

# Forest Farmer Assistance Application



The 2022-2023 Forest Farmer Assistance Program is an initiative funded by the Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmer Coalition (ABFFC) and the Edwards Mother Earth Foundation (EMEF). It is managed by Virginia Tech University in partnership with North Carolina State University, Appalachian Sustainable Development, Rural Action, Yew Mountain Center, and the Organic Growers School. The program provides direct financial support and technical assistance to forest farmers. Applicants are selected for funding on a rolling first come, first served basis. Projects may receive funding in 2022 or 2023 depending on specifications and planning requirements.

The program anticipates funding forest farming projects (intentional cultivation of non-timber forest products such as woodland botanicals, alternative shrub and tree crops, and mushrooms underneath a forest canopy) between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and 1 acre for planting and up to 3 acres for site preparation to support future planting. General guidelines for forest farmer assistance are as follows, but may vary based upon demonstrated need:

**Up to \$1,000 per  $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre of planting and up to \$500 per acre for site preparation**  
**Anticipated average project size = ~2 total acres of planting and site preparation, with no more than 1 acre funded for planting**

Farmers who receive support must be willing to share successes and lessons-learned onsite with other farmers. Minority, female, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and/or socially disadvantaged farmers are highly encouraged to apply. A portion of available grant dollars are dedicated to supporting these farmers. Virginia, East Tennessee, East Kentucky, West Virginia, Southeast and South Central Ohio, and Western Pennsylvania are priority funding locations, but applications from farms in proximity to these regions are not discouraged.

Applications will be accepted at any time following the release of this announcement. A first round of projects will be identified on or about June 15, 2022, followed by applicant consultation and site assessment. If the proposed project is deemed feasible, funding will be provided at a rate suitable to support completion. Unfunded applications will be retained in the review pool until program funds are exhausted. Direct questions to John Munsell at Virginia Tech ([jfmunsel@vt.edu](mailto:jfmunsel@vt.edu)). If applicants do not wish to submit online, applications can also be emailed or mailed to:

John Munsell  
Virginia Tech 304C Cheatham Hall (MC: 0324)  
Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation  
Blacksburg, VA 24061 USA [jfmunsel@vt.edu](mailto:jfmunsel@vt.edu)

## **Application Form**

*(This application consists of 4 sections and 1 budget worksheet)*

### **Section 1 – Contact Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Address (if different from home) \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2 – Forest Farm Project Information (10 questions)



For the purposes of this application, **Forest Farming** is defined as the intentional cultivation of non-timber forest products underneath a forest canopy. Examples include woodland botanicals such as ginseng, goldenseal, black cohosh, and ramps, as well as mushrooms like shiitake or lion’s mane, decorative plants, tree sap, and woody species grown for purposes other than timber production. Funds may be used to prepare sites, purchase planting stock, acquire and install crop protection, rent equipment, and pay contractors. Funding will not be provided to pay for producer time, purchase land, or to buy large equipment (e.g., augers, all-terrain vehicles, tillers). Learn more about forest farming:

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/>.

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Why do you want to apply for forest farming funding? (Check all that apply)

- Crop/farm diversification
- Enhanced biodiversity
- Supplemental income
- Part of a business
- Restoration of a degraded site
- Erosion control
- Bridge crop between timber harvests
- Other, please explain below

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2. Do you currently farm non-timber forest products underneath a forest canopy? (check only one)

Yes       No

3. Where would you like to forest farm on the property you own or lease? *(Please be as specific as possible and provide a map as one of your supporting documents if possible.)*

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4. What size project would you like support for? *(Keep in mind up to 1 acre may be funded with no more than \$1,000 per 1/4 -acre provided and up to 3 acres may be funded for site preparation for future planting with no more than \$500 per acre provided.)*

Total planting acreage = \_\_\_\_\_

Total site preparation acreage = \_\_\_\_\_

5. List the non-timber products you would like to farm using EMEF/ABFFC financial assistance (e.g., shiitake mushrooms, maple syrup, ginseng, ramps, elm bark, wasabi, lion's mane mushrooms, woodland flowers):

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6. Where and when do you intend to source planting stock, seed, or spawn for your forest farming project? When would you like to start preparing to plant, and how will you protect your planting? *(Funding program ends in September 2023 or December 2023 depending upon region.)*

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7. Are there any special conservation concerns or potential restrictions that may affect the long-term success of your forest farming project? For example, rare or endangered species, conservation easements or protected areas, or restrictive lease arrangements.

Yes       No

If yes, explain the concern(s) and your plan for managing these issues to ensure they do not affect project success?

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8. Have you ever harvested or grown non-timber products?

Yes       No

If yes, which products?

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9. What do you plan to do with the crops you raise in the forest farm you establish? (check all that apply)

Sell into specialty and value-added markets

Use to produce my own retail products

Personal consumption

Conservation

Other 

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10. Explain how your forest farm will benefit your farm, livelihood, and community.

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### **Section 3 – Peer-to-Peer Learning Commitment**

EMEF/ABFFC financial assistance recipients will join a peer-to-peer demonstration network known as an Agroforestry Regional Knowledge (ARK) Exchange. If you are selected to receive EMEF/ABFFC assistance and accept funding, you must agree to share your successes and lessons learned at least once with other farmers in the ARK Exchange. You may not be asked to host or present to a group of farmers, but agreeing to do so if asked is necessary to receive funding.

Are you and your farm willing to be part of the ARK Exchange should you be selected to receive EMEF/ABFFC financial assistance?

Yes       No

**Section 4 – Background Information (7 questions)**

Approximately how much of your work-week is currently spent farming crops and/or raising livestock? (check only one)

- |                                 |                                  |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10%  | <input type="checkbox"/> 10-20%  | <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30% | <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50% | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-60%  | <input type="checkbox"/> 60-70% | <input type="checkbox"/> 70-80% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 80-90% | <input type="checkbox"/> 90-100% |                                 |                                 |

Approximately how much of your current annual income comes from farming crops and/or or raising livestock? (check only one)

- |                                 |                                  |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10%  | <input type="checkbox"/> 10-20%  | <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30% | <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50% | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-60%  | <input type="checkbox"/> 60-70% | <input type="checkbox"/> 70-80% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 80-90% | <input type="checkbox"/> 90-100% |                                 |                                 |

What was your household's total income before taxes in 2021? (check only one)

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000-\$19,999   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$29,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$44,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$45,000-\$59,999   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-\$74,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000-\$99,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000-\$149,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 or more |

Do you lease the forestland you manage? (check only one)

- Yes       No

If yes, for how long is your current rental arrangement? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

How do you identify? (check only one)

- Male    Female    Neither Male nor Female    Prefer Not to Answer

What is your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

- White    Hispanic/Latino    Black/African American    Native American  
 Asian    Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander    Prefer Not to Answer

Are you lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender? (check only one)

- Yes       No       Prefer Not to Answer



## **Appendix – Supporting Documents**

Provide a realistic estimated budget based on the cost structure and time frame of the proposed project. Include on-farm items and supplies needed (e.g., planting stock, spawn, tools, equipment, rental and contractor fees, etc.). Also estimate the amount of time you will dedicate to the project and indicate an anticipated calendar of events. Use the time-budget worksheet to provide this information.

Attach at least three digital pictures from different angles of the site where you would like to establish forest farming. Take pictures that demonstrate key features. Provide a short description of each picture and annotate or mark it to highlight important places and site conditions.

### **Optional Information**

You may attach no more than 3 supporting documents (not pictures) to your application, such as annotated maps or aerial imagery, existing planning documents, business plans, farm newsletters, promotional videos, product lists, and website links.