

NCAT Soil for Water metrics: VABF

updated 24 September 2024

Conference sessions: (2022, 2023, 2024) **18** average attendance around 30 people per session. Surveys provided to attendees (survey data to Erika B.)

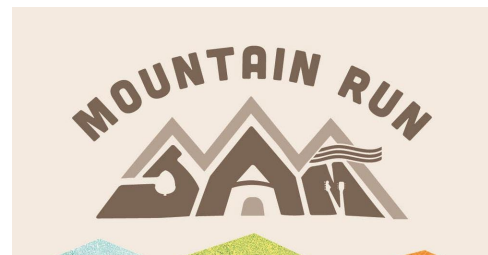


Workshops (indoors): **2** Nov 22—Floyd Ecofarm: **14** farmers in attendance
 Nov 22—NutriDense Soil Solutions: **65** farmers in attendance

Farm field days (outdoors): **3** June 23—Catawba Sustainability Center: **24** farmers in attendance
 Oct 23—Tuck Farms: **19** farmers in attendance
 Oct 23—Mountain Run Farm: **26** farmers in attendance

Pasture walks: **1** Sept 23—Mountain Run Jam “Herd Hike”: **40+** people in attendance

Sponsorships: **4** farm festivals (with table): 50+ farmers total
1 movie showing: “Common Ground” Richmond VA



Consultation **12** soil sampling & grazing/crop plans (for pasture farms and dairies—over 3 year project period), utilized Soil Health Testing methods from Regen Ag Labs on 4 farms

Highlights:

1) Having the ability to bring in grazing ‘rock stars’ fuels interest and brings more conventional farmers to the table.

2) utilizing new soil health testing methods provides additional tools for farmers to understand how important the biological component is to their operation and overall goals of regenerative grazing.

Take-home(s):

1) Regenerative grazing is catching on, but we need more support and outreach for farmers who are ‘on the fence’. Labor issues and worries about lag in production are the two biggest obstacles, as well as lacking markets that pay for high quality animals raised regeneratively.

2) In many cases, the agencies and institutions who serve farmers are not well versed in regenerative grazing practices and therefore do not have the knowledge to help farmers and grazers experiment to learn. Many are still stuck on the standard conservation methods or ‘rotational grazing’ models, which focus solely on water quality improvements and do not help producers build health, diversity and resilience into their upland grazing systems.

Slides, articles, photos:

Sponsored by NCAT and the [Soil for Water](#) network, we had farmers and grazers come from all over the region for networking, sharing and learning how to focus on the biological health of perennial-pasture grazing lands, how to measure progress and understand a little more about the broader benefit that regenerative practices provide farmers, their communities and their local ecosystems.

Special thanks to **Keith Tuck of Tuck Farms** and **Ben Coleman of Mountain Run Farm** and all the volunteers and helpers who made it happen! We'll keep you posted for the next one coming soon!



Photo: Matt Palma



Photo: Brent Wills

Case studies: Mountain Run Farm, Sedalia VA & Double M Dairy, Wirtz VA