



Agricultural Systems

PHOTO: USDA

Training the Next Generation of Farmers

In the U.S., the average age of farmers is 57.5, up 1.2 years from 2012, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Land-grant university scientists are preparing the next generation of farmers, who face different challenges than their predecessors.

Successful examples include:

- From 2018 through 2021, the **Alabama** Beginning Farmer statewide program assisted more than 319 producers with whole farm planning and certifications. Collectively, the specialty crop producers saved over \$144,000 in consultant fees for crop, pest and business management services. Success rate of beginning farmers in the program is 70%, with over 90% adoption of farming recommendations.
- The Beginning Farmers Developing and Educating Managers and New Decision-makers (DEMaND) Webinar Series teaches **Michigan** farmers how to manage a farm. In a survey of 200 participants, 82% of those responding improved their knowledge of simple accounting and record keeping, 88% improved their knowledge of farm financial statements and 100% improved their knowledge in farm financial analysis and introduction to taxes.
- Beginning farmers in **Indiana** who participated in Purdue Extension's Grow Your Farm Operation virtual series, increased their knowledge of farm financials, commodity marketing and legal issues for managing their operations.
- The Northeast Pasture Consortium provides research-based information to the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, which trains young dairy farmers. **Virginia** Tech scientists recommended the best varieties of orchardgrass to plant and when and how low to cut it to prevent premature die off. After adopting the recommendations, farmers have seen soil heal increase in their pastures. Efforts made by **Georgia** researchers to supply stress-tolerant turfgrass and more efficient cultivars contribute to a healthier environment and economic benefits for the growers and their customers.

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