



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

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Dear colleagues;

We know there is unrest in our communities across Virginia and around our nation. People are hurting, as many people feel left out and that their voices are not being heard. And in addition to the recent events sparked by George Floyd's death, the coronavirus pandemic is causing additional stress which can magnify tensions significantly. Some of us are more personally affected than others, and some of us experience the injustices of our time more deeply than others.

We, too, are personally feeling distraught and hurt by the scenes of violence and unrest of the last several days. As parents of both a young black male and a police officer, we are constantly on edge as we hope that they are remaining safe, smart, and are upholding the values we have taught them.

One of the many hard questions we have faced in the last few days is why, even in 2020, has our country not learned and embraced that ALL people are valued, and ALL people deserve dignity and respect. People's lack of empathy and sensitivity to this fundamental right saddens us greatly.

At this time, it is important to remember at the very core of Virginia Cooperative Extension's mission is the goal to improve the lives of all in the commonwealth. We believe and embrace this goal for ALL people. And it is our hope that we can all embrace the dignity and worth of our neighbors and fellow community members as we do so.

Let us in our deeds and actions be leaders in helping each other work through the challenges of our time. Let us not only exemplify these good deeds and actions but also be emblematic of the change we envision. By our actions during these difficult times we should strive to make this a better place for those who live in Virginia today and especially for those who will come after us.

Ed and Ray

3 June 2020

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