# Virginia Agricultural Council Annual Report
# Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026

Tscharner D. Watkins, III
Chairman, Virginia Agricultural Council

November 1, 2026

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Virginia Agricultural Council Annual Report Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026

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**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, 2026. The Council approved grant funding for 13 new research projects in FY 2027 for a total of $248,275.00. Nine projects from FY 2026 were approved for a second year of grant funding for a total of $99,433.21. Five projects were awarded grants from the Seed Fund for a total of $72,485.00.

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*Tscharner D. Watkins, III*
*Chair*

*Jason O. Bush*
*Secretary*

*Susan Wales*
*Executive Director*

November 1, 2026

The Honorable Abigail A. Spanberger
Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Spanberger:

The Virginia Agricultural Council is pleased to present its annual report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

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,

Tscharner D. Watkins, III
Chairman

| Members of the Virginia Agricultural Council | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Mr. Jason O. Bush**<br>Bush Farms<br>471 Brick Church Circle<br>Castlewood, VA 24224<br>Commodity: Cattle, Tobacco<br>cowmanjob@yahoo.com | **Mr. Travis Croxton**<br>Rappahannock Oyster Company<br>4777 Wormleys Drive<br>Mechanicsville, VA 23116<br>Commodity: Aquaculture<br>travis@rroysters.com | **Mr. Judd Culver**<br>Kelly Turkeys<br>6921 Jarmans Gap Road<br>Crozet, VA 22932<br>Commodity: Poultry<br>judd@kellyturkeys.com |
| **Mr. Keith M. Dunn**<br>Oak Hill Farms<br>21100 Peters Bridge Road<br>Yale, VA 23897<br>Commodity: Peanuts, Cotton<br>Keith.oakhillfarms@gmail.com | **Mr. Philip B. Glaize Jr.**<br>Glaize Apples<br>601 Pennsylvania Ave.<br>Winchester, VA 22601<br>Commodity: Apples<br>phil@glaizeapples.com | **Mr. George G. Grattan**<br>Virginia Green<br>305 Wickham Glen Drive<br>Richmond, Virginia 23238<br>Commodity: Turf<br>Gil.grattan@virginiagreen.com |
| **Mr. Carl Gupton**<br>Greenswell Growers, Inc.<br>7105 Pinetree Rd.<br>Henrico, VA 23229<br>Commodity: Vegetables<br>cgupton@greenswellgrowers.com | **Ms. Ashley E. Hardesty**<br>Harvue Farms<br>1458 Longmarsh Rd.<br>Berryville, VA 22611<br>Commodity: Dairy<br>alelgin85@gmail.com | **Mr. Mark Newbill**<br>Forest Lake Farm & NEWBILT Construction<br>105 Darlington Drive<br>Rocky Mount, VA 24151<br>Commodity: Dairy<br>mnewbill@embarqmail.com |
| **Mr. Joseph Parker**<br>Parker Farms<br>13153 Manor Garden Lane<br>Ashland, VA 23005<br>Commodity: Vegetables<br>joe@parkerfarms.net | **Mr. Tscharner D. Watkins III**<br>3907 West Franklin Street<br>Richmond, VA 23221<br>Commodity: Nursery Stock<br>tscharnerwatkins@comcast.net | **Ms. Harriet Wegmeyer**<br>Wegmeyer Farms, Moose Apple Christmas Tree Farm<br>38299 Hughesville Road<br>Hamilton, VA 20158<br>Commodity: Trees, Fruit<br>harriet.wegmeyer@yahoo.com |
| **Mr. Alan Worrell**<br>Worrell Family Farms<br>879 Sunrise Drive<br>Austinville, VA 24312<br>Commodity: Vegetables<br>Alanworrell@ymail.com | ***Vacant*** | ***Vacant*** |

| Ex-Officio Members of the Virginia Agricultural Council | |
|---|---|
| **Dr. Jewel H. Bronaugh**<br>Dean, College of Agriculture<br>Virginia State University<br>100 Owens Hall<br>Box 9081<br>Petersburg, VA 23806<br>jbronaugh@vsu.edu | **Mr. Charles Green**<br>Commissioner, Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services<br>102 Governor Street<br>Richmond, VA 23219<br>charles.green@vdacs.virginia.gov |
| **Dr. Mario Ferruzzi**<br>Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences<br>Virginia Tech<br>104 Hutcheson Hall<br>Blacksburg, VA 24061<br>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), passed in 1966 by the Virginia General Assembly, established 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 through the Virginia Agricultural Foundation Fund (Fund). Monies are deposited into the Fund from one-half cent per gallon of the state gasoline tax refund made on motor fuel used for agricultural purposes (Va. Code § 58.1-2259); a five cents-per-ton levy on lime sold (Va. Code § 3.2-3710); a 25 cents-per-ton levy on fertilizer sold, with five cents-per-ton for the Council's use (Va. Code § 3.2-3617); and a seven cents-per-ton levy on feed (Va. Code § 3.2-4814). In 1994, the General Assembly established the Seed Law (Va. Code § 3.2-4004). 50 percent of the monies received from Seed Law inspection fees (which equal the greater of $35 or three-tenths of one percent of the gross sales receipts for lawn and turf seed sold by that person in the Commonwealth during that year) are deposited into the Fund 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 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 Virginia Cooperative Education and stakeholder groups, such as the Virginia Turfgrass Foundation, to share the information with Virginia's agricultural producers.

**First Year Grants Approved by the Council for FY 2027**

| Last Name | Project Title | Amount |
|---|---|---|
| Ealy | Advancing Bovine In Vitro Embryo Culture Systems to Improve the Value and Affordability of Embryo Technologies for Dairy and Beef Producers | $15,000.00 |
| Cheng | Developing a Method for Differentiation of Vaccine-Strain Salmonella for More Accurate Representation of "Virulent" Salmonella During Surveillance Testing | $19,678.00 |
| Rivest & Ganley | Effects of Multiple Stressors on Diploid and Triploid Eastern Oyster Seed | $24,977.00 |
| Ali | From Lab to Parlor: A Farmer-Ready Milk Sensor for Early Hypocalcemia Detection | $11,397.00 |
| Dong | Helping Virginia Aquaculture Farmers Reduce Losses with Better Disease Testing | $19,998.00 |
| Kuhar | Linking Plant Resistance and Biological Control for Stronger Vegetable Pest Management | $20,000.00 |
| Bryant | Monitoring Corn Earworm Resistance to Diamide Insecticides | $20,000.00 |
| Osorio | Optimizing Colostrum Immune Quality in Virginia Dairy Cows Through Metabolizable Protein Nutrition and Targeted Amino Acid Supplementation | $24,422.00 |
| Makkar | Optimizing Winter Cereal Cover Crops Termination Timing and Herbicide Systems for Improved Weed Control in Virginia Soybean Production | $16,309.00 |
| Oakes | Return on Investment of Variable Rate Seeding in Grain Crops | $10,837.00 |
| Ghosh | Stage-Specific Biological Control and Performance-Enhanced Egg Parasitoids for Managing Box Tree Moth in Virginia | $20,000.00 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Petersson-Wolf | Use of a Novel Non-Antimicrobial for Prepartum Treatment of First Calf Heifers | $25,720.00 |
| Nita | Validating Digital Droplet PCR (ddPCR) for Rapid Detection and Management of Colletotrichum Species in Horticultural Crops | $19,937.00 |
| | **Total** | **$ 248,275.00** |

**Second Year Grants Approved by the Council for FY 2027**

| Last Name | Project Title | Amount |
|---|---|---|
| Harner | Assessing the Impacts of Adult Spotted Lanternfly Infestation on Grapevine Nutrient Status and Fruit Nutrient Composition | $17,873.00 |
| Zeng | Development of Rapid and Accurate Detection and Diagnosis of Neopestalotiopsis Disease in Strawberry Plants | $25,999.00 |
| Ferreira | Effect of Planting Date on Small Grain Silage Yield and Nutritional Quality | $5,000.00 |
| Oliver | Extending the In Vitro Embryo Culture Period to Improve Pregnancy Rates Derived from In Vitro Produced Cattle Embryos | $3,750.00 |
| Kuhar | Innovative Strategies for Reducing Cucumber Beetle Pressure on Virginia Pumpkins and Other Cucurbit Crops | $14,603.00 |
| Williams | Evaluating Winter Pea Varieties: On-Farm Participatory Research Trials for Enhanced Cover Crop Performance in the Mid-Atlantic | $5,156.00 |
| Forehand | Peanut Variety and Quality Evaluation (PVQE) Program | $12,000.00 |
| Stalknecht | Understanding the Potential Uses of Red Shade Materials in Protected Agriculture Systems | $11,283.00 |
| Jernigan | Optimizing the Benefits of Soil Microarthropods in Crop Production Through Sustainable Nutrient Management | $3,769.21 |
| | **Total** | **$99,433.21** |

**Seed Fund Grants Approved by the Council for FY 2027**

| Last Name | Project Title | Amount |
|---|---|---|
| Del Pozo | Timing, Pest Spectrum, and Residuality of Insecticide Applications to Control White Grubs and Other Pests in Turfgrass | $16,000.00 |
| McCall | Determining the Most Influential Factors that Drive Cold-Injury (Winterkill) Across Bermudagrass Recreational Surfaces | $22,215.00 |
| Sandor | Cultural Practices to Promote Sustainability and Reduce Inputs when Overseeding Bermudagrass Athletic Fields | $5,000.00 |
| Zhang | Exogenously Applying Amino Acids to Improve Nitrogen Use Efficiency in Kentucky Bluegrass | $14,000.00 |
| Derr | Granular Applications by Drones in Turf | $15,270.00 |
| | **Total** | **$72,485.00** |

**Projects Completed as of FY 2026**

| Project Number | Title |
|---|---|
| 848 | Evaluating the Impact of Saline Water Usage on the Quality of Fruits and Vegetables in Aquaponic Systems |
| 853 | Can Insecticide Seed Treatments in Wheat Benefit Virginia Agriculture? |
| 854 | Continue Developing Public, XtendFlex® Soybean Varieties |
| 855 | Enhancing Grapevine Nutrient Management for Sustainable Growth in the Mid-Atlantic Region |
| 856 | Early Season Survival of Oyster Seed During Winter Holding |
| 857 | Evaluating Accuracy, Precision, and Efficacy of GPS Sprayer Technology for Targeted Turfgrass Applications |
| 858 | Seed Coating Impacts on Ryegrasses used for Overseeding Bermudagrass Athletic Fields |
| 860 | Integrated Bioprocessing of Blue Catfish Byproducts: Creating Value-Added Products for Virginia's Circular Bioeconomy |
| 862 | Amino Acid Profiling of Virginia-Grown Apples to Improve Cider Fermentation and Flavor |
| 867 | Uncovering the Effects of Nutritional Restriction on Oocyte Health and Embryonic Development in Beef Cattle |
| 870 | Sustainable Vineyard Management Strategy |

| | |
|---|---|
| 873 | Validation of Techniques to Improve Breeding Soundness Evaluation of Rams |
| 875 | Disguised Weed Control by Herbicide Residue Transfer During Rotary Mowing Events |

## Financial Statement
**July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026**
**Revenue and Expenditures**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Cash Balance-June 30, 2025** | | **$470,045.41** |
| ***Add: FY 2026 Revenue*** | | |
| Feed Tonnage | $276,422.38 | |
| Seed Revenue | $76,813.46 | |
| Fertilizer Tonnage | $39,434.58 | |
| Lime Tonnage | $24,670.57 | |
| Motor Fuel/Interest/Misc. | $13,320.36 | |
| **Total FY 2026 Revenue** | | **$430,661.35** |
| **Total Balance and Receipts** | | **$900,706.76** |
| ***Less: FY 2026 Expenses*** | | |
| Administration | $15,000.00 | |
| Miscellaneous | $547.34 | |
| Travel | $5,185.57 | |
| Grant Payments | $365,539.18 | |
| **Total FY 2026 Expenses** | | **$386,272.09** |
| **Cash Balance-June 30, 2026** | | **$514,434.67** |
| ***Less: Reserved and Committed Funds*** | | |
| Designated Non-Seed Reserve | $50,000.00 | |
| Outstanding FY26 Seed Grant Expenditures | $42,842.11 | |
| Outstanding FY26 Non-Seed Grant Expenditures | $208,420.54 | |
| **Total Reserved and Committed Funds** | | **$301,262.65** |
| **Uncommitted Cash Balance-June 30, 2026** | | **$213,172.02** |

| REVENUE SUMMARY 2021-2026 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | 2025-2026 | 5 YR AVERAGE | Difference |
| **Feed Tonnage** | $253,463.82 | $280,742.86 | $240,241.79 | $264,611.74 | $276,422.38 | $263,096.52 | $13,325.86 |
| **Fertilizer Tonnage** | $43,647.87 | $41,392.23 | $48,375.81 | $42,174.00 | $39,434.58 | $43,004.90 | ($3,570.32) |
| **Lime Tonnage** | $20,785.14 | $28,674.23 | $25,158.76 | $26,660.00 | $24,670.57 | $25,189.74 | ($519.17) |
| **Motor Fuel / Interest / Misc.** | $1,513.42 | $9,820.46 | $23,782.66 | $64,723.00 | $13,320.36 | $22,631.98 | ($9,311.62) |
| **NON SEED TOTAL** | $319,410.25 | $360,629.78 | $337,559.02 | $398,168.74 | $353,847.89 | $353,923.14 | ($75.25) |
| **Seed** | $66,454.66 | $67,960.51 | $61,267.30 | $64,723.00 | $76,813.46 | $67,443.79 | $9,369.67 |
| **TOTAL** | $385,864.91 | $428,590.29 | $398,826.32 | $462,891.74 | $430,661.35 | $421,366.92 | $9,294.43 |

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Accounts
General Accounting

## 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 submitted to the State Comptroller. We believe the data submitted is complete and accurate in all material respects, based on management's evaluation of the agency's internal controls. Agency management has designed and maintained internal controls that provide reasonable assurance that the agency's assets are safeguarded and financial transactions are properly recorded in a cost-beneficial manner.

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, 2026, 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) | No | **PLEASE INDICATE IF THERE ARE ITEMS NOTED ON THE EXCEPTION REGISTER.** |
| Yes | All allotments (by Fund, Program) | | |
| Yes | Total expenditures (by Fund, Program, Account, and if applicable, Capital Outlay Project) | | |
| Yes | Net revenues (by Fund, Account) | No | **PLEASE INDICATE IF THERE ARE ANY NON-RECURRING TRANSACTIONS.** |
| 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.

Charles R Green
Agency Head Signature
box SIGN 1R7J5QKW-19R95Y6V

Susan Wales
Fiscal Officer Signature
box SIGN 1XR992P3-19R95Y6V

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Email: | charles.green@vdacs.virginia.gov | Email: | susan.wales@vdacs.virginia.gov |
| Printed Name: | Charles Green | Printed Name: | Susan Wales |
| Title: | Commissioner | Title: | Deputy Director of Administrative and Financial Services |
| Role: | Agency Head | Role: | Fiscal Officer |
| Date: | Jul 16, 2026 | Date: | Jul 16, 2026 |
| | | 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.**

**If you indicated there are items noted as Non-recurring Transactions, at least one of items 1 or 2 on the last page must be completed.**