Fall 2025

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Bath-Highland News

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE TOPICS

Becky Gartner, Extension Agent, Family & Consumer Science—rebes13@vt.edu—540 564 3080

SOUP'S ON!

Fall is here and the cooler temperatures are perfect weather for making a pot of soup. Soup is a great tasting and an economical way to feed your family. Use leftover meat or beans, add some vegetables and pasta to create a "kitchen sink" soup. Make a meal by adding bread or crackers and a salad for a quick and easy supper.

Here is a few tips to make your soup healthier.

- **Use reduced-sodium or salt free broth or stocks** – Broths or stocks add flavor to the soup as a base liquid. Make your own to control the amount of salt used or use more herbs and spices to add flavor without salt.
- **Add more vegetables** – If you want to go "off the recipe," add more vegetables to your soup. Your soup will be heartier, and you will contribute more vitamins, minerals and fiber to your soup.
- **Use evaporated milk in place of cream** – Creamy soups tend to be high in fat. Substitute evaporated milk for cream and you will get flavor and thickness in your soup with less fat.
- **Add some low cost, high nutrient value ingredients** - Add dry beans (black, kidney, pinto or navy) or split peas and lentils to your pot of soup. These ingredients are inexpensive and will add protein and fiber to your dish.

If your pot of soup gets too big, freeze the extra for future meals. Use freezer safe containers and allow room for expansion as the soup freezes. Thaw frozen soup in the refrigerator when you are ready to use it. Enjoy the recipe.

Eat Smart • Move More

Chicken Taco Soup

Prep Time: 25 Minutes Total Time: 1 Hour

Ingredients

- 1 ½ pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 15 ounces canned diced tomatoes, no added salt
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 ounces mild green chiles
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 15 ounces canned pinto beans, no added salt - drained and rinsed

Nutrition Facts

6 servings per container
Serving size (164g)

Amount per serving
Calories 110

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3.5g	4%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 270mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 19g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 13g	
Includes 8g Added Sugars	16%
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 50mg	4%
Iron 0.4mg	2%
Potassium 370mg	8%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Quick Tips

- Rinse canned beans to remove up to 40% of sodium.
- Use an ice cube to attract fat from sauces, soups, or casseroles. Then easily scoop out with a spoon.
- For less sodium, use 2 cups fresh, chopped tomatoes instead of canned.

Follow us | Like us

@VaFNP

www.eatsmartmovemoreva.org

Directions

- Wash hands.
- Place chicken in a saucepan and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer. Cook until tender, about 25 minutes.
- Remove chicken from broth and allow to cool.
- Once cooled, cut into bite-sized pieces or shred, and return to broth.
- Add tomatoes, onion, chilies, and garlic to the pan. Bring to a boil and add beans. Turn down to simmer for 15 minutes.
- **To prepare in a slow cooker**, add cooked chicken, tomatoes, onion, chilies, garlic powder, and pinto beans to slow cooker. Cook on high for 4 hours or low for 8 hours.

(Recipe adapted from University of Massachusetts, Extension Nutrition Education Program as listed: at https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov.)

www.eatsmartmovemoreva.org

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material is partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Food Safety School**, October 16, 8:30 am – 4 pm; VDACS Lab, 261 Mt. Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg Cost: $25 (includes lunch). If you are interested in making value added products or applying for a home kitchen permit, this is the event for you to attend. We will discuss food safety topics and current regulations. Register here: https://tinyurl.com/VAfoodsafetyschool

- **ServSafe Certified Manager Class,** October 28, 9 am – 5 pm; Rockingham Extension Office, 965 Pleasant Valley Rd., Harrisonburg. One day, in-person class with exam. Cost: $160, Registration deadline: October 14. Register here: **http://tinyurl.com/SSMGR-RH-25-PU**

4-H HAPPENINGS

Ben Hindman, Associate Extension Agent 4-H, Bath/Highland—benjaminh@vt.edu—540 839 7261

Recent Highlights

- The 2025 Highland 4-H & FFA Livestock Show and Sale, held at the end of August during the Highland County Fair, was a strong success thanks to the dedication of youth exhibitors and the support of the community. This year, 33 youth—including eight first-year participants—sold 110 animals for a total of $167,988. To participate, exhibitors were required to complete a Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) training, take part in at least six 4-H or FFA activities, and spend months caring for and preparing their animals for the show and sale. These expectations teach valuable lessons in responsibility, perseverance, and leadership. The success of this event also reflects the strong network of buyers, sponsors, volunteers, and families who stand behind Highland's youth. From providing resources and expertise to cheering from the stands, this community effort highlights the continued commitment to supporting young people and sustaining Highland County's agricultural heritage for generations to come.

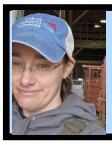
- The 4-H In-School Enrichment Program has returned to Bath and Highland County Public Schools for the 2025–2026 school year, continuing a long-standing partnership that connects classroom learning with hands-on experiences. Through this collaboration, 4-H builds meaningful relationships with local youth while supporting teachers by providing engaging, standards-based activities that bring science and practical skills to life. This year, third graders will explore the world of simple machines, discovering how tools like levers and pulleys make work easier, while fourth and sixth graders will dive into the scientific method through classroom experiments that prepare them for participation in a spring 4-H Science Fair. Fifth graders will learn about circuitry and energy through the "Magic of Electricity" program, and seventh graders in Bath County will take part in Teen Cuisine, gaining valuable lessons in nutrition, cooking skills, and food safety. Together, these experiences encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity, helping students connect classroom concepts to real-world applications and develop lifelong skills that will serve them well beyond their time in school.

Looking Ahead

- October marks the start of the 2025–2026 4-H year, which means it's time for all Bath and Highland 4-H members and volunteers to re-enroll in the 4-H Online system at https://v2.4honline.com. This includes club members, leaders, and anyone planning to attend 4-H Camp, 4-H Congress, or other programs during the year. Youth planning to participate in the 2026 4-H & FFA Livestock Show and Sale or the Virginia 4-H State Horse Show must complete enrollment by December 1, 2025, to remain eligible for those programs.

- Bath and Highland 4-H will open applications for Teen Counselor and Counselor-in-Training (CIT) positions in mid-November for the 2026 4-H Camp season. Teens selected for these leadership roles will meet regularly throughout the winter and spring to participate in training sessions that build teamwork, leadership, and youth development skills in preparation for camp. Serving as a counselor or CIT is a great opportunity for teens to grow in confidence and responsibility while making a lasting impact on younger campers. 4-H Camp will be held July 6–10, and planning is already underway for another fun, engaging, and memorable week at camp for Bath and Highland youth.

- After-school 4-H Cloverbud programs are underway in Bath County and will begin in Highland County this November! Designed for younger youth ages 5–8, these programs provide a fun, hands-on introduction to 4-H through activities that encourage creativity, teamwork, and learning by doing. Each meeting includes healthy snacks, crafts, and games centered around monthly themes that explore food, science, art, and nature. Cloverbud programs provide a fun, engaging introduction to 4-H, helping younger youth build a strong foundation for future participation in the program.



AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Kari Sponaugle, Extension Agent, Ag & Natural Resources, Highland & Bath—Cell: 540 679 9664—Email: karis@vt.edu

Upcoming Local and Regional Programs

* October 17 – "Adding Value in Beef and Dairy Operations" in Harrisonburg, VA; RSVP Jeremy Daubert jdaubert@vt.edu or 540 705 4627
* November 10th – Hoof Trimming Workshop, Bridgewater, VA; RSVP jdaubert@vt.edu
* Nov 25th / Jan 5th – Private Pesticide Applicator Recertifications, Verona VA. RSVP benner89@vt.edu
* December 3rd – Rockbridge Cattlemen's Association Meeting and Program – "Spring vs Fall Calving" with Dr. John Currin, DVM. RSVP John Benner benner89@vt.edu

Don't let dropping temperatures and shorter days keep you from attending valuable winter ag programs! Join VCE Agents and Specialists—locally and statewide—for hands-on as well as virtual opportunities that will keep your operation up to speed this fall and winter.

Cattle & Equipment WISE

Nov. 7–8, Abingdon, VA.

A Women in Agriculture event where female farmers can build confidence and practical skills working with cattle and farm equipment in a supportive environment. Register and pay by Nov 1.

Highland-Bath Winter Beef Program

December 16th 5:30-8pm, Highland Center Event Room. This educational meeting (and dinner!) for local beef producers will cover topics including managing price risk in beef, new world screw worm update and managing spring-calving cows this winter. Registration and agenda are forthcoming, but Save the Date!

The Inquisitive Shepherd

(Photo by Emily Donaldson)

A new virtual winter series for current or soon-to-be small ruminant producers is coming soon! *The Inquisitive Shepherd* will feature weekly Zoom sessions beginning in January and running for 5–6 weeks. Topics will range from fencing to finances—covering essential topics every sheep and goat producer should know. Extension Agent and specialist led, this series will follow a similar format to the online Master Cattlemen program. More details to come.

"No bull about it — Breeding Soundness Matters!"

If you're interested in a fall Breeding Soundness Exam (BSE) opportunity, call VCE or Dr. Cora Moyers at Mountainview Veterinary Services ASAP. If at least 5 bulls register, a date in late October/early November will be planned at Monterey Mountain Meats.

4-H & ANR PROGRAM EDUCATOR

Jordan Alexander, Bath & Highland—Phone: 540-839-7261—Email: jordan98@vt.edu

As the new 4-H year begins (**October 1**) and we celebrate National 4-H Week (**October 5-11**), our offices want to thank the various businesses, organizations, and individuals who supported Bath & Highland County 4-H programs during the 2024-2025 4-H year. I can't name everyone in this amount of space, but the list is ongoing, we are very thankful. Whether you're a monetary sponsor, club leader, contest day or science fair judge, serve on a committee, or school that lets 4-H visit your classroom, we couldn't do it without your help! Local partnerships are what brings our programs to life, providing youth with meaningful experiences, hands-on learning opportunities, and lasting memories. From sponsoring a classroom curriculum kit or livestock exhibitor award to volunteering to be a fair judge or bring snacks to a club meeting, your contribution doesn't go unnoticed. Most of the time, it's what the kids won't stop talking about month after month!

Another significant partnership for Virginia 4-H is the Tractor Supply Paper Clover campaign. Since 2010, this successful opportunity continues to raise funds that impact youth with technical skills and life skills that prepare them for whatever comes their way. By shopping and rounding up your bill for a Paper Clover at our local Tractor Supply locations, you can directly help youth in our communities experience 4-H Camp and leadership activities! You can visit the Staunton and Waynesboro TSC locations from **November 28 through December 14** to support Bath & Highland 4-H.

Thank you for helping us make a difference by providing youth with the skill-building, world-shaping resources they need all year long. We look forward to your continued support in the **2025-2026 4-H year**.

Highland Elementary
Cloverbuds
November 24, 2025

Bath County Office
PO Box 357
Warm Springs, VA 24484
540-839-7261

Highland County Office
PO Box 528
Monterey, VA 24465
540-468-2225

Online: www.ext.vt.edu

Your Area Extension Agents and Staff include:

Kari Sponaugle, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Bath & Highland County and Unit Coordinator
Ben Hindman, 4-H Youth Development, Bath & Highland County
Becky Gartner, Family & Consumer Sciences, Rockingham County
Rosemary Life, Crops & Soils, Rockingham County
Jason Cooper, Horticulture, Rockingham County
Tom Stanley, Farm Business Management , Rockbridge County
Adam Downing, Forestry, Madison County
Rebecca Owen, SNAP-Ed Agent, Rockbridge County
Jordan Alexander, Program Educator 4-H/ANR, Bath & Highland County
Deseray Chaplin, Administrative & Fiscal Assistant, Bath County
Kathy Beverage, Administrative & Fiscal Assistant, Highland County

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Highland County Office
PO Box 528
Monterey VA 24465

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

We are happy to provide this newsletter. However, if you prefer to receive this a different way (email/hard copy) or to be removed from the list, please call 540-468-2225 or 540-839-7261.