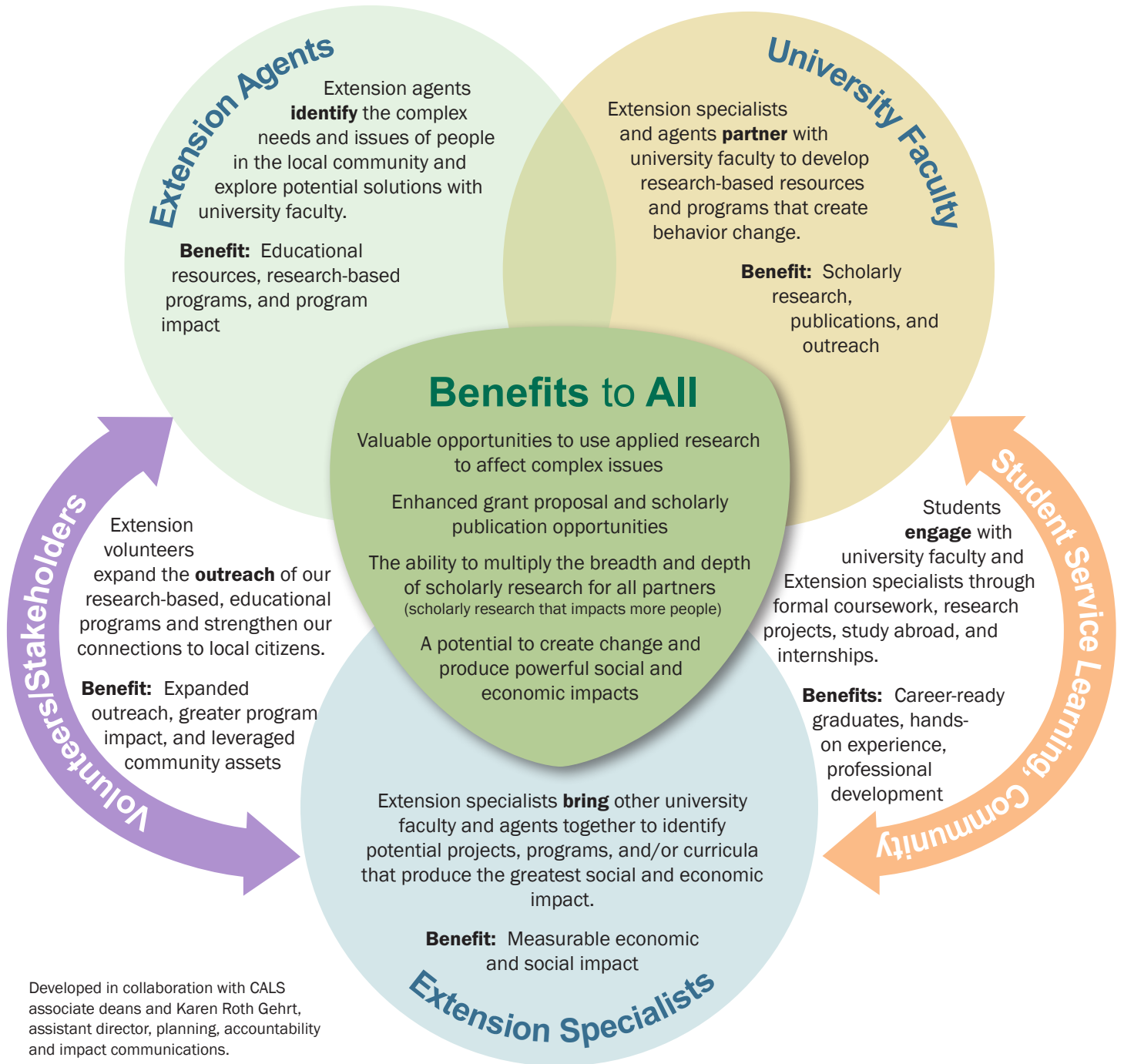


# Common Ground: Why Should University Faculty Partner with Virginia Cooperative Extension?

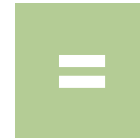


Nothing is more impactful than university faculty using the tripartite mission of discovery, learning, and outreach to impact people and their communities. University and Extension faculty, volunteers, associations, and students have wonderful opportunities to partner through applied research projects and educational programs that foster positive changes in the lives of Virginians. Let's work together for the benefit of everyone!

University  
Faculty



Extension Agents  
and Specialists



**A powerful  
potential to  
change the  
lives of people**  
through research, behavior  
change, and economic and  
social impact.

## Here's an example of how community—university—Extension partnerships benefit everyone involved...

### The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program

Starting a farm is difficult, and succeeding beyond the first few years may be even more so. Beginning farmers and ranchers nationwide face unique challenges to achieve their farm goals and aspirations. The Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program (VBFRCP) is a collaborative effort through Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech that reaches across the commonwealth to provide educational opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers to establish and sustain viable agricultural operations. Unique to this program is its community-based participatory framework where a coalition of 27 organizations and farm business work together to support beginning farmers and ranchers through whole farm planning programs, online resources, and farmer-to-farmer mentoring.

APPALACHIAN  
sustainable  
DEVELOPMENT

“The VBFRCP has proven to be a welcomed partner in our efforts to provide meaningful education and marketing opportunities to farmers in far Southwest Virginia. We can see the whole farm planning curriculum becoming a regular part of our agricultural training efforts, and the mentorship program developing into an effective platform to aid new producers. The program has also provided opportunities to network and partner with groups across the commonwealth to further the advancement of agriculture for all Virginians.”

—Tom Peterson, education coordinator and farmer, Appalachian Sustainable Development, Abingdon, Virginia



“Many of us provide services to young and beginning farmers in addition to offering a wide array of farm programs, so having a place where we can communicate with other service providers is vital to our collective success. The VBFRCP not only helps us share ideas and resources, it also leads to new programs, partnerships and collaborative efforts that can and will make a difference in agriculture's future. We are pleased that important programs like the VBFRCP and those of coalition members are working to help the next generation of farmers.”

—Ron Saacke, director of Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmers, Richmond, Virginia



William Crutchfield

“This alliance is particularly beneficial to socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers and landowners who are either returning to their homesteads or have acquired rural property. The Small Farm Outreach Program, as a partner, is able to provide beginning farmers access to technical assistance and educational resources; and most importantly, small farm outreach agents will further support the beginning farmers' development by facilitating mentoring relationships between beginning farmers and experienced farmers in their service areas.”

—William Crutchfield, director of the Small Farm Outreach & Technical Assistance Program, Virginia State University



Amber Vallotton

“As a Virginia Cooperative Extension agent, I regularly receive inquiries from citizens wanting to begin farming and needing assistance in moving their dream from vision into concrete reality. I have found the VBFRCP to be an invaluable support to this work because of the diverse composition and expertise of the coalition, and the development of comprehensive whole farm planning tools and approaches. Equipped with these many tools, I am confident that Virginia beginning farmers will continue to greatly benefit.”

—Amber Vallotton, agriculture and natural resources Extension agent, Rockingham County, Virginia



The Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition is a collaborative effort represented by Virginia beginning farmer stakeholders from across the commonwealth. The program is housed in Virginia Tech's Department of Agricultural and Extension Education. Funding is sponsored by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) of the USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Award # 2010-49400. [www.vabeginningfarmer.org](http://www.vabeginningfarmer.org).

Developed in collaboration with Kim Niewolny, assistant professor and Extension specialist for agricultural and extension and education; and Karen Roth Gehrt, assistant director for planning, accountability, and impact communications.