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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release: Organic Growers School to Host “Navigating Farm Labor: How to Structure Labor on the Small Farm” workshop

Date: Tuesday February 12th, 2019

Time: 4:00 to 8:30 pm

Location: Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy Incubator Farm 180 Mag Sluder Rd. Alexander, NC 28701 (just 15 minutes from Asheville, NC)

Cost: \$40 per person (dinner included)

Instructors: Danielle Hutchinson (Beacon Village Farm), Vanessa Campbell (Full Sun Farm) and Lindsey Jacobs, Esquire, Marianne Martinez, Vecinos Farmworker Health Program

Asheville, NC - Farming on a small farm requires significant labor to produce the food we all eat. Farms today struggle to adequately staff their farms, often using a combination of family members, hourly workers, visiting workers from other countries or engage in apprenticeship programs to fill their labor needs. In 2015, Organic Growers School conducted a “Barriers to Farming” survey and concluded that labor was a significant barrier to farm success. According to one of the farmer presenters, Danielle Hutchinson of Beacon Village Farm, “One of the biggest challenges farm owners and managers face is finding and keeping the same labor



force year after year. Farm work is challenging both physically and mentally, it is unpredictable and ever changing. Farming is not for the faint of heart and finding labor who is willing to stick with it day in and day out, year after year is always challenging. We discovered that creating a sustainable work environment increased the retention rate of our crew.” Beacon Village Farm grows 50 acres of Certified Organic produce and sells into the wholesale market in the Southeast. This year they are also growing 7 acres of hemp.

Farmers are often balancing production demands, seasonality of work, ebbs and flows of product, natural disasters wiping out crops, especially this year. Learning which labor structures best fit your farm operation and how to train and educate farm employees and apprentices is critical to success.

Hutchinson again remarks, “When we began Beacon Village Farm, we made very specific labor decisions based on previous farm labor experiences. Even though we believe in educational experiences and learning through hands on work, we knew we needed to hire experienced and skilled labor. We understood what was necessary to grow, harvest and process our crops and we hired contract labor based on those specific needs.”

Organic Growers School’s upcoming 4-hour [workshop](#) will showcase how to structure labor on a small farm through the eyes of established regional farmers. This workshop is for those who are already farming or who are just starting out to understand systems and structure of on-farm labor. Legal and financial considerations will be highlighted and discussed to better understand which labor structure best fits your farming model.

Vanessa Campbell of Full Sun Farm, one of the farmer presenters for the workshop, has hosted apprentices on her farm for 20 years She will present and share her expertise with other farmers at this four hour workshop and participants who attend will have a chance to delve into how to structure labor on their own farm for increased success and education.

Participants will:

1. Learn about different ways to structure labor on your farm including apprenticeship, paid hourly workers, visiting farm workers, and volunteers.
2. Learn how to incorporate education on the farm.
3. Understand legal considerations you need to know for your labor structure.
Be aware of equity issues with on-farm labor.
4. Hear about labor from experienced farmers running successful farms in WNC.

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You can register for this upcoming workshop for only \$40 (dinner included!) at www.organicgrowersschool.org/farmers/managing-farm-labor

The Organic Growers school has been providing organic education to farmers and home growers since 1993. The organization grew out of the volunteer efforts of a group of farmers and extension specialists who gathered to discuss the need for nuts and bolts, region-specific crop growing information applicable for farmers in Western North Carolina. From this meeting, OGS was born, along with a mission to deliver practical information about organic agriculture at a reasonable price. Organic Growers School is the premiere provider of practical and affordable organic education in the Southern Appalachians, building a vibrant food & farming community by boosting the success of organic home growers and farmers in our region.