



Virginia Agricultural Council

ANNUAL REPORT

*Fiscal Year Ending
June 30, 2025*

Virginia Agricultural Council Annual Report

PUBLICATION YEAR 2025

Document Title

Virginia Agricultural Council Annual Report

Author

Virginia Agricultural Council

Legislative Mandate

Va. Code § 3.2-2904

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the management and expenditure of the Virginia Agricultural Foundation Fund in support of agricultural research, education, and services to strengthen and promote the best interests of agriculture in the Commonwealth. It includes the Virginia Agricultural Council's (Council) annual financial statements for the fiscal year (FY) ending June 30, 2025. The Council approved grant funding for 14 new research projects in FY 2026 for a total of \$205,426.79. Five projects from FY 2025 were approved for a second year of grant funding for a total of \$57,489. Four projects were awarded grants from the Seed Fund for a total of \$54,500.

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Tscharner D. Watkins, III
Chair

Cecil E. Meyerhoeffer, Jr.
Vice Chair



Jason O. Bush
Secretary

Ashley Reed
Executive Director

November 1, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin:

The Virginia Agricultural Council is pleased to present its annual report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

The members of the Council appreciate the opportunity to serve the agriculture industry in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

We trust you will find the report informative and rewarding, and we recognize the diversity of agricultural interests in the state that contribute greatly to the Commonwealth's economic prosperity.

Sincerely,
VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL

Tscharner D. Watkins, III
Chairman

MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL	
Mr. Keith M. Dunn Oak Hill Farms 21100 Peters Bridge Road Yale, VA 23897 Commodity: Peanuts, Cotton Keith.oakhillfarms@gmail.com	Mr. Jason O. Bush Bush Farms 471 Brickchurch Circle Castlewood, VA 24224 Commodity: Cattle, Tobacco cowmanjob@yahoo.com
Mr. Tscharnier D. Watkins III 3907 West Franklin Street Richmond, VA 23221 Commodity: Nursery Stock tscharnierwatkins@comcast.net	Mr. Travis Croxton Rappahannock Oyster Company 4777 Wormleys Drive Mechanicsville, VA 23116 Commodity: Aquaculture travis@rroysters.com
Mr. Philip B. Glaize Jr. Glaize Apples 601 Pennsylvania Ave. Winchester, VA 22601 Commodity: Apples Phil@glazeapples.com	Mr. George G. Grattan 305 Wickham Glen Drive Richmond, Virginia 23238 Commodity: Turf Gil.grattan@virginiagreenlawncare.com
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Ms. Kimberley H. Nixon Co-Owner, Glenmary Farm LLC and Western View Plantation LLC 21496 River Road Rapidan, Virginia 22733 Commodity: Cattle, Turkey and Grain khnixon1231@gmail.com	Ms. Lynn Rush St. Clair Swover Creek Farms 4176 Swover Creek Road Edinburg, VA 22824 Commodity: Direct Marketing swover@shentel.net
Mr. Alan Worrell Worrell Family Farms 879 Sunrise Drive Austinville, VA 24312 Commodity: Vegetables Alanworrell@ymail.com	

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL
EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Dr. Derrick Scott Interim Dean, College of Agriculture Virginia State University 100 Owens Hall Box 9081 Petersburg, VA 23806	Joseph Guthrie Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services 102 Governor St. Richmond, VA 23219 Joseph.guthrie@vdacs.virginia.gov
Dr. Mario Ferruzzi Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Virginia Tech 104 Hutcheson Hall Blacksburg, VA 24061 Phone: 540-231-3724 mferruzzi@vt.edu	

Purpose of the Council

Agriculture is Virginia's largest industry, generating approximately \$82 billion in annual economic impact and supporting more than 380,000 jobs across the Commonwealth.

The Pennies for Progress Act (Act) was passed in 1966 by the Virginia General Assembly to establish the Virginia Agricultural Council (Council) to administer the objectives of the Act. The current Agricultural Council Law (Va. Code § 3.2 – 2900 et seq.) permits financial assistance and support for agricultural research and other services. The Council is authorized, in part, to take all such measures as will assist in strengthening and promoting the best interests of agriculture in the Commonwealth.

The Council consists of 18 members to be appointed by the Governor. Insofar as practical, 15 of the members shall be actively engaged in farming and shall be primarily engaged in the production of a different agricultural commodity. The Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and the Associate Vice President for Agriculture and Extension of Virginia State University serve as ex officio members.

The General Assembly specified in the initial enabling legislation that it is in the public interest that assessments be levied upon certain agricultural supplies used by farmers. These assessments generate the revenue that the Council uses to award grants to research projects. Monies are received from one-half cent per gallon of the state gasoline tax refund made on motor fuel used for agricultural purposes; a five cents-per-ton levy on lime sold; a 25 cents-per-ton levy on fertilizer sold, with five cents-per-ton for the Council's use; a seven cents-per-ton levy on feed; and 3/10 of one percent of gross sale receipts from lawn and turf seed, with 50 percent to the Council. In 1994, the General Assembly established the Seed Fund (currently codified at Va. Code § 3.2-4004). Monies received for this fund are administered by the Council for the exclusive funding of lawn and turf research. The Council is also authorized to accept gifts and grants.

The Council accepts requests for financial assistance from any organized group within, or serving, Virginia's agriculture industry. This includes suppliers, farmers, marketers, extension centers, colleges, and universities.

The Council's philosophy on selecting projects for support dictates that projects should exhibit the capabilities of yielding timely results that are applicable and useful. Studies should address current or foreseeable problems and interests and should have the potential to provide benefits to a reasonably broad spectrum of agricultural needs. All

projects will be considered; however, projects should show promise with results that can be applied in a reasonable timeframe.

There are five basic considerations, as follows:

- a. Importance of the project to Virginia's agricultural economy.
- b. Recognition by the public or the Council of the project's importance.
- c. Availability of other funds from industry, commodity groups, governmental agencies, or private individuals in support of the project.
- d. Availability of personnel and facilities to conduct the project.
- e. Ability of the group, organization, or agency to execute the proposal.

Council members meet at least twice each year; once in the spring, and again in the summer. To be considered for funding, principal investigators complete a preproposal outlining the objectives of their proposal, and selected applicants are invited to submit full proposals. New project proposal requests are considered at the spring meeting.

The Council approves project funding for one fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). Continued financial support for the second year depends upon reports of progress, availability of funds, and priority in relation to other requests.

The Council's grant award requires the researchers to submit final reports summarizing their research and results and, more importantly, to disseminate the results to industry. Researchers will present at conferences, publish results and summaries in industry newsletters, or work with cooperative education and stakeholder groups, such as the Virginia Turfgrass Foundation, to share the information with Virginia's agricultural producers.

GRANTS APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

Last Name	Project Name	Amount
Feng	Integrated Bioprocessing of Blue Catfish Byproducts: Creating Value-Added Products for Virginia's Circular Bioeconomy	\$ 19,557.00
Oliver	Extending the in vitro embryo culture period to improved pregnancy rates derived from in vitro produced cattle embryos	\$ 11,250.00
Stewart	Amino Acid Profiling of Virginia-Grown Apples to Improve Cider Fermentation and Flavor	\$ 14,793.00
Williams, M.	Evaluating Winter Pea Varieties: On-Farm Participatory Research Trials for Enhanced Cover Crop Performance in the Mid-Atlantic	\$ 9,130.00
Kuhar	Reducing dairy methane emissions through forage quality	\$ 14,603.00
Stalknecht	Understanding the Potential Uses of Red Shade Materials for Protected Agriculture	\$ 11,220.00
Zeng, Y.	Development of rapid and accurate detection and diagnosis of Neopestalotiopsis disease in strawberry plants	\$ 25,222.00
Pollock, A.	Uncovering the effects of nutritional restriction on oocyte health and embryonic development in beef cattle	\$ 7,500.00
Harner	Assessing the impacts of adult Spotted Lanternfly infestation on grapevine nutrient status and fruit nutrient composition	\$ 18,873.00
Jernigan	Optimizing the benefits of soil microarthropods in crop production through sustainable nutrient management	\$ 11,230.79

Acimovic	Sustainable vineyard management strategy	\$ 12,763.00
Forehand	Virginia Peanut Variety and Quality Evaluation (PVQE) Program	\$ 12,000.00
Ferreira	Effect of Planting Date on Small Grain Silage Yield and Nutritional Quality	\$ 21,500.00
Steward, J.	Validation of techniques to improve breeding soundness evaluation of rams	\$ 15,785.00
Total		\$ 205,426.79

SECOND YEAR PROJECTS FY 2026

Last Name	Project Title	Amount
Aigner	Can insecticide seed treatments in wheat benefit Virginia agriculture?	\$15,619.00
Acimovic	Enhancing Grapevine Nutrient Management for Sustainable Growth in the Mid-Atlantic Region	\$7,870.00
McCall	Evaluating accuracy, precision, and efficacy of GPS sprayer technology for targeted turfgrass applications (Seed)	\$17,000.00
Sandor	Seed Coating Impacts on Ryegrasses used for Overseeding Bermudagrass Athletic Fields (Seed)	\$5,000.00
Zhang	Continue Developing Public, XtendFlex® Soybean Varieties	\$12,000.00
Total		\$57,489.00

SEED FUND PROJECTS FY 2026

Last Name	Project Title	Amount
Zhang	Exogenously applying amino acids to improve nitrogen use efficiency in Kentucky bluegrass	\$ 18,000
Goatley, Jr.	Disguised Weed Control by Herbicide Residue Transfer During Rotary Mowing Events	\$ 5,000
Del-Pozo	Insecticide susceptibility and efficacy for two key beetle pests in turfgrass	\$ 16,500
Derr	Granular Applications by Drones in Turf	\$ 15,000
Total		\$54,500.00

PROJECTS CLOSING OUT AS OF FY 2025

Project Number	Title
789	Evaluation of Blue Grama Cultivars as a Warm-Season Option for Low-Input Turfgrass in Virginia
790	Validating the Use of Aerial Imagery to Apply Nitrogen in Winter Wheat
796	Identify the Beneficial Endophytes from Turmeric Plants
802	Use of Precision Technology to predict Pathogenic Diarrhea in Pre-weaned Dairy Heifers
804	Selective Postemergence Control of Grass and Sedge Weeds in Turfgrass
808	Cover Crop Species and Variety Evaluation to Maximize Agronomic and Economic Returns in Virginia's Row Crop Agroecosystem
810	How Cannabidiol Affects Pig Intestinal Inflammation During Weaning
816	Living Cover Crops for Organic Vegetable Production
820	Developing Public, XtendFlex Soybean Varieties
822	Evaluation of New Fungicides for Management of Apple Bitter Rot Disease in Virginia and Comparison to Synthetic Fungicides
828	Identification of Perfect DNA Markers to Develop High Protein Soybean Cultivars
829	In-field Evaluation of Aerial Drone Imaging and Mapping in Vineyards for Disease Management
832	Evaluation of the Effect of Protein Hydrolysate Biostimulants on the Growth and Yield of Corn, Strawberry and Tomato
835	A Novel Treatment for Mastitis that Reduces Intramammary Antibiotic Use and Lessens the Concerns of Antibiotic Resistance on Virginia Dairy Farms
838	Metagenomics for Faster Identification of Plant Pathogens in Virginia
839	Effect of Management Practices on Microbiome and its Impact on Soil and Plant Health on Tobacco Farms
842	The Use of a Nurse Grass and Selective Herbicides in Accelerating the Establishment and Use of Zoysiagrass
843	Improving Residential Blue Grama Establishment as a Low-input Lawn Option Using Pre- and Post-emergent Weed Control

845	Optimizing Combinations of Bioproducts and Wetting Agent for Improving Summer Stress Tolerance and Quality for Creeping Bentgrass Putting Greens
846	Improving the health of bovine embryos used for embryo transfer
847	Evaluation of Growth Responses to Amino Acids in Broiler Chicks
850	Reducing dairy methane emissions through forage quality
859	Individual Plant Treatment with Cryogenic Liquids & Lasers

Financial Statement for VAC				
July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025				
Revenue and Expenditures				
Cash balance - June 30, 2024			\$	620,116.34
Add: Revenues				
	Feed Tonnage	\$	264,611.74	
	Seed	\$	64,723.00	
	Fertilizer Tonnage	\$	42,174.00	
	Lime Tonnage	\$	26,660.00	
	Motor Fuel/Interest/Misc.	\$	15,380.89	
		\$	413,549.63	
Total Balance and Receipts			\$	1,033,665.97
Less - Expenses				
	Administration	\$	15,000.00	
	Miscellaneous	\$	3,000.00	
	Travel	\$	16,395.60	
	Grant Expenditures to date	\$	391,353.79	
		\$	425,749.39	\$ 425,749.39
Less- Reserve	Non-Seed			50,000.00
Cash Balance - June 30, 2025			\$	557,916.58

REVENUE SUMMARY 2020 - 2025							
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	5 YR AVERAGE	Difference
Feed Tonnage	230,385.22	253,463.82	280,742.86	240,241.79	264,611.74	253,889.09	(13,647.30)
Fertilizer Tonnage	45,020.48	43,647.87	41,392.23	48,375.81	42,174.00	44,122.08	4,253.73
Lime Tonnage	21,258.75	20,785.14	28,674.23	25,158.76	26,660.00	24,507.38	651.38
Motor Fuel/Interest/Misc.	2,197.22	1,513.42	9,820.46	23,782.66	64,723.00	20,407.35	3,375.31
NON SEED TOTAL	298,861.67	319,410.25	360,629.78	337,559.02	398,168.74	342,925.89	(5,366.87)
Seed	30,395.70	66,454.66	67,960.51	61,267.30	64,723.00	58,160.23	3,107.07
TOTAL	329,257.37	385,864.91	428,590.29	398,826.32	462,891.74	401,086.13	(2,259.81)

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Accounts
General Accounting

Attachment B
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Certification of Agency Reconciliation to Cardinal

Agency Number: 307

To the Comptroller:

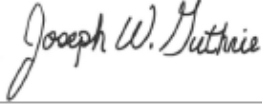
Our agency's management accepts responsibility for the integrity and objectivity of the financial transactions provided to the State Comptroller. We believe the data provided are accurate in all material respects. The basis for these conclusions relates to our assessment of the internal controls operating within our Agency. The establishment of such internal controls requires estimates and judgments from management so that, in attaining reasonable assurance as to the adequacy of such controls, the cost of controls should not exceed the benefits obtained. I believe the Agency's internal controls adequately safeguard its assets and provide reasonable assurance as to the proper recording of financial transactions.

Additionally, I certify that, for the agency listed above, the accounting records represented in Cardinal, the official record of the Commonwealth, are accurate in all material respects.

Our agency accounting records for the year ended June 30, 2025, have been verified and reconciled to Cardinal, and when any submitted General Ledger Journals have posted to Cardinal, and/or items shown below (if any) are processed, our internal records will be in agreement with those reported in Cardinal for each of the following:

Yes	All cash balances (by Fund)		
Yes	All appropriations (by Fund, Program)		
Yes	All allotments (by Fund, Program)	No	PLEASE INDICATE IF THERE ARE ITEMS NOTED ON THE EXCEPTION REGISTER.
Yes	Total expenditures (by Fund, Program, Account)		
Yes	Net revenues (by Fund, Account)		
Yes	Capital assets (by Fund)		

*Note that agencies must adhere to the reconciliation requirements outlined in CAPP Topic No 30905, Reconciliation & Error Correction, for capital asset accounts, including Construction in Progress.


Signature
box SIGN 4L2VPLR6-4YXZJQ28

Email: joseph.guthrie@vdacs.virginia.gov
Printed Name: Joseph W. Guthrie
Title: Commissioner
Role: Agency Head
Date: Jul 17, 2025


Fiscal Officer Signature
box SIGN 1XR992P3-4YXZJQ28

Email: susan.wales@vdacs.virginia.gov
Printed Name: Susan Wales
Title: Finance Director
Role: Fiscal Officer
Date: Jul 17, 2025
Fiscal Officer's Telephone No. 804-371-8576

If you indicated there are items noted on the exception register, at least one of items 1, 2, or 3 on the following page must be completed.