FARM TRAIL

VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LOVERS

www.fieldsofgold.org



Don't Miss Out  
on this opportunity  
to enjoy the best of  
the Shenandoah Valley  
at the heart of the  
state.



DISCOVER  
SHENANDOAH  
VALLEY'S

