

Agricultural Development Board Guide:

Creating Effective Local Support for Agriculture

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INTRODUCTION



The purpose of this **Agricultural Development Board Guide** is to strengthen local support for profitability of farm-related enterprises in local communities. This guide can also be used to enhance the network of information-sharing between counties around the state and spur the creation of new boards.

The project was made possible with funding through a cooperative agreement with USDA Rural Development, and represents a collaboration between the Council for Rural Virginia, Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation, and Rural Sustainability (VA FAIRS), Virginia State University (VSU), Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and Matson Consulting.



Organization

The document consists of five major sections:

1. **Survey and Interview Results:** presents the results of the survey of Virginia localities along with contextual information gathered from statistical sources.
2. **Ag Development Activities Across the Country:** shows other states' methods by providing examples of unique agricultural development activities and entities, with a primary focus on those near Virginia and in the surrounding regions.
3. **ADB Roles and Activities:** provides a discussion of the various roles taken on by agricultural development entities such as ADBs, and also provides suggested activities related to those roles.
4. **Operations Guide:** offers step-by-step examples of how to establish an ADB, as well as a section on maintaining or improving operations for existing ADBs.
5. **Resources:** presents online resources and tools divided by topic for localities considering the establishment of an ADB or existing ADBs looking for tools or resources to expand their activities.

Agricultural Development Board Guide Development Process

This publication is the culmination of extensive research to examine and share the experiences of county-based agricultural economic development groups in Virginia and across the U.S. Information from surveys, meetings, interviews, and research is consolidated into this guide for ease of use. The project consisted of the following steps:

1. Surveys and Interviews: The consultants surveyed Virginia localities addressing the extent and organization of local agricultural economic development efforts. The survey's mission was to discover current efforts in Virginia related to the needs of agriculture and the localities' major activity areas and focus. Initial respondents were sent follow-up questions concerning ranking and priority levels of their activity areas.

The consultants conducted follow-up interviews with key localities to learn more about specific activities and their results. These interviews also included discussions at meetings of the Virginia Agricultural Development Organization (VADO), convened by VDACS.

The document uses “county” to refer to a basic local government unit. This may be a county or other county equivalent.

In the survey report section, “localities” refers to both counties and independent cities specifically in Virginia.

2. Research: The consultants completed literature and database searches, reviewed results, and drew conclusions. Research focused on successful county-based agricultural economic development boards and structures in Virginia and other states. Key examples are included throughout the Roles and Activities section of this report.

3. Third Party Review and Discussion: To provide context and clarity for the project, the consultants held face-to-face and phone discussions to review early drafts with key personnel at various state and federal agencies. Staff also sent early drafts to other personnel associated with the project, and feedback was incorporated at various points throughout the process of creating the final document.

4. Creation of Final Document: Staff discussed beginning document outlines with key personnel at the beginning of the project, and developed sections through the process of completing the project. The final document is the result of several interim iterations, and represents review and input from numerous sources.

Acknowledgements

Due to the collaborative nature of the project, we wish to thank the numerous individuals who provided their time to participate in the surveys and discuss and offer their insights, including experts, practitioners, and leaders at both the state and federal levels. We also appreciate and thank all those organizations who continue to work in agricultural development and have made their hard work available in public formats so that others may glean valuable lessons from their efforts. Though not exhaustive, many of these critical sources have been compiled in the Resources section of this guide.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD GUIDE

CREATING EFFECTIVE LOCAL SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE



COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

What is an Agricultural Development Board?

This report focuses on county-based agricultural development efforts, both in Virginia and beyond. For the purposes of this document, an Agricultural Development Board (ADB) is defined as “**a county based board or advisory group that works on locally focused agricultural economic development.**” ADBs offer a means for interested community members and stakeholders to learn about the needs of local farming and take an active role in addressing these needs. ADBs also provide a unique opportunity to foster partnerships between representatives of county, state, and national institutions,

An ADB is “a county based board or advisory group that works on locally focused agricultural economic development.

as well as forging regional connections between localities with common goals and resources.

Successful county-based agricultural development entities have exhibited tremendous flexibility, focusing on a variety of goals and activities centered on planning for and promoting agricultural development. ADBs commonly address long-term issues, such as farmland preservation, generational transition, and infrastructure development, and immediate issues, such as zoning and regulation, public education, and local foods marketing. Taken together, these and other issues can be grouped under the broader label of **“planning for agriculture.”**

ADB commonly address both short-term and long-term issues, which establishes a framework for a sustainable agricultural industry.

Though some entities may focus on addressing individual issues, and though there may be significant overlap of goals and activities between these types of boards and other entities already in existence, specifically considering ADBs will enable a deeper understanding of how they can be effective and provide a range of possibilities as examples to localities considering establishing such an entity.



“PLANNING FOR AGRICULTURE” AS EXPLAINED BY AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST:

Planning for agriculture establishes a framework for an economically and environmentally sustainable agricultural industry. It steers growth away from active farming communities, reduces regulatory barriers, encourages policies that support appropriate infrastructure development and new farming opportunities, and addresses farm tenure and transfer. Increasingly, it must address the public’s desire for environmental protection at the local level. Thus, it is essential for community leaders to understand the needs of the farm and forest sectors and provide support for the businesses that rely upon the land for their economic survival. Community planning is not complete without a plan for agriculture.

Source:

www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/FI_NAL_NCP4Ag_AFT_1.pdf

Why are ADBs Necessary?



Photo courtesy of Freddie Wydner

The national agriculture industry is experiencing pressures and changes resulting from an increasingly complex regulatory landscape, rising environmental concerns, and increased interaction between commercial agricultural activities and non-farm neighbors. In addition, internationalizing markets, increasing instability with fluctuating prices based on world supply and demand and price of fossil fuels, and the growing need to produce differentiated products have led to challenges to profitability.

The spread of urban development has been a longstanding concern, especially at county and community levels. Urbanization brings inevitable competition for land, resulting in rising land prices and clashes of incompatible uses. As farmers age and retire, and family farms consolidate, the number of farms in many places has declined dramatically. Issues related to farmland preservation through generational transition have also come to the forefront as communities struggle to retain their agricultural heritage while the number of farms and farmers continues to shrink. This decrease has resulted in the loss of essential infrastructure and support services, putting further pressures on profitability and farm survival.

Urbanization, farm consolidation, and generational transition are all factors that can put pressure on farm survival.

Along with the disappearance of these family farms, however, comes a growing awareness of the numerous benefits of local agriculture. Communities seeking growth and improvement are increasingly seeing benefits of healthy agricultural industries and seeking ways to promote local agriculture as means of enhancing the local economy and improving the quality of life of their residents. These types of communities need a clear plan to support farming and a long term vision for success. Strategic planning and coordinated action is necessary to identify opportunities, prioritize needs, and initiate actions to create a stable investment climate for agricultural profitability.

Healthy local agricultural industries bring economic growth and improvement to communities.

On a national level, an established chain of entities at the federal, state, and non-profit levels, share goals that include promoting and assisting with community economic and agricultural development through a variety of programs and services. The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development division, state land grant universities and departments of agriculture, and national and regional non-profit organizations are committed to providing technical information and financial resources to support farm diversification and enhancement.

Rural economic development is a well-researched and documented area, with both formal policy-related information and less formal anecdotal and case study reports. USDA Economic Research Service reports such as *Development at the Urban Fringe and Beyond: Impacts on Agriculture and Rural Land and Recreation, Tourism, and Rural*

Well-Being show that factors affecting rural development have been a focus of federal agencies for quite some time.



National organizations have also called attention to this area. In testimony before the House Agriculture Committee panel in 2011, then National Association of Counties (NACo) chair Don Larson emphasized the need in making rural development a priority within the Farm Bill. NACo recently published a report, *Cultivating a Competitive Advantage: How Rural Counties are Growing Economies with Local Assets and Regional Partners*, which highlights the efforts of numerous counties across the U.S. in several key sectors, such as Community Planning, Food Systems and others.

Community level planning can direct national and state resources to local agricultural issues.

Given recent trends within national agriculture and opportunities that have arisen from the local foods movement, attention has turned to agricultural innovation as a promising means of using local resources to improve the economy, attract tourism, and expand economic investment. However, the few current sources of information available only discuss the specific role of local agriculture in county and community-level economic development or outline how to translate previous research into implementation. On an operational level, local agricultural economic development requires collaborative efforts between a diverse group of public and private partners. While national and state farmer-oriented organizations, such as the Farm Bureau, commodity associations, and Cooperative Extension play an important role in advocacy, communication, and education, community-based strategic action is needed to connect these higher level resources to individual farm families in order to address their specific needs.



Numerous entities across the country have an interest in advancing agriculture within a county, community, or region. In some cases, traditional entities—such as state-based boards, county boards of supervisors, chambers of commerce, or economic development entities—have taken on these essential leadership roles. In other areas, multi-county initiatives, non-profit organizations, or informal working groups made up of various county staff members, development personnel, and extension agents have taken it upon themselves to provide agriculture-building activities.

Assistance on local ag efforts can come from a variety of public and private groups.

In Virginia and other states throughout the country, county-based Agricultural Development Boards (ADB) have assumed the leadership role of addressing the needs of local communities and producers. An ADB is uniquely positioned to bring together a diverse range of farmers and various supporting organizations to develop a big-picture

ADBs can unite outside organizations and producers to identify needs and promote growth in the area.

view of the needs of the agricultural sector and identify the resources necessary to enhance the farm economy.

A better understanding of these entities and what role they currently play in addressing county and community level agricultural and economic development needs can help both urban and rural areas within Virginia and other states determine the best way to promote growth and well-being of the farm sector.





SURVEY AND INTERVIEW PROCESS

Addressing the Need for Research

Thus far, the state of Virginia has not created a comprehensive source of material that includes information about the existence, activities, or effectiveness of Agricultural Development Boards (ADB) or similar entities. Even within Virginia's rural development community, questions about the prevalence and activity levels of these specific entities have not been addressed.

To discover the organization of these types of entities, their number, their location or regions of operation, and their activities or areas of focus, the consultants worked to create a baseline of information and provide context for further investigation.

Methods

Formal Survey Instrument



To better understand the current state of agricultural development in Virginia, including the role and activity of ADBs and similar entities, the consultants conducted a survey of individuals involved in economic development within the state. The survey instrument (available in the appendix) included 18 questions in total, with a mixture of yes/no and open-ended questions designed to gather information about what entity was responsible (if any) for Agricultural Economic Development, and general information about what

agriculture related issues the locality was currently addressing. Certain questions also separated respondents by asking whether the locality had a formally organized Agricultural Development Board or an Agricultural Development Director position. Finally, the survey included subsequent questions with a specific focus on the ADBs' activities and operations.

The consultants conducted an 18 question survey about agricultural development issues and plans.

The consultants asked about 13 key agricultural issues:

- ✓ Ag Financing
- ✓ Farmland Preservation
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Agribusiness Recruitment
- ✓ Food Access
- ✓ Regulations
- ✓ Agritourism
- ✓ Forestry
- ✓ Zoning/Land Use
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Local Foods
- ✓ Farm Transition

Formal and Informal Interviews

Simultaneous with and subsequent to the survey, the consultants conducted follow-up interviews with individuals affiliated with agricultural development at various levels within state and local government. Interviews consisted of formal and informal conversations over the course of several months and revealed information related to best practices and pitfalls related to the establishment and successful operation of ADBs and agricultural development activities.

Comparison to Public Data

For additional points of comparison and context, the consultants gathered publically available information from regional and government institutions. This information, along with survey information, is presented to better capture and describe the current state of agriculture as it relates to survey respondents and their localities.

Process



Staff began the survey process by conducting in-person surveys with attendees at the 1/15/2015 meeting of Virginia Agricultural Development Officers (VADO) group, and gathered 15 responses representing 12 individual localities.

The consultants conducted further survey work via an electronic SurveyMonkey initiative, which sent surveys to 84 contacts representing county-level economic development efforts in Virginia. Their responses were added to the in-person survey results. After the initial results were received, the staff emailed a follow up question, which asked respondents to rank a series of agriculture issues according to their current priority levels. The staff conducted follow-up interviews on an individual basis to clarify responses or to gather additional information about unique initiatives discovered in the survey results.

Overall, The Center for Rural Virginia, VA FAIRS, and Matson Consulting received responses from 27 unique localities, including 26 counties and Virginia Beach (city). While a portion of the survey focused on Agricultural Development Boards (ADB), many localities have developed alternative outlets for tackling these issues. In some cases, one organization may be responsible for all economic development (including agricultural), or an individual such as an agricultural director may fulfill the duties normally taken on by an ADB. A locality's approach to agricultural development may also influence whether activities are organized under a director, a board, or neither. Some localities, while engaging in development activities, have deliberately chosen not to establish a formal board or director position.

Of the 15 in-person and 84 online contacts surveyed, responses were received from 27 localities.

Because the survey was not intended to be a statistical study, the results primarily highlight similarities and draw inferences between areas. The following section presents the survey results along with the consultants' synthesis of information gathered

The survey results highlight comparisons between localities and show correlations between activities.

throughout the process to provide context and comparison. This additional information includes conversations and interviews with key personnel, the consultants' experience in the agriculture industry, and publically available data.

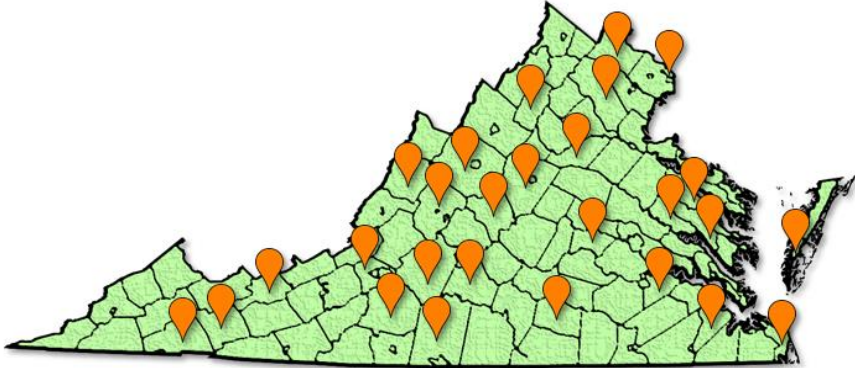
Comparing survey results to other statistical sources yields interesting correlations and provides a method for additional analysis of the responses. The relationships drawn between various data sets are not necessarily substantiated by other resources, but do allow for further discussion of the importance of ADBs and the factors that may lead to a locality having, or not having, a board or director in place.



SURVEY RESULTS

The figure below shows the locations of the 27 localities represented by the individual respondents. The survey reached many key areas of Virginia, as respondents were distributed evenly across the state and represent a mix of rural and urban localities.

Figure 1: Location of Survey Respondents



Each of the unique localities that responded to the survey, 26 counties and the city of Virginia Beach, are listed in the following table. The respondents represent 20 percent of the counties and independent cities in Virginia.

Of the 27 responding localities, seven stated they currently have an operating agricultural development board and/or an agricultural development director on staff. Of the remaining respondents, 20 did not have an ADB or agricultural development

Of the 27 responding localities, seven currently have an operating ag development board and/or an ag development director.

director. Respondents to the survey included 9 Urban and 18 Rural localities. Rural/Urban designations are further discussed in proceeding sections of this document, along with related implications¹.

The survey questions relating to whether the locality had an ADB and/or director were not mutually exclusive. As a result, two of the three counties that cited having a director—Loudoun and Fauquier—also reported having active ADBs. Washington County was the only other locality that indicated it had an agricultural development director but did not identify having an ADB.

Table 1: Formal ADB and/or Ag Development Director

Locality	Director	Board
Loudoun	Yes	Yes
Fauquier	Yes	Yes
Bedford	No	Yes
Augusta	No	Yes
Franklin	No	Yes
Pittsylvania	Yes	Yes
Washington	Yes	No
Albemarle	No	No
Virginia Beach (city)	No	No
Isle of Wight	No	No
Bath	No	No
Orange	No	No
King William	No	No
Prince George	No	No
Page	No	No
Bland	No	No
Lunenburg	No	No
Roanoke	No	No
Powhatan	No	No
Nelson	No	No
Rockbridge	No	No
King And Queen	No	No
Northampton	No	No
Campbell	No	No
Essex	No	No
Smyth	No	No
Arlington	No	No

Throughout this section of the document, localities listed in tables that have an established ADB, Director, or both, are highlighted in blue. In the text, “ADB” refers to those localities with a formal ADB and/or Director unless otherwise noted.

¹ Rural/Urban designation based on U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis list of Metropolitan Counties by State. Retrieved from <https://bea.gov/regional/docs/msalist.cfm> on 5/18/2015.

Determinants of Agricultural Development Activities

A variety of factors may influence whether a locality has an ADB or director, or if agricultural development is a priority for locality leadership. The consultants compared response information from the survey to publically available agricultural industry information; the results are presented below along with observations and discussion.

VADO Membership

In 2010, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) formed a group to facilitate networking and development among local government employees working in agricultural development. The Virginia Agricultural Development Officers Group (VADO) meets on a quarterly basis to discuss issues related to agricultural development in the region, best practices, and gather those seeking to coordinate within the region. Based on the 2015 VADO membership list, 11 of the 27 total respondents are members of VADO. It is interesting to note that all the responding localities that have an ADB, director, or both were represented in VADO membership except two: Franklin and Washington counties. While membership of locality representatives in the group may indicate some level of interest in the promotion of agriculture and agricultural development, localities

Table 2: VADO Member Localities

Respondent Locality
Albemarle County
Augusta County
Bedford County
Fauquier County
King And Queen County
Loudoun County
Lunenburg County
Nelson County
Page County
Pittsylvania County
Virginia Beach
Non-Respondent Locality
Botetourt County
Halifax County
Rockingham County

All but two localities with an ADB and/or director are members of VADO.

may also simply choose to address agricultural development through other means.



Photo courtesy of Lisa Shannon

with only Arlington, Loudoun, Fauquier, and Albemarle counties reporting a higher per capita income. Loudoun and Fauquier counties, second and third in terms of per capita income among the respondents, are the only counties with per capita incomes above the state average that also reported having an ADB.

Per Capita and Farm Related Income

Levels of income, either on a per capita basis or related to farm activities, may influence a locality's decision to establish an ADB. According to estimates from the Census Bureau's 2013 American Community Survey, the average per capita income for the state of Virginia was \$33,493. **Of the localities that responded to the survey, 85 percent fell below this state average,**

The remaining four counties that responded to the survey and stated they had agricultural development boards have per capita incomes that fall below \$29,000. Pittsylvania County has the lowest per capita income of localities with an ADB, with an average of approximately \$21,583.

85 percent of responding localities fell below the average Virginia per capita income of \$33,493.

Table 3: Per Capita Income

Locality	Per Capita Income	Locality	Per Capita Income
1. Arlington County	\$62,018	15. Augusta County	\$25,519
2. Loudoun County	\$46,565	16. Washington County	\$25,109
3. Fauquier County	\$39,600	17. Franklin County	\$24,557
4. Albemarle County	\$37,239	18. Prince George County	\$24,434
5. Virginia Beach	\$31,934	19. King & Queen County	\$23,868
6. Roanoke County	\$31,728	20. Northampton	\$23,473
7. Powhatan County	\$31,252	21. Campbell County	\$23,231
8. Isle of Wight County	\$30,903	22. Page County	\$22,355
9. Bath County	\$28,704	23. Pittsylvania County	\$21,583
10. Bedford County	\$28,691	24. Essex County	\$21,532
11. Orange County	\$27,655	25. Smyth County	\$20,837
12. King William County	\$26,940	26. Bland County	\$18,501
13. Nelson County	\$26,059	27. Lunenburg County	\$17,630
14. Rockbridge County	\$25,638	VA Average	\$33,493

Although per capita income does not appear to be a strong indicator of a locality's decision to establish a formal ADB, analysis of county income can be further narrowed

Per capita income may not be a strong indicator of a locality's decision to institute a formal ADB.

by comparing farm related activities data from the 2012 agricultural census. Augusta, Loudoun and Fauquier counties had some of the highest incomes from farm related

activities of all localities responding to the survey, and Bath County had the lowest of the 27 respondents, at \$246,000. Of the responding localities, Arlington did not have any farm related income reported in the census.

All respondents that cited having either a board or director were among the top half of the responding counties by total farm related income, and all of them show total farm related income of more than \$2 million. This relationship may indicate that counties with higher overall agricultural income also tend to have formally organized ADBs. Localities that report significant income from farm activities should consider the importance of having an ADB or similar entity to focus efforts where they can do the most good within the county. Albemarle, Northampton, Essex, Orange, Rockbridge, and Nelson counties all have sizeable farm related income, but did not report having a formal ADB or director.

Counties with higher overall agricultural income tend to have formally organized ADBs.

Table 4: 2012 Ag Census Total Farm Related Income

Locality	Total Farm Related Income	Locality	Total Farm Related Income
1. Augusta County	\$7,159,000	15. Campbell County	\$1,731,000
2. Loudoun County	\$7,114,000	16. Virginia Beach	\$1,662,000
3. Fauquier County	\$6,461,000	17. Isle of Wight County	\$1,568,000
4. Albemarle County	\$5,684,000	18. Page County	\$1,057,000
5. Pittsylvania County	\$4,813,000	19. Powhatan County	\$1,042,000
6. Northampton County	\$4,144,000	20. Roanoke County	\$774,000
7. Essex County	\$3,576,000	21. Smyth County	\$663,000
8. Franklin County	\$2,918,000	22. Lunenburg County	\$598,000
9. Orange County	\$2,802,000	23. King William County	\$408,000
10. Bedford County	\$2,750,000	24. Prince George County	\$381,000
11. Washington County	\$2,115,000	25. Bland County	\$336,000
12. Rockbridge County	\$1,971,000	26. Bath County	\$246,000
13. Nelson County	\$1,882,000	27. Arlington County	Not Reported
14. King and Queen County	\$1,764,000		
Average	\$2,523,808	Median	\$1,823,000

Although wealthier localities may have more available resources, data show that percent of income from agriculture is a better indicator of whether a locality will have a board and director (and perhaps whether they should if they do not currently). **For localities most dependent on agricultural income, it becomes most crucial to take a strategic approach and invest in maximizing overall activity in that sector.**

Rural/Urban and Metropolitan/Non-Metropolitan Designations

For those considering an ADB and/or a director position, it is beneficial to consider the locality’s urban or rural designation. However, there are wide variety of definitions for “rural” and “urban” depending on the issuing agency and parameters considered. For example, classification may change depending on the methods and frequency in which the data is measured. Within counties, there can also be significant variance between rural and urban, as one part could be considered urban while other parts are considered rural. This section will examine some of these definitions and how they are determined.



Bureau of Economic Analysis Designations



The Commonwealth of Virginia consists of 95 counties and 38 independent cities. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis' (BEA) designation of Metropolitan counties by state²—which uses the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) guidelines as a basis for their analyses—

35 of the state's counties are designated as Metropolitan (Urban), while the remaining 60 counties are considered Non-Metro Rural), representing 37% and 63% of the total counties in Virginia respectively. The BEA list designates 10 independent cities as Metropolitan, representing 26% of the total number of independent cities, with the remainder designated as Rural (28 cities). Combining the two, the mix of Rural and Urban localities in the state is 66% to 34% respectively.

In Virginia, 35 counties are designated by BEA as Urban, while the remaining 60 are Rural- nearly identical to the sample mix.

Respondents to the survey included 26 unique counties and one independent city. ***This sample appears to be representative of the state as a whole, with 67% of respondents representing rural areas and 33% of respondents representing urban areas.*** The following table lists responding localities and designates them as Rural or Urban based on their inclusion on the BEA's list of Metropolitan Areas in Virginia.

ERS Rural-Urban Continuum Codes



For comparison, Rural and Urban classifications are also provided using the ERS's Rural-Urban Continuum Codes³ (an expanded Metro/Non-Metro designation). Based on the classifications of the codes (1-9), localities designated under codes 1-3 are considered Urban, while those designated with codes 4-9 are Rural. The rankings are as follows⁴:

Metro Counties

- 1** 1 million or more
- 2** 250,000-1 million
- 3** Fewer than 250,000

Non-Metro Counties

- 4** 20,000 or more, adjacent to metro area
- 5** 20,000 or more, not adjacent to metro area
- 6** 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to metro area
- 7** 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to metro area
- 8** Less than 2,500, adjacent to metro area
- 9** Less than 2,500, not adjacent to metro area

² Rural/Urban designation based on U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis list of Metropolitan Counties by State. Retrieved from <https://bea.gov/regional/docs/msalist.cfm> on 5/18/2015.

³ USDA ERS 2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes. Retrieved from www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/.aspx

⁴ USDA ERS rankings based on 2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes. Retrieved from www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/documentation.aspx.

The consultants asked survey participants what issues were priorities for their localities. When analyzing responses according to Rural vs. Urban localities based on BEA designation, some unexpected results became evident. Logically, Rural localities would be expected to select agricultural issues closely associated with their resources and that directly relate to their locality's characteristics. For example, 67% of the respondents classified as Rural selected Forestry as an issue they were addressing; however, 56% of Urban localities also selected this issue—a surprise, given their classification. Also unexpected is the lack of respondents from both Urban and Rural localities selecting Food Access as an issue they were addressing. For Rural localities, Food Access was selected the fewest number of times, and for Urban localities, Food Access tied with Ag Financing and Farm



Despite being classified as Rural or Urban both types of localities seem to have similar focuses.

Transition for the fewest selections by respondents. The following outlines a general map of responses.

- **The largest difference between respondents designated as Rural or Urban occurs in the area of Regulations:** with 39% of Rural localities and 89% of Urban localities selecting it as an issue they were addressing.
- **Issues where the spread between Rural and Urban respondents was smallest were Local Foods and Ag Financing,** with 72% of Rural localities and 78% of Urban localities selecting Local Foods, and 50% of Rural localities and 44% of Urban localities selecting Ag Financing.
- **Among responding Rural localities, the issues most often selected were Marketing, Local Foods, and Zoning/Land Use,** with 72% of the Rural respondents selecting these issues, while **Urban counties were most unified in selecting Marketing, Zoning/Land Use, and Regulations,** with 89% of responding urban localities selecting these areas.

More analysis related to respondent's issues and activity areas is contained in proceeding sections of this document.

Population Density



Due to the varying nature of classifications and definitions used in designating counties as Rural, Urban, Metropolitan, or Non-Metropolitan, areas that appear to be more rural in nature may still be designated as Metropolitan or Urban. For example, Franklin County is considered by many to be a rural county, but is included as a Metropolitan county on both the BEA's and ERS' lists. Isle of Wight, also

considered a more rural county in character, is also included as a Metropolitan area, most likely due to its proximity to the major population centers of Norfolk/Virginia Beach.

As an alternative to viewing the respondents solely according to their designation as Urban, Rural, Metropolitan, or non-Metropolitan, **population density can provide a more neutral view of the localities**. According to the STATS Indiana USA Counties in Profile web source, Virginia has a population density of 209.2 people per square mile. Respondents are ranked in the table below by their respective population densities.

Table 5: Respondents Ranked by Population Density (per Sq. Mile)⁵

Locality	Pop. Density/ Sq. Mile	Locality	Pop. Density/ Sq. Mile
Arlington	8,650.2	Franklin	81.6
Virginia Beach (city)	1,801.1	Page	76.6
Loudoun	678.2	Augusta	76.4
Roanoke	373.3	Smyth	70.2
Albemarle	142.9	Pittsylvania	64.4
Prince George	140.5	King William	58.8
Isle of Wight	113	Northampton	57.3
Campbell	109.6	Essex	43.7
Powhatan	108.6	Rockbridge	37.3
Fauquier	103.8	Nelson	31.4
Orange	101.8	Lunenburg	29
Washington	97.9	King and Queen	22.6
Bedford	92.7	Bland	18.8
		Bath	8.7
Virginia	209.2	Respondent Median	81.6

With the exception of Loudoun County, the majority of respondents with a formal ADB and/or director position fall within a similar population density range (64-104 per square mile). This number places five of the seven localities with an ADB and/or director at or above the median population density of 81.6 (Loudoun, Fauquier, Washington, Bedford, and Franklin) and two below the median (Augusta and Pittsylvania).



⁵ STATS Indiana USA Counties in Profile. Retrieved from www.stats.indiana.edu/uspr/a/us_profile_frame.html. Accessed 6-30-15.

Issues Identified



As part of the survey, respondents were asked to identify which of 13 distinct issues their locality currently addressed in their agricultural economic development efforts. These categories consisted of Ag Financing, Agribusiness Recruitment, Agritourism, Education, Farm Transition, Farmland Preservation, Food Access, Forestry, Infrastructure, Local Foods, Marketing, Regulations, and Zoning/Land Use, and Other. The following section provides some survey

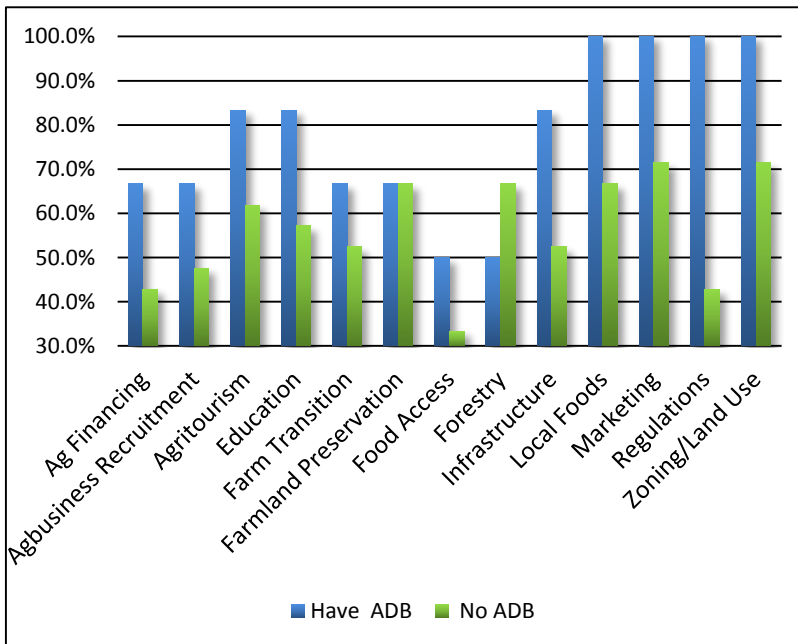
results along with additional information about some of the issue categories included on the survey.

Addressing the Issues

The following figure details the percentage of localities (divided between those with and without formal ADBs, Directors, or both) that reported addressing the various issues presented in the survey. Similarities for localities with and those without an ADB and/or director include Food Access, which displayed the lowest engagement level across all respondents, and Farmland Preservation, in which nearly 70% of both ADB and non-ADB localities reported engagement.

Localities with ADBs reported a focus on Marketing, Local Foods, Zoning/Land Use, and Regulations.

Figure 2: Percent of Surveyed Counties Engaging in Activity



Issues that were being addressed by respondents varied widely among ADB and non-ADB localities.

For those with ADBs, the survey results highlight an overwhelming focus (100%) on the issues of Marketing, Local Foods, Zoning/Land Use, and Regulations. These areas are much broader in scope and may reflect an ADBs' focus on addressing areas that affect multiple facets of agriculture in a region. Marketing and Zoning/Land Use were the

topics most prevalent amongst non-ADB localities, with Farmland Preservation, Local Foods, and Forestry close behind. Non-ADB localities also reported a higher focus in Forestry than ADB counties, an area that is usually specialized both within the state and the county.

Farm Transition and Farmland Preservation



Farm Transition and Farmland Preservation are closely related issues. By transitioning farmland from one generation to the next, families are also preserving the land for future agricultural use. Farmland preservation allows the land to continue to be utilized for agricultural activities. **Of the localities surveyed, 18 reported they are addressing farmland transition, 15 are addressing farmland preservation, and 12 are addressing both issues.**

The USDA's Census of Agriculture periodically reports the amount of land in farms for both states and counties. From the 2007 to the 2012 figures, Virginia land in farms overall have experienced a slight increase of 2%, rising from approximately 8.1 million acres to 8.3 million acres. Despite this recent increase, when viewed over a longer horizon, the state has experience significant overall declines in land in farms in the past few decades. Since the 1964 Census of Agriculture, land in farms has declined from just over 12 million acres to 8.3 million in 2012, an overall decline of more than 3.5 million acres over a 48 year time span.

Changes in the amount of land in farms from one census to another is only a one-dimensional view of the issue, since it does not report whether land has been lost to development or other uses. However, other sources, such as the Farmland Information Center, track agricultural land converted to developed land, and reports a steadily increasing number of agricultural acres lost to development.

Farmland transition and preservation are important for ensuring agriculture remains viable in rural communities.



Of the 27 responding localities, **16 reported either no change or an increase in their land in farms between the 2007 and 2012 Census of Agriculture.** Smyth County exhibited the largest increase, at 30.9%, representing an increase of just over 39,000 acres in farmland, while King and Queen County exhibited

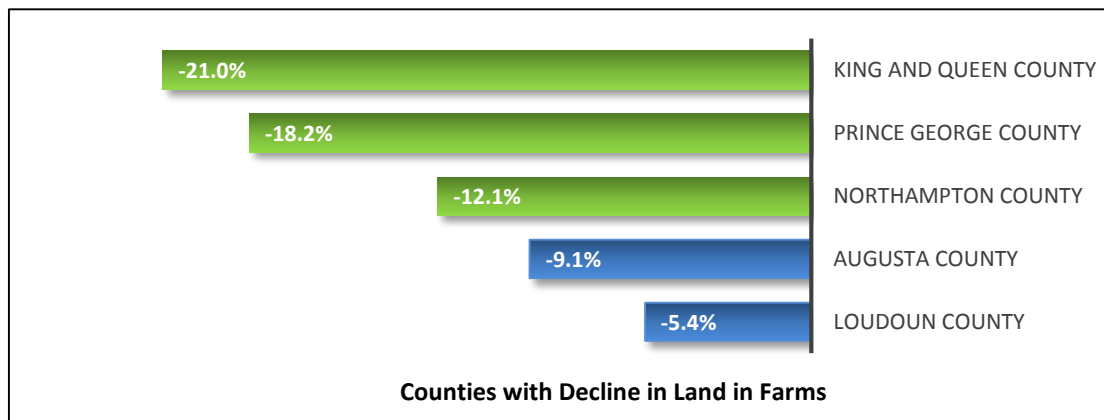
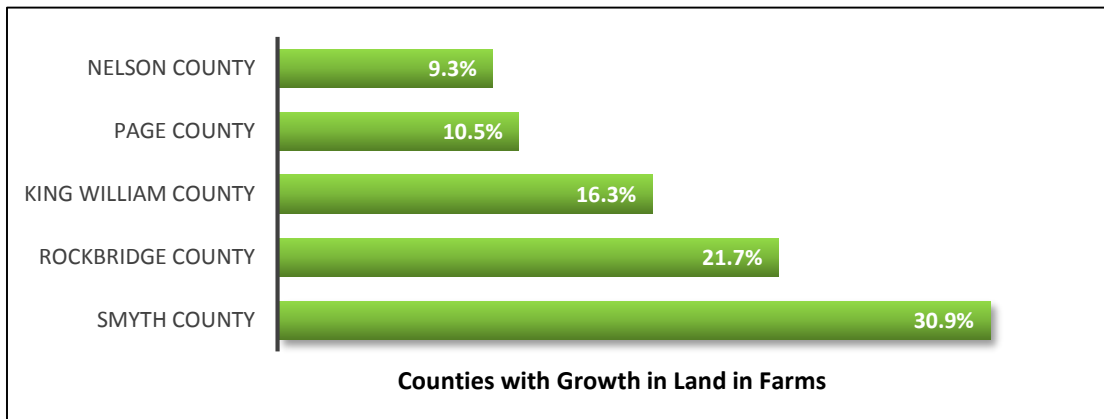
the largest decrease, at -21%, representing a loss of more than 11,000 acres of farm land.

The following charts show the five responding localities with the largest growths in land in farms and the five localities that experienced the largest decline in land in farms over the same period, as reported by the 2012 Census of Agriculture. This data represents the trend between 2007 and 2012 for these localities. Of the ten localities presented in the charts, only Smyth and Rockbridge counties did not



indicate they are addressing either Farmland Transition or Farmland Preservation. Interestingly, these are the counties with the largest increase in land in farms over the census periods.

Figure 3: Percent of Growth and Decline of Land in Farms from 2007 to 2012



Among those localities responding to the follow up question asking for a ranking of their issues and activity areas by order of importance, only one ADB locality (Fauquier County) selected Farmland Preservation as its top priority area. One non-ADB locality (Campbell County) also chose this category. Two counties chose Farm Transition (Powhatan and Lunenburg counties). The following table presents these counties and their corresponding changes in land in farms between 2007 and 2012.

Table 6: Increase/Decrease in Farm Land for Selected Localities

Locality	2012	2007	Increase/Decrease
Fauquier County	228,285	222,486	2.6%
Campbell County	150,689	140,359	7.4%
Powhatan County	32,081	29,792	7.7%
Lunenburg County	82,722	83,232	-0.6%

Only nine of the respondents represent localities designated as Metropolitan; of these Metropolitan counties, only three experienced declines in land in farms from 2007 to 2012. King William County experienced the largest increase, at 16.3%, representing an increase of more than 7,000 acres. A county's designation as Metropolitan does not appear to correlate with a decline in land in farms, with or without the presence of an ADB, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Localities Designated as Metropolitan (Urban)

Locality	Increase/Decrease Land in Farms
Arlington, VA	0.0%
Fauquier	2.6%
Franklin, VA	-1.2%
Isle of Wight, VA	3.0%
King William, VA	16.3%
Loudoun, VA	-5.4%
Nelson County, VA	9.3%
Powhatan, VA	7.7%
Virginia Beach, VA (Independent City)	-1.8%

Agritourism

Agritourism is a growing segment of agricultural activity in the United States.

Among all respondents, 18 reported addressing the issue of Agritourism. Of the seven respondents that were identified as having an ADB, Ag Development Director, or both, six stated that they are addressing Agritourism. Fauquier County was the only county with an ADB that did not cite that they addressed agritourism.

Bedford County (with an ADB) and Nelson County (without an ADB) both ranked Agritourism as their most important area. It is notable that Nelson lists this as their top priority, since the county only had 14 farms reporting Agritourism and Recreational Services income, and the actual income figure was withheld in the Census of Agriculture. This may reflect that the county has identified this area as a potential opportunity and is working to identify and address barriers.

Of the seven respondents with an ADB and/or director, six reported addressing Agritourism.

Based on the 2012 Census of Agriculture, Loudoun and Albemarle counties had the highest incomes from Agritourism and Recreational Services of all the survey respondents. While both counties cited that they were addressing agritourism, Albemarle ranked it among its top five most important issues. This may reflect that Loudoun County's agritourism sector is established enough that they have chosen to focus their resources elsewhere.

The following table shows the agritourism income of the surveyed localities from largest to smallest.



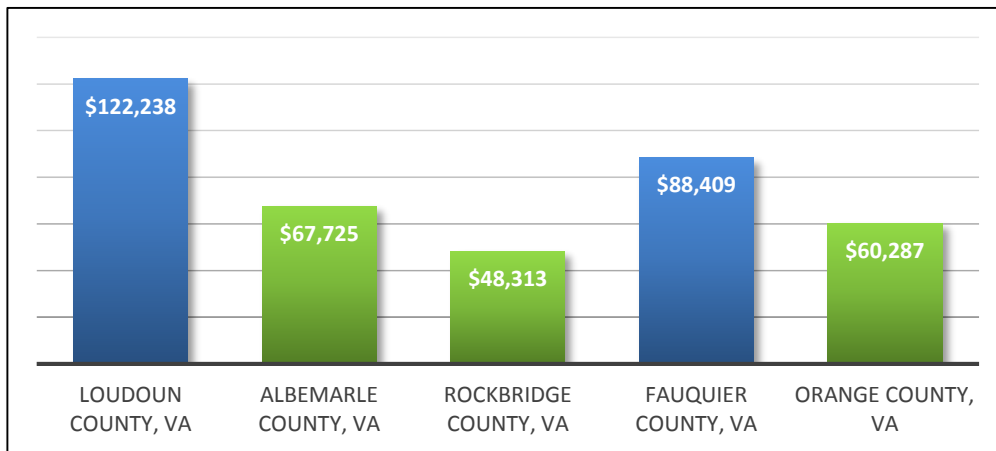
Table 8: Income from Agritourism and Recreational Activities; 2012 Ag Census

Locality	Income from Agritourism and Recreational Activities	As a % of Total Farm Related Income
Loudoun County	\$2,036,000	28.6%
Albemarle County	\$1,693,000	29.8%
Rockbridge County	\$251,000	12.7%
Fauquier County	\$192,000	3.0%
Orange County	\$161,000	5.7%
Virginia Beach	\$141,000	8.5%
Bath County	\$126,000	51.2%
Pittsylvania County	\$102,000	2.1%
Bedford County	\$91,000	3.3%
King And Queen County	\$75,000	4.3%
Northampton	\$41,000	1.0%
Augusta County	\$36,000	0.5%
Essex County	\$31,000	0.9%
Prince George County	\$17,000	4.5%
Washington County	\$12,000	0.6%
Franklin County	\$10,000	0.3%
Page County	\$9,000	0.9%
Campbell County	\$6,000	0.3%
Isle of Wight County	\$4,000	0.3%
Lunenburg County	\$0	0.0%
Arlington County	*Not Reported	-
Bland County	*Not Reported	-
King William County	*Not Reported	-
Nelson County	*Not Reported	-
Powhatan County	*Not Reported	-
Roanoke County	*Not Reported	-
Smyth County	*Not Reported	-

*The Census of Agriculture withholds information that may reveal the identity of respondents.

The five counties with the highest agritourism earnings also report median household incomes at the higher end of the range of surveyed localities. According to the Census Bureau, the 27 localities' median household incomes range from approximately \$33,500 in Northampton to \$122,000 in Loudoun County. Though agritourism figures do not solely represent individuals from the county, as visitors frequently come from outside the county and state, there may be a correlation between household incomes represented by residents and in surrounding counties and the amount of agritourism, as individuals with higher discretionary incomes may be more inclined to engage in these activities.

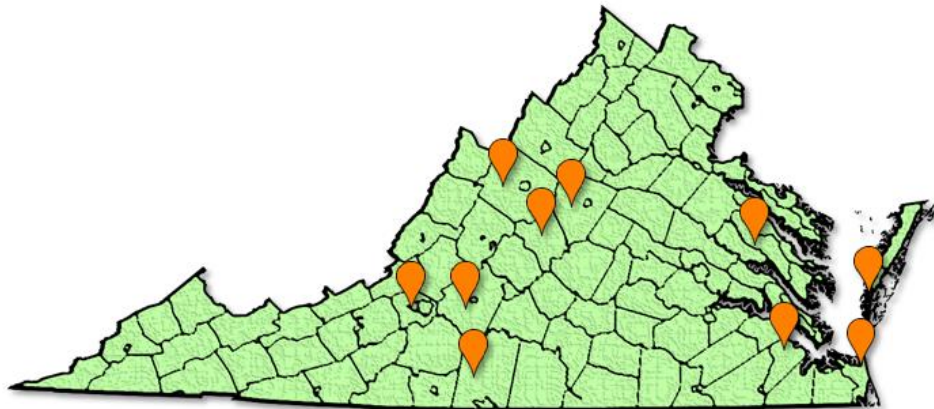
Figure 4: Median Household Incomes of Top Agritourism Counties, 2009-13



Food Access

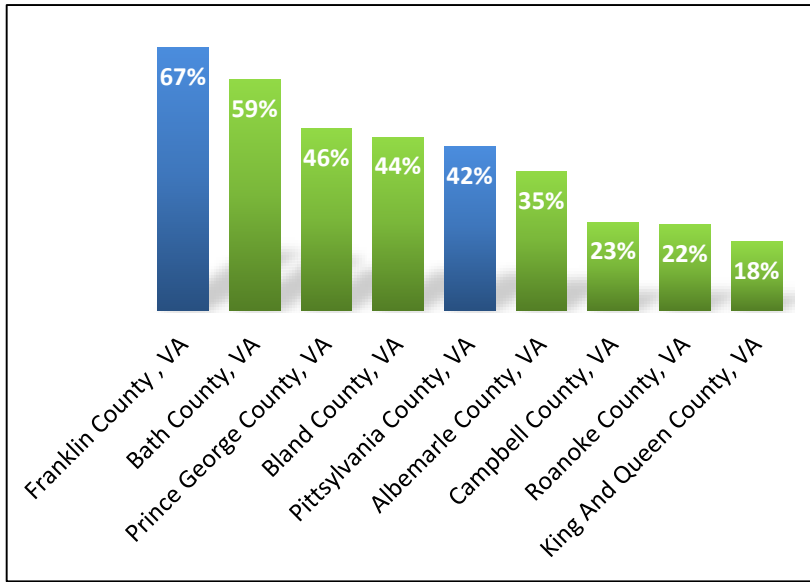
Of the 27 responding localities, 10 stated they were addressing Food Access. Though 4 of these 10 localities also responded to the follow-up question asking for a priority ranking of their activity areas, **the Food Access category was the only category not selected as a top five priority area.**

Figure 5: Location of Respondents Addressing Food Access Activities



The USDA Food Access Research Atlas (USDA Atlas) provides direct data on populations with low food access and defines low food access as a percentage of people with low access to a supermarket or large grocery store. **According to the Atlas, nine of the survey respondents have a percentage of their population suffering from low food access.** These counties are: Franklin, Bath, Prince George, Bland, Pittsylvania, Albemarle, Campbell, Roanoke, and King and Queen. The following chart outlines the counties and their corresponding percentages.

Figure 6: Percentage of Population with Low Food Access



Of the 9 localities identified by the Atlas as having percentages of their population with Low Food Access, only four (Pittsylvania, Albemarle, King and Queen, and Roanoke counties) stated that it was an issue they were addressing.

Low Food Access is often associated with urban areas; however, of the nine localities with populations suffering from low food access, only Franklin County is

designated as urban, while the remaining eight are considered Rural localities.

Pittsylvania and Franklin Counties were the only two ADB localities that also had individuals with low food access, while Bland, Bath, Campbell, Albemarle, King and Queen, Prince George, and Roanoke were the non-ADB localities with percentages of the population considered "low food access" according to the USDA.

Only 45 percent of the localities with low food access reported addressing the issue within their ADB work.

Since low food access and poverty are often closely related issues, examining the percent of a localities population living under the poverty level from the 2010 Census may show correlations between respondent's focus on Food Access and their respective poverty statistics.



On average, the responding localities without an ADB and/or director were also areas that had higher percentages of their population under the poverty level (12.78% for non-ADB vs. 9.64% for ADB localities).

Among all respondents, Loudoun County (an ADB locality) reported the lowest percentage of individuals living under poverty at 3.6%, with Powhatan (a non-ADB locality) at 5.4% being the second lowest. Northampton and Lunenburg counties had the highest percentages among all respondents and among non-ADB localities, at 24.3% and 22.6% respectively. Pittsylvania and Franklin counties were the localities with ADBs that had the largest percent of population living under the poverty level, at 14.5% and 14%.

Forestry

A limited amount of public data about the number of forested acres primarily used for agricultural activities is available at the county level. Information such as this may be internally available to county personnel and should be used in any self-assessment activities conducted at the county level. Those within the county government tasked with assessment activities should utilize any other non-public information at their disposal as well to help establish priorities for an ADB or similar agricultural development entity.

Of the 27 responding localities, 17 report addressing Forestry at the county level.

Based on their responses to the survey, 17 of the 27 respondent localities report addressing Forestry at the county level. The map shows the distribution of responding counties; with the exception of the DC metro area, their locations are spread fairly evenly throughout the state.

Figure 7: Respondents Addressing Forestry Activities

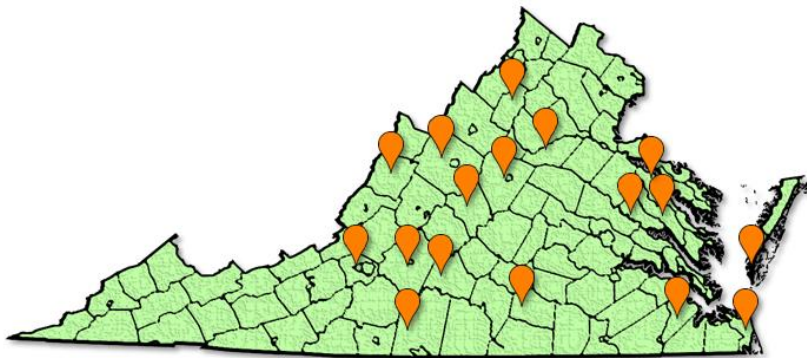


Table 11 below lists the harvest values of the top five counties in Virginia according to the Virginia Department of Forestry⁶, which lists harvest values from 2002-2012 by locality. In 2012, Brunswick County is reported as having the largest forestry harvest value, upwards of \$17.5 million; **of the localities that**

responded to the survey, Pittsylvania County had the highest value at 10.4 million and was number five on the list.

Of the respondents that represent ADB localities, only three stated they are currently addressing forestry (Augusta, Bedford, and Pittsylvania). Figure 11 on the following page shows the reported harvest values of the seven respondents with ADBs and whether or not they reported addressing Forestry.

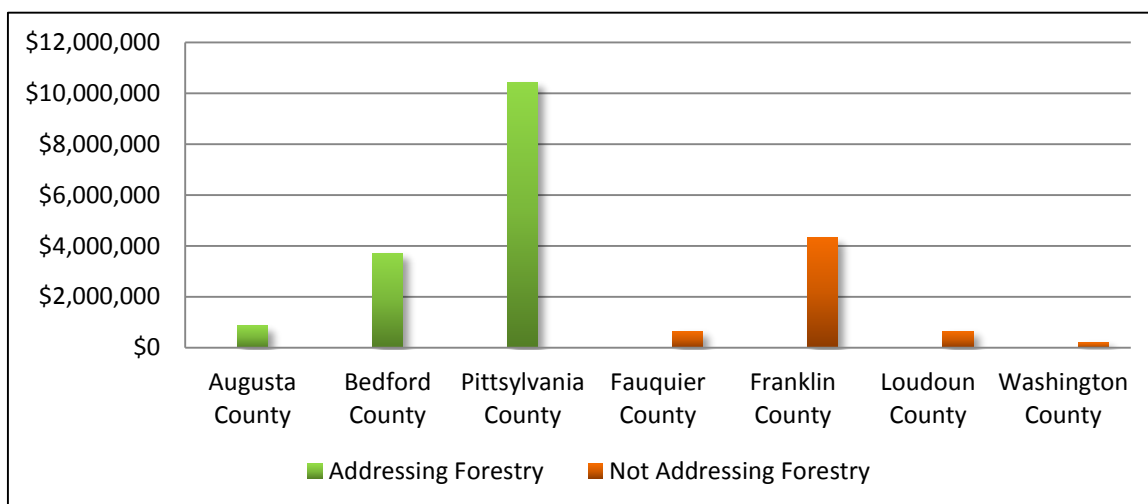
Table 9: Top 5 Counties by Forestry Harvest Values

County	Forestry Harvest Value
Brunswick	\$17,460,904
Buckingham	\$14,223,000
Charlotte	\$12,783,171
Sussex	\$11,977,641
Pittsylvania	\$10,440,653

When compared to the other localities with ADBs, Pittsylvania's harvest value is substantially higher, and though Bedford and Augusta counties also report addressing forestry issues, their harvest values are on par with the three remaining counties that did not report addressing forestry.

⁶ Virginia Department of Forestry. "Harvest Value Listed by Locality Name." www.dof.virginia.gov/harvest/data/harvest-value-name.htm

Figure 8: Forestry Harvest Values of Counties with ADBs



There appeared to be no correlation between the harvest value of forestry and whether respondents stated that they were addressing Forestry as an issue, or whether the respondent represented an ADB locality.

Among those localities that responded to the follow-up question asking for a 1-5 ranking of activity areas included in the survey, only two included Forestry in their rankings: King William County (ranked Forestry as #3) and Essex County (ranked Forestry as #2). While Pittsylvania noted in the original survey that their county was addressing forestry issues, they did not rank Forestry in their response to the follow-up question, despite their relatively large forestry harvest values. Franklin County also shows significant harvest value, but did not include Forestry in their rankings either.

Other

The “other” category allowed respondents to write in areas they were addressing that were not otherwise listed. While there were some unique responses, respondents did not identify any major areas that were not already included in some form in the survey.

Table 10: Other Activities as Specified by Survey Respondents

Locality	Activity
Albemarle County	Organic Farming, GAP Food Aggregation, Flash Freezing
Isle of Wight	Agribusiness Retention
Lunenburg County	Bio-Solids
Prince George County	Veterans to Farming
Arlington County	Urban Agriculture
Powhatan County	At this time, none of the above

Prioritizing Activities

To understand priorities amongst the specific issues and activity areas included in the original survey, those who responded were sent a follow-up question asking them to rank their top five issues on a scale of 1 to 5, with one (1) being the most important, and five (5) being the least. All 27 localities that responded to the original survey were sent the follow-up question, and 14 replied.

Agribusiness Recruitment was the highest ranked priority area among all responding localities.

The resulting rankings were weighted to determine areas designated as highest priority levels. The following section reports the results of the follow-up ranking and highlights some

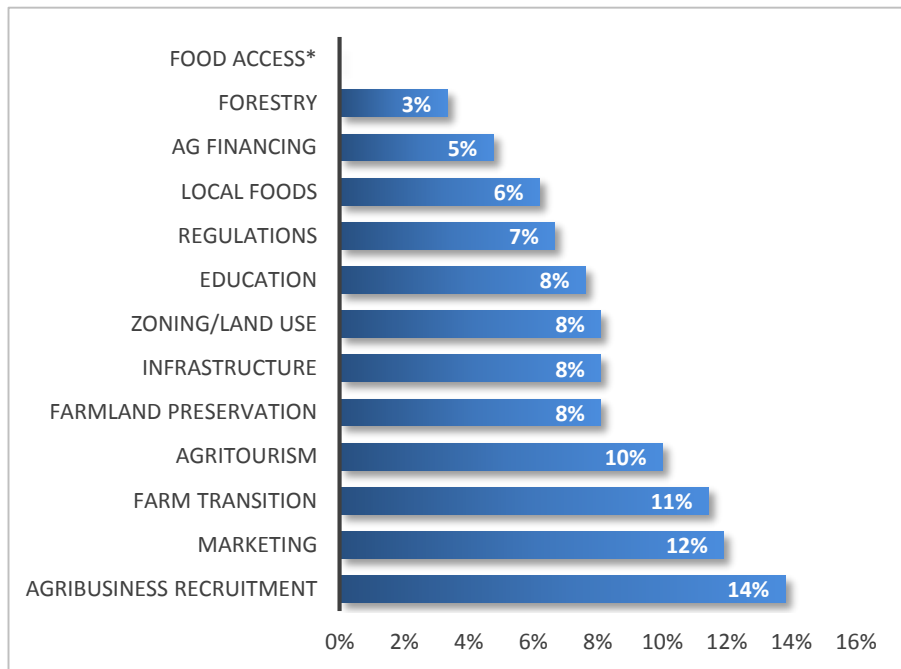
activity areas by providing contextual information for comparison with the survey results.

For reporting purposes, the consultants divided the results among localities with a formal ADB, Ag Director, or both, and those without to identify any trends.

Overall, **Agribusiness Recruitment was the highest ranked priority area among all localities that responded to the follow-up question.**

Marketing, Farm Transition, Agritourism, and Farmland Preservation round out the top five highest priority areas designated by respondents.

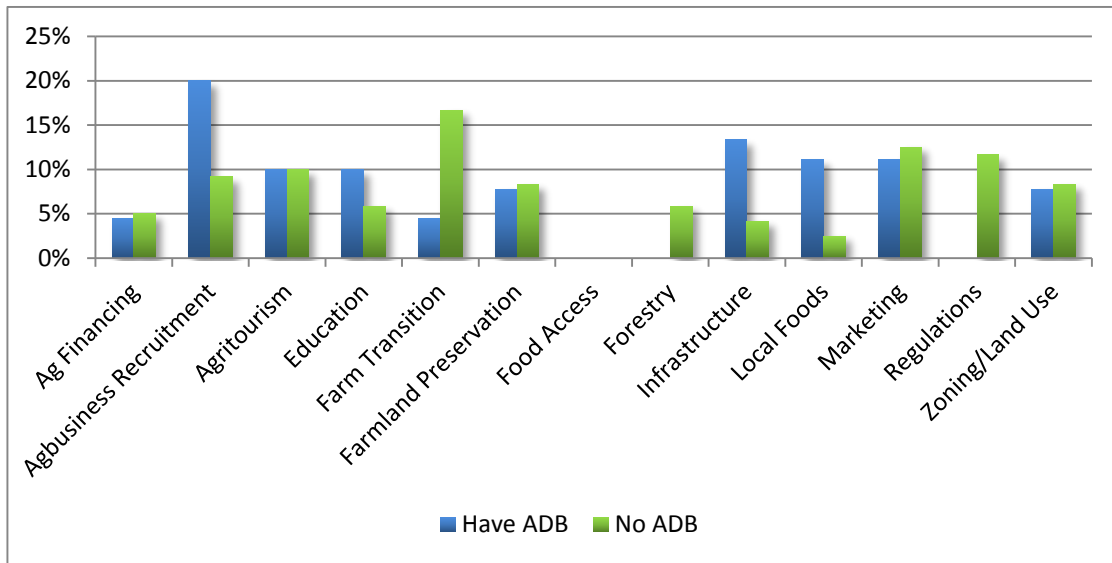
Figure 9: Highest Priority Areas: Total Responses



The top four highest priority areas for respondents with ADBs (representing a majority of the ranking points at 56%) are Agribusiness Recruitment, Infrastructure, and Marketing and Local Foods (tied for fourth). Interestingly, Regulations, Forestry, and Food Access were not ranked by any of the respondents with ADBs.

The top four priority areas among respondents without ADBs (also representing the majority of ranking points at 51%) are Farm Transition, Marketing, Regulations, and Agritourism. When responses from ADB and non-ADB counties are viewed in aggregate, a variety of categories were emphasized with no single category garnering the majority of rankings out of all responses.

Figure 10: Priority Comparison With/Without ADB



The only overlapping priority area within both categories' top four rankings is Marketing. Of all the categories respondents were asked to rank, Food Access was the only category not selected by any of the respondents for ranking.

Table 11: Top Activity Areas

Top Four Activities (by Total Ranking Points)	
Have ADB	
1	Agribusiness Recruitment
2	Infrastructure
3	Marketing
4	Local Foods
No ADB	
1	Farm Transition
2	Marketing
3	Regulations
4	Agritourism

Of those localities with an ADB, Agribusiness Recruitment was identified as being the highest priority activity area, with 3 of the 6 localities with ADBs choosing this category as the most important (ranked as 1) area of focus for their county. Among localities without ADBs, the 8 responses were more evenly distributed among the selections; Farm Transition (2) was the top choice, while other areas such as Agribusiness Recruitment, Agritourism, Education, Farm Transition, Farmland Preservation, Marketing, and Zoning/Land Use each only received a single number one ranking.

Given the current local foods climate in Virginia and the U.S., the low ranking for Local Foods as a priority area is surprising. While localities with ADBs included this category in their top four rankings, it was only selected by one respondent of the counties without ADBs. This result may also reveal the fact that an emphasis on Local Foods works best when an area has a solid agriculture industry as a whole. Within this analysis, ADB counties seemed more consistent in their emphases than non-ADB counties.

Overall, localities with active ADBs exhibit more consistent focus on fewer activity areas.

The categories ranked in the top four for localities with ADBs reveal interrelated areas—Agribusiness Recruitment, Marketing, and Local Foods—all areas that can be emphasized with similar activities. Along with Infrastructure, these categories represent long-term components of agricultural development. These responses may indicate that these counties have established a solid foundation in agricultural economic development and are moving on to second tier issues.

Areas with ADBs exhibit more consistent and focused agricultural planning and action.

The consistency among ADB priorities paves the way for regional, cross-county collaborative efforts.

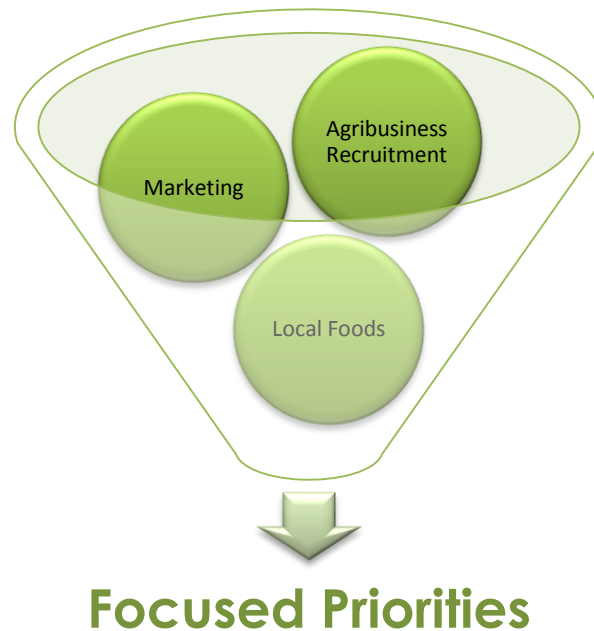


Photo courtesy of Freddie Wydner

Since many counties with ADBs share common goals and emphasize similar activity areas, this may lead to a natural ability to collaborate on larger regional projects that can help each county work better toward their individual goals.

Non-ADB counties exhibited a wider spread in their selection of the activities listed. It may be that the creation of an ADB helps a county build a consensus of their top priorities and taking the next step of creating a work-plan to focus on

specific issues further hones the application of a locality's resources. The responses from those counties without an ADB reveal the multitude of concerns faced by the agricultural sector and how essential a strategic, targeted approach is for a county when addressing them.



ADB Details

Respondents that reported having a formal ADB were asked additional open-ended questions in order to gather details about the board and its operations. The open-ended nature of these survey questions means that the responses are not always well-suited to statistical summaries. Short-answer type responses have been synthesized in order to gain insight into common or successful practices, and the results are presented below in the order they were asked on the survey.

For the most part, there were a broad range of responses to these more detailed ADB questions. The diversity of respondents' answers may be a result of the relative newness of these entities in the state, and the lack of a well-defined role for ADBs. Most boards have been established for a variety of reasons and through different methods, with some boards set up for a single purpose while others have grown organically from other committees or governing bodies.

Localities can structure their ADBs in a way that makes sense for their level of activity, funding, focus, and goals.

The breadth of the responses also indicates the flexibility inherent in ADBs. Depending on the purpose for which they are established and the goals they are tasked with accomplishing, counties and other localities are able to structure their ADBs in a way that makes sense for their level of activity, funding, and focus.

Age of the ADB

Respondents with ADB or directors were asked when their boards or positions were established. The following table shows the wide range of dates. Loudoun and Fauquier Counties have the most established boards, at older than 15 years apiece, while the rest of the participants were all established within the last 7-8 years.

Table 12: Established Date of ADBs

Locality	Date Est.
Franklin County, VA	2008
Augusta County, VA	2007
Bedford County, VA	2007
Pittsylvania County, VA	2007
Fauquier County, VA	late 1990s
Loudoun County, VA	1998

Surprisingly, most of the respondents with ADBs did not indicate that their board had been established by county ordinance. Only one locality, Loudoun County, reported that its board had been established this way.

Funding and Budgeting

With a newer entity such an ADB, funding can be a significant obstacle to a new board's effectiveness. Follow-up interviews emphasized how **a lack of consistent and meaningful funding can cripple the effectiveness of the ADB**. Boards often face the "chicken or the egg" dilemma, because funders typically want to see results before committing funding, while ADBs are limited in their ability to address issues effectively without it.

A lack of consistent and meaningful funding can cripple the effectiveness of the ADB

When asked specifically about sources of funding for their respective ADBs, responses included the county general fund, portions of the overall economic development budget for the county, and a mix of grant and funds from chamber of commerce

membership dues and partnerships with county extension agencies. The most frequently cited source of funds was from the county's economic development budget, with three of the six respondents with ADBs reporting that some portion of funds came from this source.

Follow-up interviews further highlighted the wisdom of fostering close ties with the county's economic development entity. Economic development is traditionally a funding area for county level governments, and presenting agriculture projects in light of their overall economic impact can help provide economic development entities with new ideas for projects and more closely tie agricultural success with overall community health and success.

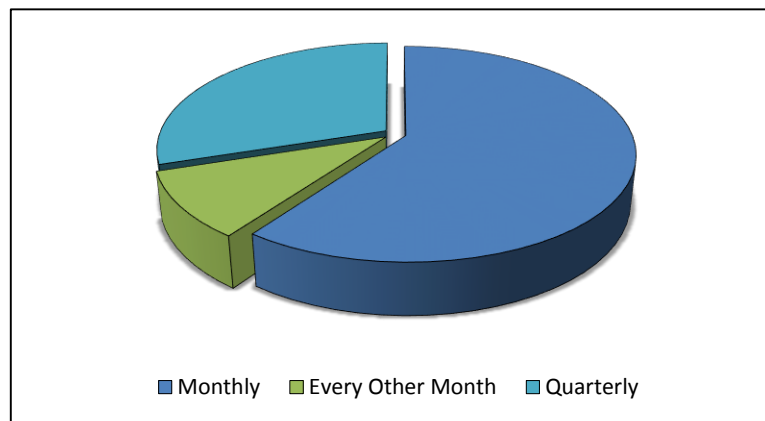
Participants with ADBs were asked to provide annual budget information for their respective boards. The great majority listed not having a specific budget for their board. Those that responded, stated their budget reached as high as \$11,400, with some indicating they had no regular funding source and instead had to rely on project specific approval from the board of supervisors or other governing entity or funding that varied from year to year. Within the survey, many respondents commented that while they may not have a specific budget, its activities were funded within the context of other economic development activities. This money was divided amount numerous development activities, not solely dedicated to the board.

Only one locality reported having a set budget amount. Other responses mentioned that while the board was not provided with its own dedicated budget, program implementation was supported with funding from other agencies, such as the Department of Economic Development or County Department of Agriculture, and in many cases, spread over multiple programs instead of one dedicated program.

Frequency of Board Meetings

Counties with ADBs were also asked about the frequency with which they held board meetings. The majority (60%) of respondents indicated that their boards were convened on a monthly basis, while about 30% met on a quarterly basis, and about 10% every other month.

Figure 11: How Often Ag Boards Meet



Besides revealing the most common meeting practices, the frequency of board meetings did not seem to correlate to any other questions and responses asked in the survey. The fact that certain boards met more often did not seem to indicate higher levels of activity or effectiveness.

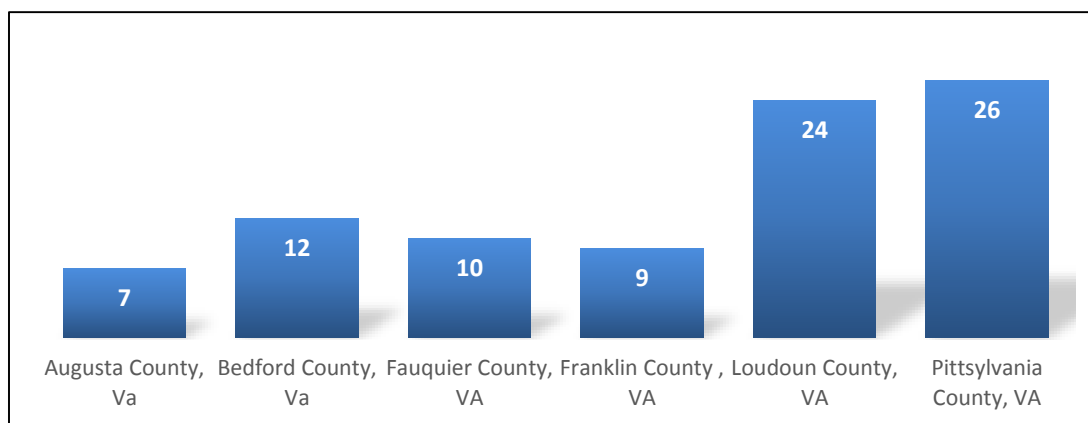
Membership

Counties that indicated they had an ADB were also asked to report their number of board members. The results varied widely, with numbers ranging from seven in Augusta County, to 26 in Pittsylvania.

From the additional questions asked, such as the issues being addressed by each county and their associating priority levels, there did not appear to be any significant difference based on the relative size of the localities' ADBs. Both Augusta and Pittsylvania Counties reported addressing each of the 13 issues listed, and while their rankings showed diverse rankings overall, both counties ranked their number one and number five priority areas as the same issues: Agribusiness Recruitment and Local Foods respectively.

Regardless of relative size and location, ADBs tend to focus priorities on similar issues.

Figure 12: Number of ADB Members



Different ADBs also exhibit varied internal organization characteristics, with some respondents indicating formal divisions within the body of the board. Pittsylvania's 26 members, for example, are divided among 14 voting and 12 non-voting members. Other characteristic designations included members representing specific zones within the county combined with at-large members or representatives from other entities, such as Farm Bureau.

Some boards have members appointed by another county entity or through a selection process, while at least one respondent, Albemarle County, indicated that their board's membership comprised of self-selected members of the chamber of commerce, based on their interest in ag-related issues. The most common responses to how members are selected include appointment by the county board of supervisors or through a nomination committee and approval process.

One open-ended question regarding advice was included in the survey. Respondents were asked: "What advice would you give to a county thinking about establishing an ADB?" and three of the respondents that answered the question addressed the key concept of board member selection.

Having an "interdisciplinary perspective" and ensuring "multiple connections to agriculture industry (not just a farming background)" were highlighted in the responses. Other responses mentioned trying to maintain a "full representation of all ag sectors" and having as "diverse a board as possible." One respondent suggested including representatives from outside of the agriculture industry, such as tourism or the chamber of commerce.

Finding members from various backgrounds can help an ADB address wide ranging issues.

Other responses included the importance of having a strong connection with the board of supervisors. Suggestions included having board of supervisors support, and tying the ADB directly to the board of supervisors for the county, and extended all the way to "allow BOS [Board of Supervisors] to fully appoint ADB members." A close tie to the BOS was cited as being necessary to create "information flow and collaboration."

Follow-up interviews with agricultural development personnel revealed key insights as well. One highlighted point was that the board often has members who serve in

Finding a balanced assortment of members to include on a locality's ADB can positively impact its ability to enact positive change.

different non-formal roles, from a group dynamics perspective. While nuanced, these points reveal how finding the right assortment of members to include on a county's ADB can greatly impact its effectiveness.

Boards seem most effective when they have an individual or individuals who are willing to serve as the "champion" of agriculture for the region. Having the positive influence of someone who is passionate and personally involved in agriculture within the board's membership can help create a positive "can-do" environment for the whole board. This role can keep activities focused on doing the most good for the county's producers.

Another important role mentioned was having a "forward thinker" personality. Morale and enthusiasm within a board can often be greatest at the beginning of a new project. Having an individual who is constantly looking forward and thinking about next steps or the next project for the board was cited as an effective way to prevent dwindling morale as the board successfully completes one project and searches for, or waits to begin the next.



An area often overlooked is the issue of handling member turnover. Follow-up interviews emphasized the necessity of maintaining a healthy balance between new and more experienced members, while ensuring continuity of purpose and focus for the board. Having large changes in membership during projects can hamper their effectiveness and diminish the board's efficiency in creating or maintaining lasting change.



Some counties mentioned the challenges of bringing together the traditional agricultural sector with newcomers who are more focused on direct marketing opportunities and environmental amenities.

In most counties, agricultural leadership is composed primarily of long-time farmers with deep roots in the community, growing commodities on relatively large acreage for a conventional market. These traditional farm families are the foundation for the agricultural sector, with long history on the land and strong connections amongst various elements of the farm economy. Adding to the mix are relative newcomers who have moved to the county within the last generation and may be

growing on smaller acreage for a direct market, perhaps adding value through additional processing or identity preservation.

Although these groups may have different focuses and experience, those counties most successful in their agricultural economic development efforts have found ways to combine the experience and commitment of the traditional sector with the entrepreneurial sense and marketing savvy of newcomers. While some counties report

Bringing together established farmers and newcomers is key to successful ag development.

challenges in bringing these two groups together, others have found that an ADB is an ideal forum to bring together this diverse range of experience and produce positive results.

It is critical to populate the ADB with a new set of members that doesn't overlap too heavily with existing forms of local agricultural leadership, such as the Farm Bureau or Soil and Water Conservation District. Given the challenges of combining differing perspectives, some ADBs have emphasized the importance of skilled facilitation in an early stage of board development to assure that all voices are heard and valued.

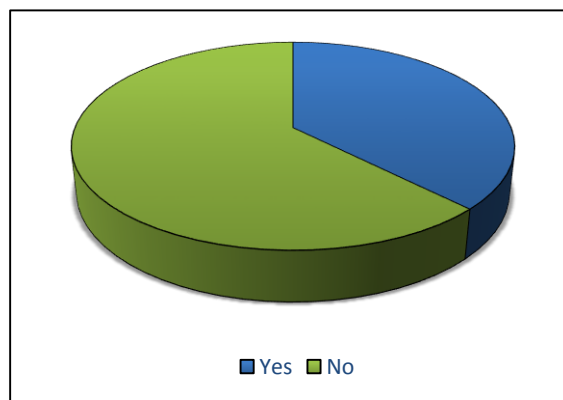
Meeting Minutes Published Online Depending on the individual rules established by the board, some ADBs publish their meeting minutes online to promote easy access and recordkeeping.

Participants were asked whether or not their meeting minutes were published online, with the majority of respondents stating that they did not publish their minutes online.

The choice to publish these minutes and related documents may also involve concerns over transparency and activity.

Boards may want to promote their activities through highlighting an open and transparent process, and publishing their meeting notes and minutes can be an integral component of this strategy.

Figure 13: Meeting Minutes Published Online

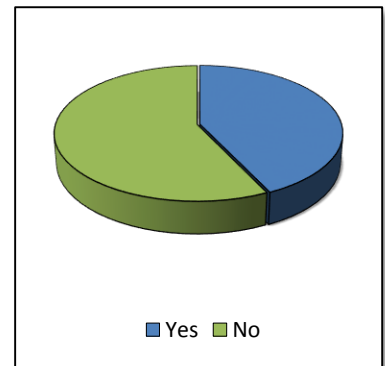


Some informal interviews revealed that refraining from publishing minutes online led to healthier discussions among members during meetings. One county mentioned they had chosen to form an Agricultural Advisory Committee rather than an official, county-selected and sanctioned board. Many of the issues committee discusses are still at an early phase of consideration or may include activities that could encounter some resistance from some segments of the citizenry (such as large scale livestock operations). An official ADB would require a full range of public notice, open meetings, and media coverage. With an advisory committee instead, participants may feel greater freedom to brainstorm more creatively and speak more candidly in meetings. This allows the committee to explore a broader range of possibilities and consider openly benefits and challenges of new enterprises.

Work Plan and Director

A work plan is typically a guiding document that outlines the current state of agricultural development, benchmarks, historical changes, future goals, responsibilities, and other components. ADBs often use such documents to set forth the plan of implementation based on goals that have been established for their locality in regards to agricultural development. **Of those counties that reported having ADBs, only about 40% said that they had an established work plan for the board.** Though the majority of counties reporting an ADB did not have a formal work plan, follow-up interviews and

Figure 14: Work Plan



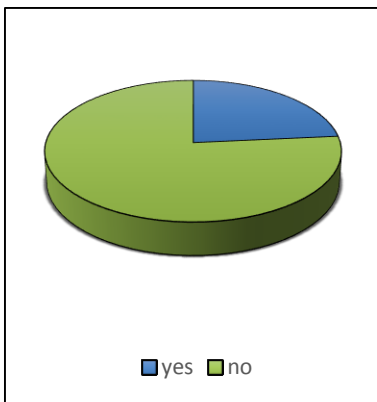
Work plans set forth strategies for reaching an area’s agricultural development goals.

discussions highlight the importance of having such a document for both

accountability and evaluation purposes as well as to maintain initiative and momentum.

Of the 16 localities that responded to this question on the survey, only four reported having an agricultural development director position. When viewing this question in

Figure 15: Ag Development Director



light of areas of activity, the presence or lack of a director position does not seem to correlate with the respondents' reported focus on certain activity areas over others, or in the number of total activities that the locality is focused on. From discussions and follow up interviews, having a director position is another feature of an ADB that can provide overall focus and direction. Some localities have even chosen to utilize a director position that reports to the Board of Supervisors in lieu of establishing a formal ADB.



EXAMPLES OF COUNTY AG DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

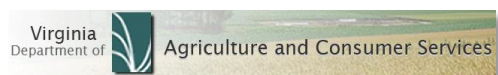
As the landscape of the country's agricultural industry changes, counties and localities have responded with a variety of methods to foster and preserve farm development in their areas. From establishment of boards and regulatory bodies, to programs that engage other vital components of the local economy, the methods employed are almost endless. This section provides a snapshot of some notable agricultural development activities in Virginia and other states.



- **The Commonwealth of Virginia** maintains a robust agricultural development atmosphere and utilizes multiple programs and initiatives to address many issues related to agricultural viability and development, including information and education, farmland preservation and transition, and funding.
- **Other localities in the United States** maintain a wide variety of agricultural industries and development activities. For the sake of brevity, the consultants attempted to select states that are representative of the country as a whole, yet contain some unique element to their agricultural preservation and development activities.

Virginia Examples

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)



VDACS works to ensure that Virginia's agricultural industry is growing and developing in ways that promote good environmental practices and

consumer protection. This department's Marketing Development Services links producers with markets, ensuring that Virginia products reach customers in the state and abroad. Some of VDACS' marketing programs include the Agriculture and Forestry Development Services (AFDS) and the Farm to School Program.⁷

The Agriculture and Forestry Development Services Unit (AFDS)

Established in 1995, the AFDS promotes and develops Virginia's agricultural economy by assisting in job creation and investment in agribusinesses. The unit works closely with producers and businesses link them with government agencies, assist with development plans, and find sources of funding. The AFDS also works with business from outside the state by recruiting companies and producers to expand into Virginia, offering assistance, and planning for the process.⁸

Farm to School Program



The Farm to School Program brings fresh, local produce to schools and universities in Virginia, aiding both farmers and the state. Farmers profit from a new market for their products while the state benefits from keeping more money within Virginia, promoting an increased agricultural economy, and encouraging a healthier and more local foods-oriented population. The school system spends over \$6 million each year on produce for this program, supporting local farmers instead of out of state food distributors.⁹

The Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Fund

Through AFID, the governor awards grants to divisions that want to help agricultural businesses focusing on value-added products. AFID grants target businesses that make use of Virginia-produced agricultural products, create jobs, and have a positive economic impact on their areas. Grant recipients must match state funds and meet specific performance requirements during the program to ensure sustainability and positive results.¹⁰



⁷ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/index.shtml

⁸ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/about.shtml

⁹ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/marketing/farm.shtml

¹⁰ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/afid.shtml

Office of Farmland Preservation

The Office of Farmland Preservation, located within VDACS, was established in 2001. According to their website, this office uses a five-pronged approach to stem the loss of farmland in the state:¹¹



- Work with other governmental and private organizations to help establish local purchase of development rights (PDR) programs by creating model policies and practices, establishing criteria to certify programs as eligible to receive funds from public sources, and determining methods and sources of funding for localities to purchase agricultural conservation easements.
- Create programs to educate the public about the importance of farmland preservation.
- Help farmers with farmland preservation efforts.
- Assist local governments in developing additional farmland preservation policies and programs.
- Administer the Virginia Farm Link program.

Virginia Farm Link Program (Generational Transition)



Administered by the Office of Farmland Preservation, the Virginia Farm Link Program was established to introduce farmers who are retiring with those who are in search of land, equipment, and knowledge in order to start up their own farm or expand an existing one. The program offers an online database to help new farmers find those interested in leaving the profession, as well as the Certified Farm Seeker program which helps new farmers create a business plan and find resources to enter the

agricultural industry. The VA Farm Link Program is vital to keeping farms in operation across the state and encouraging the next generation of farmers to step into the place of the aging producer population.¹²

Virginia Agricultural Development Officers Group (VADO)

VADO is a group of local government employees specializing in agricultural and economic development. The group meets every quarter around Virginia to organize networking and professional development. The group brings together local producers, businesses, and state agencies so they are better able to share information and learn from one another. VADO promotes statewide cooperation and the spread of development ideas.¹³

¹¹ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/index.shtml

¹² www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/program.shtml

¹³ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/vado.shtml

Agricultural Centers

In addition to state and local government institutions, other entities such as multi-use agriculture centers can also play a role in enhancing the promotion of agricultural industries in a region. There are many examples of counties and local organizations taking it upon themselves to promote the success of locally produced agriculture by providing infrastructure and support. These entities often take the form of partnerships to produce facilities for processing, space for direct marketing activities such as farmers' markets, or a designation area for agritourism or related agricultural events. Facilities may also include arenas, education centers, and other related forms of promotion. These types of entities are often formed through a collaborative process of multiple counties or agencies seeking to promote the agriculture industry of a region. The following are some selected examples from Virginia.

Counties and agencies can form partnerships to provide processing facilities, marketing spaces, and locations for agricultural events.

The Highland Center

thehighlandcenter.org

Located in Highland, Virginia, the center's overall focus of is on cultural and economic development; however, as a component of this mission, the center utilizes a Local Foods and Agriculture program that includes the following:



- *Community Kitchen*-Provides access to a full-service inspected kitchen for local food entrepreneurs.
- *Allegheny Mountain School*-A six-month intensive training program and twelve-month community outreach program for young adults focused on sustainable food production.
- *Allegheny Meats*-A USDA-inspected slaughter and educational center.
- *Faces of Farmers*-Profiles and stories of the areas farmers and producers.
- *Highland Farmers' Market*-A producer driven market selling Allegheny-grown products.
- *Mountain Foods*-A buying club focused on obtaining natural, organic, and local foods.
- *School Garden Project*-A partnership between the Highland Center, the Highland County Public School System and the Virginia Cooperative Extension/4-H to provide and maintain garden space for educational purposes.

Olde Dominion Agricultural Foundation, Chatham, VA

www.theodac.com

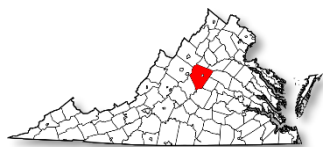


Olde Dominion Agricultural Foundation is an entity located in Southside Virginia that was formed by a group of local farmers with the purpose of supporting local agriculture in the area. It is supported by the Pittsylvania County Farm Bureau.

The Board of Directors for the foundation consists of 20 members from different counties including Bedford, Campbell, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, and Pittsylvania counties. Their mission is to "promote and support local agriculture while offering a community based facility to educate and entertain."

The agricultural complex run by the foundation is a multi-purpose facility used to house business and government offices. The complex includes an education and conference center, a farmers' market, and an arena that can be used for concerts, shows, equestrian events, and cattle sales.

County Example: Albemarle County



The Albemarle County Economic Development Office works together with the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce to take a leading role in agricultural economic development in Central Virginia. Through the formation of the Agribusiness Roundtable, the Chamber has created a forum in which 25 agricultural entrepreneurs and support agencies gather monthly to discuss new ideas in the farming economy. Each meeting highlights a distinct area of concern to membership, bringing in outside experts and suggesting action items to address opportunities and needs. An even larger group stays in touch through an automatic emailing service, highlighting production and marketing events in a timely fashion. One advantage of the Chamber's leadership is regional cooperation that goes beyond city or county lines. The Roundtable's meetings include farmers and business people from five counties, as well as the city of Charlottesville. This allows broad collaboration on issues of common interest and builds critical mass for infrastructure and promotional issues.

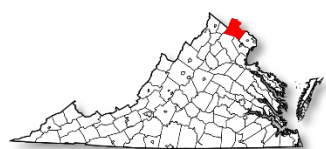
Albemarle County's Agribusiness Roundtable works to tie its activities with regional development.

The Albemarle County Economic Development Office plays the lead role within county government to support agricultural enterprises as a part of the overall economic development strategy. Since 2013, the Economic Development Office and Chamber have organized and hosted an annual Agribusiness Marketing Conference, bringing together farmers and outside expertise for a more in-depth discussion of topics raised during the Roundtable or over the course of the year.



The Economic Development office has served as the lead agency for local AFID grants focused on wineries and local food production. With 30 wineries in operation in the county, the Albemarle County Economic Development Office has placed particular emphasis on regulatory guidelines, policy issues, and marketing opportunities for local grape and wine producing enterprises. Future topics of exploration focus on the next generation of farmers, connecting middle and high school students and their curricula to agricultural careers.

County Example: Loudoun County



Loudoun County, whose farms face heavy development pressure on the outskirts of Washington, DC, has one of Virginia's oldest and strongest agricultural economic development programs. Formed in 2000, the Rural Economic Development Council (REDC) helps guide the work of the Rural Business Division of the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development. The REDC's 25 member board is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Agendas and minutes for their monthly meetings are posted online.

The Rural Business Division focuses primarily on promoting agricultural products and assists in the development of new agricultural businesses. The agricultural development staff produces informational materials and sponsors educational programs along with agritourism events throughout the year. Their services include:

- Assisting landowners with decisions about what crops to grow or additional agriculture services provided
- Farm business planning
- Coordination with Cooperative Extension for technical assistance
- Marketing and promotions of your rural business
- Navigation through the zoning/permitting process

In 2011, the Board of Supervisors authorized the REDC to create a Rural Economic Business Development Strategy for Loudoun County. The REDC created 15 subcommittees for each sector in which agriculture could positively influence the local economy and quality of life. Through extensive organizational efforts and public outreach, this project completed a thorough determination of need and opportunity in each area, engaging over 300 individuals in the process over 18 months. Each

Loudoun County's REDC engaged over 300 individuals in determining needs and development opportunities in each ag sector.

subcommittee sector completed a report, which the REDC compiled into an overall strategy to be pursued through collaborative work and coordinated fundraising. Recommendations in this report include general business development support (such as a business accelerator and a

peer consulting network), marketing and outreach assistance (website redesign and local branding), and sector-specific infrastructure (Equestrian Association and a year-round farmers market).

An implementation committee has also developed metrics to track progress towards the goals outlined in the strategy, revising as needed. Current support for a new malting facility and rezoning amendments to cover farm-scale breweries are also bringing a cluster of new beer makers to the county.



“Loudoun County is wisely investing in rural economic development, with agriculture as the driving component,” says Kelli Boles, Loudoun County's Agricultural Development Manager. “Agriculture isn't the biggest creator of jobs or tax revenue, so it often gets ignored in economic development efforts. [Through] Cost of Community Services studies, our Board of Supervisors has seen the fiscal balance that agriculture provides [through] limiting the cost of public infrastructure needs for new houses. A healthy rural economy will keep active farming operations on the land and attract new businesses to our county.”

Examples from Other States

California



Despite its prominent position in U.S. agriculture, California faces many pressures and obstacles. Farmland is being lost to urbanization, and the state faces challenges from water conservation and drought related weather conditions. As a result, the state has established several entities to address various agricultural issues. It also provides a unique example of inclusiveness and partnering with non-governmental entities to accomplish agricultural development goals.

Under the auspices of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the California State Board of Food and Agriculture serves as the primary advisory board to the governor. The board is comprised of 15 members appointed by the governor. In 2008, the Board and the CDFA sought a way to address the long-term issues and challenges faced by the agriculture industry. The initiative held "listening sessions" with over 500 farmers, ranchers, and other citizens, which formed the basis of the *California Agricultural Vision*.

In partnership with the American Farmland Trust, the goals established in the document were assessed to form specific strategies in order to meet the objectives, and after a series of workshops and committee review, the resulting proposals were published as *California Agricultural Vision: Strategies for Sustainability*. The original documents and subsequent reports by American Farmland Trust have served as benchmarks measuring the progress of the state towards its agricultural goals.¹⁴

The California Department of Conservation's Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) "seeks to encourage the long-term, private stewardship of

California's CFCP has funded more than 175 conservation easements, effectively preserving farmland in the state.

agricultural lands through the voluntary use of agricultural conservation easements. The CFCP provides grant funding for easement and planning projects that support agricultural land conservation statewide. As of January 2015, CFCP funded more than 175 conservation easements, permanently conserving some of the state's best farmland in agricultural regions throughout the state."¹⁵ The CFCP's Agricultural Conservation Easements (ACEs) are based on voluntary deed restrictions that help preserve agricultural land and alleviate the development pressure often faced by producers and farmers.¹⁶

¹⁴ http://cdfa.ca.gov/agvision/docs/Ag_Vision_Progress_Report.pdf

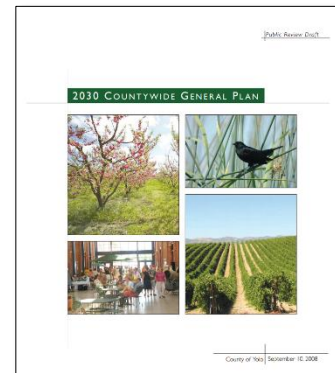
¹⁵ www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/Pages/Index.aspx

¹⁶ www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/cfcp/overview/Pages/ag_consrv_easements.aspx

County Example: Yolo County

Yolo County, in the Sacramento Valley east of San Francisco, contains some of the world's most productive soils and one of the country's most prestigious land grant universities—the University of California, Davis. County leadership has remained vigilant on innovations to promote a diverse and vibrant agricultural sector. Through an active farmland preservation program keeping an affordable land base for agriculture, the county seeks out needs for the large scale commercial sector (canning tomatoes, wine grapes, almonds, walnuts, and rice) as well as opportunities for small scale farmers and locally oriented food production.

The county's 2030 Comprehensive Plan includes an extensive agriculture and economic development element to clearly establish emphasis on continuing to grow the agricultural sector.¹⁷ The chapter includes an examination of the land base and farmland protection tools, as well as the profitability needs of the sector.



Yolo County has taken a distinctly regional approach, creating a Rural-Urban Connections Strategy with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. They also jointly created a Farmbudsman staff position with Solano County to help farmers developing new enterprises and marketing channels negotiate California's complex network of regulatory challenges. According to the position's RFQ¹⁸ (Request for Quotation) the program and resulting position was intended to execute the following:

- "Enhance the value of agriculture within the two counties and decrease actual and perceived regulatory obstacles on agriculture-related businesses seeking to expand, enhance and/or maintain their operations,
- preserve and enhance agriculture as viable industry for its cultural, environmental and economic benefit to the respective counties,
- facilitate and expedite the development of promising value-added agricultural projects,
- facilitate the navigation of agriculture-related projects through the various agencies, and
- expand the economic viability of existing farmers, ranchers and agriculture-related businesses and to expand the overall economic impact of agriculture on the local economy by attracting additional agriculture related business activity."

A 2011 study of the impact of food chain activities with Solano County makes a compelling case for continued investment in this area.¹⁹

¹⁷ www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=14465

¹⁸ <http://solanosbdc.org/sites/default/files/Farmbudsman%20RFQ%202-8-2013.pdf>

¹⁹ www.coecon.com/assets/solano_foodchain.pdf

Yolo County created a detailed outline for an Agricultural Economic Development Fund, even though it does not currently have financial backing. The plan identified 10 priority projects and included detailed budgets and implementation strategies for its

Yolo County's plan identifies projects and strategies for future investment

top five. Willingness to invest in such detailed analysis without any current funding demonstrates the value the county places on agricultural economic development and lays the groundwork to be ready for investment when an opportunity arises.

Public sector leadership, demonstrating the commitment and value of the agricultural and food sector, has led to the development of non-profit entities and private businesses to address specific areas of opportunity. For example, the Yolo County Ag and Food Alliance, an organization founded in 2004, focuses on collaboration between key stakeholders from "production agriculture, environmental and civic organizations, and support agencies to improve the viability and sustainability of Yolo County agriculture." The site reports that in 2011, the Alliance expanded its focus to include other issues such as farm-to-institution, food security, and public health. Today, the primary issues addressed by the non-profit Alliance are **Policy Advocacy** for the support of local agriculture, **Regulatory Barriers** hindering agricultural producers, and **Community Engagement** on food security and access issues.

The county also works to attract research and development projects that have contributed to the local economy and the agricultural knowledge base. Yolo has recruited private sector businesses, such as biotechnology and seed companies, emphasizing the value of the world class research environment at UC Davis.

One exciting private enterprise that has emerged to support the agricultural sector is the Capay Valley Farm Shop. Established in 2007, Capay Valley Farmshop aggregates, markets, and sells products from 45 producers and conducts wholesale business with independent specialty retailers, restaurants, and corporate cafeterias. The hub offers CSA-style "FarmShares," with a mix of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables as well as a wide selection of other items sold as "add-ons" to the FarmShares or as stand-alone purchases. Purchases



can also be bundled into monthly mixes, called "MeatShares" and "PantryShares." The hub's wholesale business grew out of its CSA program and is now the fastest growing activity, surpassing CSA sales in 2013. For more information, visit <http://capayvalleyfarmshop.com>.

Kentucky



Kentucky took a unique approach to agricultural economic development with their combination of a statewide ADB with county-level councils. In 2000, the Kentucky Legislature made a historic effort to move crop production away from majority of tobacco to incorporate a more diverse variety of crops. To help revitalize the farm economy, the state invested 50 percent of Kentucky's Master Settlement Agreement into the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (KADF), and established a statewide ADB to oversee fund investments. Funds are used to promote the farm economy through business development and technical feasibility assistance, helping new businesses grow and distributing grant funds to increase farm diversification, cooperative development, marketing, and new product development.

Kentucky established a statewide ADB to oversee investments and work with county councils.

Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB)

The state ADB is composed of five statutory members (Governor, Commissioner of Agriculture, Secretary of Economic Development, Director of KY Cooperative Extension Service, and President of Kentucky State University) and 11 appointed members (seven active farmers, an attorney and lender with agricultural experience, and appointees of the Chamber of Commerce and Farm Bureau).

County Agricultural Development Councils

Each of Kentucky's 120 counties established a council to evaluate the needs of the local agricultural economy, to identify programs that will support the county's agriculture, and to assist local applicants in preparing proposals to submit to the ADB. At the end of the 2013 fiscal year, over \$200 million had been distributed to Kentucky's 120 counties for projects.

County councils are composed of six appointees: two each from the Farm Services Agency, Conservation District, and Cooperative Extension. These six appointed members then elect three outside members to foster diversity in the council. Particular attention is given to including young farmers and those representing racial or gender minorities.

Areas of Concentration

Kentucky continues to stimulate locally based economic development through the evolution of the state program. The state has identified 10 target investment areas, and each proposed project must fit into one of these categories:

- Agricultural Diversification
- Large Animal, Small Animal
- Farm Infrastructure
- Forage & Grain Improvement
- Fencing & Water
- On-farm Energy
- Poultry
- Value-Added & Marketing.
- Technology & Leadership Development

The county level councils must update their comprehensive plans for agriculture every five years in order to draw funds from their allotment of the Tobacco Settlement and stay eligible for more state funding. This rule requires the councils to frequently update and plan strategically, establishes guidelines that focus on effective practices, and creates a consistent flow of feedback so success stories can be accessed by other counties interested in a particular subject area.



Local organizations can apply to their county agricultural development councils with any funding request that can help the local farm economy. The county rates and prioritizes the proposal based on its merit and whether it fits with the needs identified in the countywide plan, then sends it to the state ADB to request funding. The ADB makes the final decision on which projects to support as part of each county's overall ADF (Agricultural Development Fund) allocation.²⁰

Three key aspects make this program a success:

1. Diverse membership in the state ADB and county councils, which represents a wide range of interest and experience in various segments of farm economy
2. Adherence to ADB guiding principles in making funding decisions,²¹ and
3. Inclusive county level planning that builds partnership and identifies needs and opportunities.

County Example: Fayette County, Food Systems Innovation Center



The Food Systems Innovation Center used funding from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board to set up a center that will "provide technical and business development services to facilitate the profitable production, processing and marketing of locally produced and processed food by Kentucky-based enterprises and entrepreneurs." The center works to promote community access to the University of Kentucky's expertise and resources and serves as a direct link between the university and individual entrepreneurs, agricultural producers, and processors. According to the Kentucky Ag Council's strategic plan, the FSIC has "served over 400 clients, carrying out over 2,000 analytical procedures." More information at www.uky.edu/fsic/ and www.kyagcouncil.org/documents/KAC-Strategic-Plan-2013-18.pdf.

Fayette County's Food Systems Innovation Center works to connect the University of Kentucky with agricultural industries.

²⁰ Kentucky Agricultural Landowners Guide for Conservation and Profitability. American Farmland Trust. 2004.

²¹ http://agpolicy.ky.gov/board/Documents/guiding_principles.pdf

Maryland



Maryland has seen the creation of multiple county and regional entities to stimulate the agricultural economy and assist in a transition to the next generation. These boards have gone on to become active independent leaders in spurring local agricultural economic development activities.

MALPF: Permanently Protecting Farmland

In 1977, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) was created to purchase conservation easements. With an investment of \$645 million, MALPF funding has enabled the permanent protection of 292,357 acres on 2,154 farms through 2014. The Maryland Agricultural Code requires counties to appoint an agricultural preservation advisory board of five members, including at least three owner-operators of farms who earn 50 percent or more of their incomes from farming. Applicants to MALPF must first submit their proposals to their local county administrator for approval and prioritization.



SMADC: Assistance, Awareness, and Advancement of Local Agriculture

In 2000, the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) was created to administer the federal tobacco buyout and reduce five counties' reliance on tobacco production for agriculture. SMADC was developed within the umbrella of the regional planning agency, the Southern Maryland Tri-County Council. SMADC assisted farmers in creating business plans, addressing laws and regulations that impacted new types of farming enterprises, and securing specialized grants for capital improvements. The group used seminars, publications, and targeted grant programs to deliver technical assistance, raise awareness of local agriculture, and direct farms towards opportunities within the region.

The makeup of the group guiding the program reflects the variety of agricultural economic development interests in the region. Appointees include state legislators, farmers from each county and the Maryland Farm Bureau, as well as

representatives from the College of Southern Maryland, county-level planning and land preservation, small businesses, chambers of commerce, and agritourism.²²

Maryland has a number of independent programs with different goals, including agricultural preservation and assistance.

²² www.smadc.com/aboutsmadc/commission.html

Program Variety

SMADC programs reflect the wide range of ideas available for agricultural development:²³ The following is a list of some of these ideas:



So. Maryland, So Good – a “buy local” program with print and electronic resources educating consumers on where to buy products grown in the region, along with marketing materials for farms to identify their local items.



Southern Maryland Meats – a segment of the So. Maryland, So Good program, establishing a set of production and packaging guidelines for the use of an identifying label, along with refrigerated transportation trailers and freezer cases for the distribution and sales of individual farm meats to be marketed under the program umbrella.



Buy Local Challenge Week – a collaborative effort encouraging consumers to maximize their local purchases during the height of the produce season, with an effort to expand their local food consumption year-round.



Southern Maryland Trails – a guidebook and online directory for agritourism opportunities, creating links with local lodging, natural areas, and galleries that highlight the region's beauty and culture.



Maryland Farm Link – full service forum for rental and sales of productive land, with the goal of keeping this land in agricultural use.



Cornelia and the Farm Band – an elementary classroom education program connecting local farms with healthy eating choices.



Crop Hop – a bicycle tour highlighting local farms and raising funds to provide fresh foods to low income families in the region.



Southern Maryland Food Council – integrates production, marketing, distribution, and consumption issues to address food accessibility to hungry and underserved communities, along with agricultural sustainability and resource conservation.

²³ www.smadc.com/programs/programs_q1.html

County Example: Montgomery County

Montgomery County has made a commitment to a farming future by creating an Agricultural Services Division (ASD).²⁴ The ASD focuses on preserving farmland and keeping the agricultural sector viable and sustainable.

Since the designation of an Agricultural Reserve in 1980, the county has protected almost 50,000 acres of farmland from development as active participants in the MALPF program and the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (which was repealed in the 2014 Farm Bill). Montgomery County has also been a leader in the farmland protection program funded by the private sector mechanism known as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).

In a TDR program, farmers get paid to protect their land from development. Developers pay farmers to place conservation easements on their land. In exchange, the developers get added density bonuses in areas where the county would like to encourage additional building, such as urban enterprise zones and transit stations. Thus, the pressure to sell land for development is transferred away from rural areas and placed in more appropriate or strategic areas of the county where development is desired that will not take away prime farmland. In addition, the farmer gains some extra capital, and the land is preserved against future attempts to purchase and develop.

Through a Transfer of Development Rights program, farmers and developers benefit while preserving farmland.

The ASD supports development which highlights area farms, promotes local agricultural products and markets, and identifies barriers to profitability. One current emphasis is the New Farmer Project, a unique farm incubator program. The New Farmer Project puts



beginning farmers on leased, actively farmable land in the Agricultural Reserve Area (priority farming locales in the county) with the possibility to develop long-term relationships with the landowner. This program provides established farmers with the incentive to invest in the fertility of their soil and infrastructure to build the farm business towards present stability and future profitability. Participants also receive an experienced mentor and access to shared equipment.²⁵

²⁴ www.choosemontgomerymd.com/programs-incentives/agricultural-preservation

²⁵ www.choosemontgomerymd.com/programs-incentives/agricultural-preservation/new-farmer-pilot-project/#.VQb7Y-Gukxl

New Jersey



Despite its highly urbanized nature, New Jersey maintains an active farmland preservation program. The state administers its farmland preservation through the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC). The SADC provides grants to counties, municipalities, and nonprofit groups to fund the purchase of development easements on farmland. The SADC also purchases farms and development easements directly from landowners and offers grants to landowners to fund up to 50 percent of the cost of soil and water conservation projects.

Other activities include maintaining a list of approved appraisers for projects that intend to seek SADC funding, post-preservation monitoring activities and use approvals, administration of the Right to Farm and Farmlink Programs, and overseeing the Transfer of Development Rights Bank.²⁶

All but three of New Jersey's 21 counties have an established ADB.



The SADC is made up of 11 members, including six citizens appointed by the governor (four must be active farmers and two serve as representatives of the general public) and five "ex-officio" members.

The program encourages counties to form County Agriculture Development Boards (CADB) to designate agricultural development areas. As of 2015, only three counties within New Jersey do not have a CADB (Essex, Hudson, and Union). Boards are given the primary authority for approving applications for the Farmland Preservation Program. After the County ADB has received, reviewed, and approved local applications, they are then sent to the SADC.

County Example: Burlington County



The County Agriculture Development Board²⁷ was created by a county ordinance in 1981. It consists of 12 voting members; six active farmers, and three represent agricultural institutions in the county. The Board advises the county commission on maintaining and protecting agricultural resources, as well as determining conditions and locations eligible for farmland protection.

In 2008, the Board completed a 10-year Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan for the County Commissioners. This plan evaluated and drew lessons from the 1996 *Strategic Farmland Preservation Plan* and put county-wide strategies recommended by the 2004 *Strategies for Farm Viability reports*²⁸ into action. The 2004

Since the 2008 Farmland Preservation Plan, Burlington County has protected over 28,000 acres of farmland.

²⁶ <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/about/>

²⁷ www.co.burlington.nj.us/196/Farmland-Preservation

²⁸ www.co.burlington.nj.us/DocumentCenter/View/1893

reports used surveys of farmers and consumers to identify needs and opportunities for increasing agricultural profitability. Completion of the 2008 Plan was a requirement for receiving state farmland preservation funding. To date, Burlington County has protected over 28,000 acres of farmland through both the purchase and transfer of development rights.



Burlington County encouraged local townships to participate by creating a model ordinance for municipal Agricultural Advisory Committees (AAC). The AAC consists of 3-5 citizens actively engaged in farming, serves as an ad hoc advisory committee to the Planning Board, and has created additional model ordinances for municipalities covering farm labor housing and on-farm direct marketing.

A 2008 Case Study, "Farm Viability in Urbanizing Areas," highlighted the successes of Burlington County agriculture amidst heavy development pressure.²⁹ Farmers and landowners were surveyed and found to be generally satisfied with the state of

Most farmers surveyed agreed that the combination of farmland preservation and ag viability tools were essential for future farm success.

agriculture and the sector's ability to adapt to changing conditions. Most shared the sense that a combination of farmland preservation and agricultural viability tools were essential for the success of future farms. Recommendations addressed areas of

concern such as farm labor and succession, water availability, and future state incentive programs to keep land in agricultural use.



²⁹ www.unl.edu/plains/CGPS_images/research/BurCaseApr4.pdf

New York



New York has been a leader in the development of multipurpose agricultural development boards. The New York State Agriculture and Markets Law calls for the creation of county agricultural and farmland protection boards with the original purpose of advising the County Board of Supervisors and to work on establishing, modifying, continuing, or terminating Agricultural Districts. Over time, the role of these boards has expanded to include additional responsibilities involving farmland preservation, land use planning, and agricultural viability. The boards' duties now include:

- Advise the county legislative body about agricultural districts
- Review notice-of-intent filings
- Make recommendations about proposed government acquisition of farmland
- Prepare and update county agricultural and farmland protection plans
- Request review of state agency regulations affecting farm operations
- Review and endorse applications for state Purchase of Development Rights funds³⁰

Agricultural Districts

The state's *agricultural districts* encourage people to continue using farmland for agricultural production. The program is based on a combination of landowner incentives and protections that are designed to delay or prevent the farmland being used for non-agricultural purposes. This program's benefits include: preferential real property tax treatment (agricultural assessment and special benefit assessment), and protections against overly restrictive local laws, government-funded acquisition or construction projects, and private nuisance suits involving agricultural practices.³¹

Agricultural districts protect and incentivize preservation of farmland.

Farmland Protection Planning and Implementation



The state has awarded Farmland Protection Planning Grants to 53 counties since 1994. In some counties, this farmland protection and agricultural development plan has become the Agriculture and Conservation chapter in the counties' overall Comprehensive Plans, ensuring that this plan becomes official county policy for decisions about land use planning, economic development, and proposed changes in laws and regulations.

³⁰ Action Guide: Agricultural and Farmland Protection for New York. American Farmland Trust. 2000.

³¹ www.agriculture.ny.gov/ap/agservices/agdistricts.html

Since the program became available, 77 localities have received grants to develop town farmland protection plans.

Since 2007, when the program became available to municipalities, 77 towns have received awards to develop town farmland protection plans. The grants allow local governments to conduct agricultural inventories, determine changes in zoning regulations

to be more farm friendly, and create recommendations for agricultural economic development projects.

Purchase of Development Rights

Counties and towns with approved farmland protection plans can apply to the state for cost-share money for the Purchase of Development Rights on individual farms, as consistent with overall strategies and priorities identified in their plans. This state funding must be matched by local and/or federal dollars, encouraging broader partnerships and supporting the stability of a productive land base for agriculture. By requiring consist plans, the state is encouraging local government to focus on protecting those farms with a model for future profitability and succession.

County Example: Saratoga County



Saratoga County, located in the eastern part of the state between Albany and New York City, is both one of the leading agricultural counties in New York and one of its leading tourism destinations, with equestrian activities, mineral baths, performing arts, and Skidmore College. Agriculture also remains an important part of the local economy and character, with \$80 million in sales and ranking third in the state in the production of horses and

eggs. Saratoga County has been a leader in using a variety of public and private tools to support agricultural development.

In 1996, the town of Charlton was the first in the state to pass a Right-to-Farm law, ensuring that agricultural uses of the land would receive a clear mandate of support of any future land use disputes or development of regulations. This law gave farmers the message that the county valued their enterprises, encouraging long-term investment in agricultural infrastructure, such as livestock housing. Charlton was also one of the state's first municipalities to create an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan which was approved by the state.



In 2000, Saratoga and Washington counties created an Agricultural Economic Development Educator staff position with funding from each county matched by the state's Farmland Viability Program. This position, housed within the Cooperative Extension Service, provides a range of services to local farmers, led by increasing opportunities for local markets. A significant responsibility of this position is the

maintenance of the Saratoga Farms website, which lists local farmers markets, direct marketing farms, farm-related news and events, and other resources.³²

For almost 20 years, the county has hosted a Sundae on the Farm open house celebration at various local farms. Free and open to the public, this celebration raises public awareness of the importance and viability of local agriculture. This event represents the strong partnerships between local farms, businesses, and agencies in organizing logistics and raising necessary funding.



Saratoga County produces an *Are You Thinking of Moving to the Country?* brochure for new residents. This publication attempts to resolve potential conflicts between farms and newcomers to rural areas who may not be prepared for the sights, sounds, and smells of local agriculture.

In 2003, the county began an Open Space/Farmland Preservation Program with initial funding of \$330,000. As of 2012, 3,550 acres of farmland and open space have been protected through the program, using a combination of funding sources and project partners. Of this acreage, 2,291 acres are classified as Farmland and 1,259 acres are Open Space. The program has helped leverage approximately \$4 million in Farmland protection funding and \$6 Million in local and state funding for Open Space.

Between 2003 and 2012, Saratoga County preserved over 3,500 acres of farmland and open space.



³² www.saratogafarms.com/index.html

North Carolina



North Carolina uses Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VAD) programs to allow farmers to form areas where commercial agriculture is encouraged and protected. Authorized by the North Carolina General Assembly in the 1985 Farmland Preservation Enabling Act and

implemented at the county level, VADs facilitate partnerships between farmers, county commissioners and land use planners. As of May 2014, 86 of North Carolina's 100 counties had passed farmland preservation ordinances establishing VAD programs. Because the VAD program allows landowners to withdraw at any time without penalty, a 2005 NC House Bill authorized an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts (EVAD) option which offered landowners an additional tier of benefits if they were willing to waive this right.



County Agricultural Advisory Boards: Educating and Advising

County Commissioners appoint a 10-member Agricultural Advisory Board representing the geographic, demographic, and economic diversity of the agricultural sector; six must be actively engaged in farming, and each township is represented. The board reviews applications for enrollment in the VAD program, educates the public on concerns of the farming community, and advises county commissioners and staff on projects and issues affecting local agriculture.

The county level Agricultural Advisory Boards have addressed farm viability issues to a minor degree, but have the makeup and status within state and county legislation to be effective forces for agricultural development. Two counties in North Carolina (Orange and Polk) have created agricultural economic development staff positions.

County Example: Polk County



In Polk County, located in the western North Carolina Mountains, the passage of a VAD ordinance in 2002 and the completion of an agricultural development and farmland preservation plan laid the groundwork for the creation of an Agricultural Economic Development

Office within county government.³³ The office administers the VAD program, but more importantly provides a broad range of services to area farmers and prospective farmers, including assistance with marketing, infrastructure, and business planning. To facilitate communication, a monthly agricultural breakfast is held to discuss emerging trends and educate non-farmers about issues of concern.

The Agricultural Development Office administers the VAD program and provides a broad range of services to area farmers.

³³ <http://polkcountyfarms.org/ag-economic-development/>

The Soil and Water Conservation District has operated the Mill Spring Ag Center since 2009. This center is a central location for both agencies, as well as a number of local agriculture and food related businesses. It offers many services and programs for farmers and producers, including the following:

Polk County focuses on providing agricultural assistance and education for producers and non-farmers alike.

- Local Food Farm Store: features local food from local farmers and producers
- Winter Farmers' Markets: allows for year-round business
- Polk Equipment Cooperative: rents out tools and equipment at a low cost
- Demonstration Gardens: includes a vegetable garden, medicinal/culinary/dye herb garden, and over 400 varieties of roses
- Farm Class Series: around 15 fall and winter classes for farmers
- Bi-Monthly Chicken Swaps: allows farmers to purchase, sell, or trade chickens

The center is also available to be rented out for various events, making it more self-sufficient. More information on this location is available at <http://polkcountyfarms.org/msac/>.

Polk County has been named a Community of Opportunity by the Growing Food Connections (GFC) project of American Farmland Trust, Cultivating Healthy Places, Ohio State University, and the University of Buffalo. Over a three-year period, GFC will help local governments create their own plans, policies, partnerships, and make public investment to support family farmers and enhance food security.



Pennsylvania



The state of Pennsylvania is known for its well-rounded farmland preservation and agricultural programs, and according to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Farmland Preservation, "Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of farms and acres permanently preserved for agricultural production."³⁴

The Department of Agriculture recognizes the importance of helping producers access new market channels and the need for consumers to have access to fresh healthy food. To address these issues, it established the Bureau of Market Development to assist with the "domestic and worldwide promotion/marketing of Pennsylvania agribusiness products and services, and developing and administering programs to assist agribusinesses in locating and/or expanding within the Commonwealth."³⁵ The state also maintains the Bureau of Food Distribution, which seeks to promote movement of food from farm to table to ensure access for its citizens. Part of this effort includes the State Food Purchase Program, which helps over 1,800 food banks and pantries in procuring food and funding to increase access for those who are food insecure.



The state began an Easement Purchase Program in 1988 to address the loss of farmland to development. The program is unique in that it allows local, county or state government, or any combination of the three to purchase agricultural conservation easements. Now, the state has "fifty-seven participating county programs receive state funds for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements."³⁶

Pennsylvania's Easement Purchase Program allows local, county, and state government to purchase easements.

Counties that decide to have an Easement Purchase Program create an agricultural land preservation board to receive and approve applications from owners. In addition to purchasing easements, county boards can also establish Agricultural Security Areas

(low-cost non-permanent land protection similar to Agricultural Districts) and generally promote the benefits of farming in the county. Additionally, a state level board is in place to handle the disbursement of funds and oversight of the county level boards, providing final approval of easement purchase offers.

³⁴www.agriculture.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_24476_10297_0_43/AgWeb site/OrganizationDetail.aspx?name=Bureau-of-Farmland-Preservation&navid=34&parentnavid=0&orgid=10&

³⁵www.agriculture.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_6_2_24476_10297_0_43/AgWeb site/OrganizationDetail.aspx?name=Bureau-of-Market-Development&navid=34&parentnavid=0&orgid=14&

³⁶www.agriculture.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_75292_10297_0_43/AgWeb site/ProgramDetail.aspx?name=Easement-Purchase-&navid=12&parentnavid=0&palid=11&

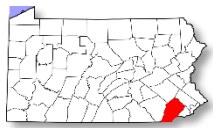
County Examples: Berks, Chester, and Lancaster Counties

Berks County: Berks County has operated the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board since 1989, and utilizes agricultural conservation easements as their primary form of agricultural preservation. Activities are overseen by a nine-member Agricultural Land Preservation Board, and according to their website more than 64,000 acres of farmland have been preserved through their efforts. In order to ensure access to fund for the purchase of agricultural easements, Berks County was granted a \$24 million dollar line of credit in 2005 by the Berks County Commissioners.³⁷



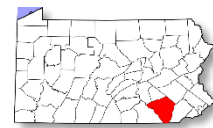
Chester County: Chester County's Agricultural Development Council seeks to "help Chester County farmers continue to farm while encouraging additional agricultural opportunities, create an environment to attract new farmers and agricultural activities, educate residents and municipal officials, and partner with others to help resolve problems and issues related to agriculture."³⁸ The Council, made up of ten

appointed members, oversees several agriculture promotion initiatives, including publishing the Local Farm Products Guide, a yearly publication that seeks to increase the connection between local consumers and local producers. The guide highlights a "farmer of the year" and provides short articles on agricultural topics, as well as a listing of farmers' markets, farm outlets (on-farm markets), CSAs, retail outlets, and a harvest calendar.



Lancaster County: In 2005, the Lancaster Board of Commissioners formed the Blue Ribbon Commission to address the future of agriculture and farming. The Commission hosted 18 listening sessions as a forum for local citizens to voice their concerns and ideas

for long-term strategies. The Commission distilled these ideas to use as a basis for addressing the county's future agriculture strategy.



Pennsylvania counties have focused their agricultural development efforts in different areas based on local needs.



³⁷www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/DeptofAg/Pages/HistoryofAgriculturalLandPreservationinBerksCounty.aspx

³⁸ www.chesco.org/index.aspx?NID=1123



ADB ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

Across the country, many county-based entities have formed to solve agricultural economic development issues and address specific community needs. These entities have had a number of different emphases based on state programs, authorizing legislation, funding opportunities, and particular issues of concern in their localities.

Many county-based agricultural economic development entities in Virginia have operated under variety of names. While the Code of Virginia contains are some passing references to ADB-type entities, there is no specific legislative definition.

- Chapter 3.1 of the Code requests the establishment of the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID), and Section 3.2-305 provides for the creation of guidelines and criteria for awarding the grant. The AFID Planning Grants Program Guidelines³⁹ state: "The program requires the active participation of a board, committee or working group representing agriculture and/or forestry interests in the planning and implementation of a project in an affected locality. Examples of such groups may include an Agricultural Advisory Board, Agricultural Development Board, Agricultural and Forestal Districts Committee, or similarly composed board/committee/group."
- Another ancillary reference to an entity similar to an ADB is found in relation to the establishment of agricultural and forestal districts. Section 15.2-4304 of the Virginia Code⁴⁰ discusses the establishment of an "advisory committee"

³⁹ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/pdf/grantsum.pdf

⁴⁰ <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/15.2-4304/>

composed of “four landowners who are engaged in agricultural or forestal production, four other landowners of the locality, the commissioner of revenue or the local government's chief property assessment officer, and a member of the local governing body.”



In the context of this document, **an Agricultural Development Board is loosely defined as “a county based board that works on county-based agricultural development.”** As problem solving entities, they look to the future and seek to increase community involvement. The following examples show how different counties have

defined their ADBs and similar entities or positions.

- In Chesterfield County, Virginia, the board “Advises the Board of Supervisors on all issues related to the operation and preservation of agricultural, horticultural and forestry businesses. Examples of issues of programming importance include soil and water conservation, zoning and land use, storm water drainage, population, environment, out-reach and education, direct marketing, farmers' markets, and farm-subdivision conflicts.”⁴¹
- In some counties, the responsibility for agricultural development is placed on a position, often called an Agricultural Development Director. In Pittsylvania County, Virginia, he or she is “responsible for designing and implementing a comprehensive plan for agricultural economic development, and promoting agriculture and forest industries as well as enhancing the economic viability of farming and extending the Pittsylvania County agricultural infrastructure.”⁴²

Regardless of the problem they were originally established to address, most ADBs have grown over time to become more formalized and have expanded to address other issues and needs within their respective communities; this has allowed many county-based development boards to elevate their influence and effectiveness.

The following sections present the variety of issues ADBs and similar entities can address by taking on various roles and provides ideas for related activities. This section also contains specific examples (“Case in Point”) to highlight some innovations or successes.

Farmland Protection

According to the 2010 National Resources Inventory Summary Report, the United States lost over 13 million acres of non-Federal rural land classified as farmland, mostly due to development. Virginia saw a decline of more than 705,000 acres of cropland during this same time period.

⁴¹ www.chesterfield.gov/EventDetails.aspx?id=8590044770

⁴² 2010 MS PowerPoint Presentation to VACO. Online at www.vaco.org/AnnualConferenceFiles/10ACFiles/Wydne10.pdf

Long term growth of an area's population often makes it necessary to address farmland preservation policies. ADBs can help ensure that county projects place a priority on maintaining healthy farming systems, and many local boards have been developed to focus on farmland preservation and protection with the common goal of



Case In Point: *Dinwiddie County, Virginia*

Dinwiddie County is focused on expanding its industrial capabilities while preserving the rural characteristics of agriculture and small business- effectively balancing economic growth and the traditional livelihood of the area. With access to interstates, railways, and the nearby Port of Virginia, the county is capitalizing on what its location can offer to businesses.

Bringing together their planning and economic development departments, Dinwiddie County has created zoning laws that protect agriculture while allowing the growth of industrial infrastructure. The county then utilizes its transportation and distribution networks to benefit both industries. As it worked to attract two Amazon distribution facilities in 2012, Dinwiddie County also brought this infrastructure to its agriculture sector, allowing for more of its crops to reach shipping and processing centers.

More information is available at www.dinwiddieva.us

creating a stable and affordable land base for future farming activities. Because of the diversity of farms and farmland owners, farmland protection strategies must be flexible. There are numerous examples of programs that have been created to help ensure land will not be converted to non-farm uses, and often a range of programs and tools are required to meet the needs and goals of a diverse producer base. Programs often vary in length of commitment and eligibility requirements, and can often be combined. In cases where programs require partnering between public- and private-sector entities, ADBs can help foster partnerships, administer and monitor programs, and encourage awareness among area landowners and producers. The following sections present various farmland protection tools that have been utilized at various levels by ADBs or similar county-level entities.

Activity

- ✓ Focus county priorities to better preserve communities by including ag development in planning documents

Agricultural Conservation Easements (ACEs)

Agricultural Conservation Easements are voluntary deed restrictions placed by landowners on their land to ensure the land remains available for agricultural use. The main components of ACEs typically include permanent limits on the subdivision of the land and limits on non-agricultural development.

With ACEs, landowners retain ownership and ability sell the property or pass it along to heirs, but future owners must also abide by the terms of the easement. The landowners, often known as *easement grantees*, typically coordinate with a government entity such



Photo courtesy of Fauquier County Agricultural Development Department

Case In Point: Fauquier County, Virginia

In the late 90s, Fauquier County established an Agricultural Development Office with a full-time staff position and advisory board, adding a PDR program with a separate advisory board in 2002. These two programs work closely to promote a stable agricultural base for the county. The PDR program has protected over 10,000 acres for agricultural use, with some farms using the proceeds from the sale of development rights to begin new value-added enterprises.

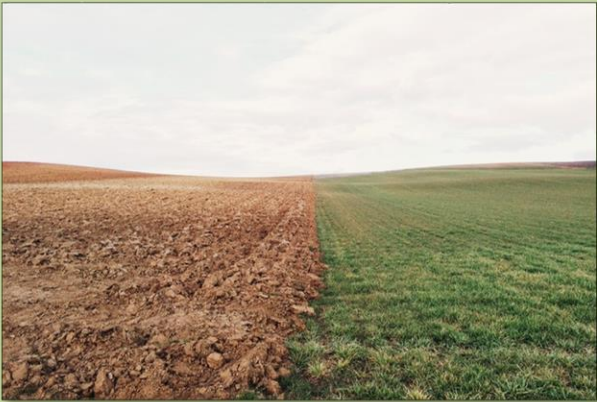
The Economic Development Authority of Fauquier County promotes local products, shares information on grant opportunities and research findings, and provides a range of economic development services to local farmers including local farm promotion, marketing, labeling, farm tours, and infrastructure recruitment. The county has also established the non-profit Fauquier Education Farm, a regional center with a training program for beginning farmers, donating all food produced to a local food bank.

as a soil and water conservation district or a land trust entity, known as the *easement holder*, who agrees to monitor the property indefinitely. This role is natural for an ADB or similar entity, and many ADBs have been founded primarily to serve as the easement holder for ACE programs.

PDR/PACE and Similar Programs

Loss of productive farmland is an increasingly important issue, and counties should work with their farming communities to heighten awareness and develop creative solutions, such as providing financial compensation for landowners interested in placing an ACE on their farms. Such programs are often known as Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) or Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs, and funding typically comes from state, local, or federal funding sources.

Some counties have chosen to integrate PACE with strict agricultural zoning to use private development dollars to purchase conservation easements. These Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs shift development from agricultural land to designated growth zones located closer to municipal services. Developers pay farmers to restrict development on rural lands, and receive credits in areas where counties are trying to encourage higher density in exchange.



Case In Point: Durham County, North Carolina

North Carolina uses Agricultural District programs to build agricultural development capacity at the county level by enacting Local Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) programs that encourage and protect commercial agriculture. In 1996, Durham County passed a Voluntary Farmland Protection Ordinance, establishing a VAD Program.

The County Commissioners appointed a 14-member Farmland Protection Advisory Board representing the geographic, demographic, and economic diversity of the agricultural sector. The board reviews applications for enrollment in the VAD program, educates the public on concerns of the farming community, and advises county commissioners and staff on projects and issues affecting local agriculture.

The Soil and Water Conservation District, which administers the program, helps create a map of enrolled farms for display in county offices that establishes a visual and quantifiable presence for local farms, raises public awareness of agricultural activity and helps leaders plan future development.

More information at: <http://dconc.gov/home>

ADB and similar boards or councils have also been formed to function as an intermediary authority for implementing and overseeing PDR and PACE programs at the local level. Many states maintain such boards or councils to provide local approval for submissions, and these boards also disseminate information to educate the region's producers.

Because of their close ties to the community, boards are also often responsible for establishing priorities, providing outreach, preparing applications, and monitoring the restrictions of the conservation easements for selected properties. Updated as of 2014, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) website lists 21 localities (19 counties and 2 cities) with PDR program, all of these administered by a local board⁴³.

Ag and Forestal Districts (AFDs)

In addition to programs protecting farmland through the purchase of permanent agricultural conservation easements, some county boards facilitate Agricultural or Forestal Districts, or "voluntary agreements between landowners and the locality, and offer benefits to landowners that agree to keep their land in its use for a period of 4 to 10 years."⁴⁴ ADBs and Agricultural Development positions can assume roles associated with AFDs. Often a local governing body is responsible for receiving applications to establish a district, but ADBs and similar entities have also been established to take on these tasks.

⁴³ www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/tools.shtml. Accessed 7-22-2015.

⁴⁴ "Agricultural and Forestal Districts." Office of Farmland Preservation (OFFP) www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/tools.shtml

Soil and Water Conservation



Another role for county-based agricultural boards is in addressing soil and water conservation needs. While many areas already have dedicated Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and related boards, ADBs can assist with facilitation and coordination activities already conducted by these entities, as well as “stand in the gap” when an area lacks solid leadership in this area.

The ADB can help the farm community take an active role in setting land use rules as they affect drinking water and recreational priorities. If any discussions/community processes occur around the need for improving water quality, an ADB can ensure that agricultural community representation occurs from the start and seek flexible strategies, including adequate state and local cost-share funding to support any farmer sacrifices.

Activity

- ✓ **Ensure the local farm viewpoint is included when addressing water protection needs**

There is often overlap in the activity areas of traditional SWCDs and their work to prevent loss and contamination of a regions soil and water resources. Similar to SWCDs, ADBs can actively identify priorities related to conservation efforts, initiate landowner and farmer education programs, represent the interests of landowners and producers, and point individuals to resources related to infrastructure improvements, cover-cropping practices, and other production related efficiency improvements.



Photo courtesy of Afton Mountain Vineyards

Agricultural Viability

Another role for agricultural boards is stimulating and supporting agricultural viability. Traditionally, their purpose and activities will fit most closely with the goal of agricultural economic development, as both seek to create a stable investment climate for businesses through strategic planning and identifying the needs of individual sectors.

If applicable, an ADB can help ensure that agriculture is a primary focus area in any county level economic development and strategic plans and conduct the necessary activities to ensure all personnel are aware of agriculture as a focus, as well as what specific steps are being taken to address ag-related issues.



Case In Point: *Genesee County, New York*

Genesee County has developed an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan to keep agriculture at the forefront of the county's economic development. County agencies worked closely with citizens and farmers in the area to ensure their voices were heard during the plan's development. Overall, the plan focuses on ensuring agriculture remains the dominant industry, while allowing for new and growing industries to prosper in the area. The county is seeking to make farming an even more financially sustainable venture through increased sources of funding and by providing assistance for farmers in a variety of matters from public outreach to zoning incentives. More information is available at www.co.genesee.ny.us/departments/planning/agfarmboard.html

ADB's formed to focus on agricultural viability activities can address a wide range of issues that concern the farming community, based on unique local priorities. Some broad level agricultural activities related to agricultural viability include:

- Recruitment and Retention of Farmers and Ag-Support Businesses
- Land Use Planning
- Infrastructure Development
- Marketing and Local Farm Promotion
- Agritourism
- Business Planning
- Generational Transition
- Local Food Production
- Forestry and Renewable Energy

Activity

- ✓ Promote statewide knowledge and information sharing
- ✓ Join an organization such as the Virginia Agricultural Development Officers (VADO)
- ✓ Work collaboratively with other organizations, such as agritourism or economic development

Recruitment and Retention of Farmers and Ag-Support Businesses

Some areas have formal recruiting programs to attract experienced farmers to move to the area. ADB activities may include creating a recruiting packet and program for farmers considering relocating to the region or establishing “welcome wagon” program that promotes locality’s advantages, including climate, length or timing of the growing season, soils, school systems, affordable land, access to markets, etc.



Case In Point: *Jefferson County, New York*

Jefferson and the nearby counties of Lewis, Essex, Franklin, Madison, Oneida, Oswego, and St. Lawrence in northern New York have been working to market themselves across the country as a destination for those wishing to become farmers or move their operations. The region is faced with an aging farmer population along with large amounts of productive farmland and infrastructure. To keep this critical part of their economies thriving, the counties pooled their recruitment efforts into the Come Farm with Us program.

Together, the counties work to spread information about the opportunities for farmers in the area through agricultural publications and farm trade shows. Jefferson County has created an Agricultural Development Council to devote county resources to ensuring that farm interests are represented alongside industry in development decisions. More information is available at www.comefarmwithus.com/ and www.farmanddairy.com/news/recruiting-farmers-come-farm-with-us-in-northern-new-york/1564.html

Producers need sources of irrigation equipment and bulk commodities for crop production, pasture development, and livestock feed. As the number of farmers dwindles, providers that serve agricultural business, such as farm supply or equipment repair, may experience similar declines.

Farms making purchases from non-local entities represent economic leakages which have long-lasting repercussions, and further exacerbate the problem. ADBs can help recruit entities that provide products and services to local farmers, and seek to increase the level of communication between existing farm supply businesses and producers.

Owners of these businesses should be included in the board’s membership, as they can see trends among a changing customer base, and their survival is crucial to farms’ profitability. Boards that are able to achieve a bird’s eye view of this sector of the industry and maintain close association with community business leadership can identify issues before critical mass is lost.

Activity

- ✓ Encourage farmers to purchase farm supplies locally
- ✓ Attract more ag equipment providers
- ✓ Maintain/publish a list of ag supply providers

Generational Transition

With the average age of local farmers rising, higher real estate values, and an increasingly mobile younger generation, passing the farm along “to the kids” is not as easy as it once was. However, ensuring this transition to a new generation of farmers continues is crucial to the long-term survival of agriculture.



Local ADBs are uniquely positioned to help farm families begin to work through their options around farm succession and to educate professional advisors on the unique needs around these issues. Activities may include simply establishing a repository or list of resources, or actively promoting the topic of farm transition within their sphere of influence. ADB members often know the landowning community very well, and should not hesitate to bring awareness to this topic.

Prospective new farmers may be seeking their path into a career in agriculture. Boards can help recruit new farmers to their county by strengthening the links between such individuals and landowners looking to sell their farm. ADBs can also provide resources to educate these newcomers on the need for a solid business plan and access to capital,

and even establish mentoring and equity-building employment arrangements with experienced farmers.



ADBs can facilitate education for professionals in the community such as attorneys, accountants, and financial advisors to ensure these professionals have proper knowledge of agricultural issues. Rather than directly provide such continuing education materials, an ADB can partner with other organizations to increase the knowledge of professionals working in these and related fields.

Case In Point: Prince Edward County, Virginia
 The Prince Edward County Cannery and Commercial Kitchen of Farmville has been in existence since 1975, and with funding from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, was updated to include Commercial Kitchen capabilities and became an FDA registered Food Canning Establishment. The facility now provides services to both home canning and commercial customers.
 Info at http://co.prince-edward.va.us/cannery_index.shtml

Activity

- ✓ Address the needs of transitioning farmers

Land Use Planning and Infrastructure Development



Case In Point: Lake County, Illinois

Prairie Crossings in Grayslake is an example of neighbors who wanted to preserve open space and agricultural land. They formed a company with the goal of developing 677 acres responsibly, with a total of only 359 single-family homes and 36 condos as opposed to 2,400 homes that were planned by another developer. Located at the Prairie Crossings community, Prairie Crossing Farms is currently owned by the Liberty Prairie Foundation, a non-profit Foundation that operates a number of programs centered primarily on the farm.

In addition, the Foundation operates a Farm Business Development Center, which allows other independently-owned for-profit farm businesses to rotate use of the Prairie Crossing Farms land. Sandhill Family Farms, the largest portion of Prairie Crossing Farms, is located within the Prairie Crossing conservation community, and sells produce at the on-site market as well as farmers markets in the Chicago area and a local CSA.

More information is available at www.prairiecrossing.com and libertyprairie.org

ADB's have a history of tackling land use planning issues. County planning departments and staff and citizen planning boards generally determine community priorities for density, development, and transportation. Based on existing resources, economic development needs, market forces, and citizen feedback, they often develop a comprehensive plan that provide the legal framework for local governments to makes land use decisions, explain to the public the county's position on development policy, and provide a basis for public decisions on future spending. ADB's should actively seek to make sure that any land use and development policy documents consider agricultural needs and concerns by providing a voice for this important industry sector.

ADB's can create awareness among the professional community, such as realtor associations, developer associations, and other related entities about approaches that allow for development while preserving farmland or agricultural areas. One such example, Development Supported Agriculture, solves the inherent conflict between the two interests by including farming and agriculture as an amenity within housing developments.

In infrastructure development, the needs of traditional economic development and agricultural development often overlap. An ADB or similar entity may not be the primary force behind the development of needed infrastructure, but it can ensure that agricultural needs

are not overlooked at the county level when strategic plans are composed or implemented, and make sure that the needs of the agriculture community are considered as part of any larger county-wide initiatives.

County boards can identify the agricultural community's need for additional facilities to add value to raw farm products through processing and consolidation or other

infrastructure needs. Though a facility may be beyond the reach of an individual farmer or entrepreneur, a county board could identify critical mass necessary to support a facility and bring together a public-private partnership to provide financing.

ADB's can also help expand agricultural entities' access to facilities or infrastructural advantages that are already present in the region. Working with processing facilities to obtain certifications that allow out of state sales, or gaining USDA certification for meat processing facilities are examples of these types of efforts.

ADB's can also serve as an impartial advisor on the allocation of funding priorities for projects. Through the diversity of the board's members, the ADB can serve as a representative voice for all sectors of agriculture in a community, and can maintain a repository of assessment tools to use when evaluating newly proposed projects.

Marketing and Local Farm Promotion

Agritourism, buy local campaigns, farm to school programs, and farmers market development are just a few types of marketing and farm promoting activities ADB's can initiate or maintain to support local farms and keep consumer food dollars circulating within the county and improve the long-term viability of agriculture in a community.

Boards can build partnerships between agencies, growers, and consumers, helping to negotiate the complex regulatory landscape for the startup of a new farmers market. They can work with local schools to facilitate product consolidation and processing needed by school kitchens, while translating product needs back to the farming community. Local and regional marketing initiatives can publicize data on the value of buying local foods and establish criteria for a local identifying label, similar to state level initiatives such as "Virginia Grown," "Kentucky Proud," or "Maryland's Best."

ADB's can have a tremendous impact on area producers simply by focusing community awareness on local farms and the ways that a community can directly or indirectly support them. ADB's can identify events at local and regional institutions and help coordinate them so that local farmers have opportunities to interact with the public.

ADB's can also take on the role of organizing and creating partnerships when implementing specific programs. Successful initiatives have included maintaining a local food guide that lists local food resources, from farmers markets and CSAs to retail locations that highlight local food and farm equipment sales and service businesses, or

Activity

- ✓ **Encourage businesses to expand their services to agricultural customers**
- ✓ **Promote development of existing or new entities that benefit agricultural enterprises**

Activity

- ✓ **Strengthen the connection between the community and farmers**
- ✓ **Initiate or expand an online directory of local amenities**

challenging restaurants to highlight which of their products are from local farms and to source more of their product locally.

Agritourism has long been a viable way to supplement farm revenue, diversify income streams and contribute to the ability of farmers to remain in business. On-farm recreation and events continue to grow in popularity, and can be a significant generator of tourism visits and revenue for non-agricultural businesses as well. Because they create linkages and partnerships with other businesses in the county, agritourism

activities can significantly affect economic growth.



Case In Point: *The Crooked Road, Virginia*

The Crooked Road was implemented in 2003 as way to help promote tourism and economic development in southwestern Virginia. The idea behind The Crooked Road focuses on the regions musical heritage, scenic terrain, and cultural activities. The road includes ten counties, three cities, and ten towns: it encompasses Franklin, Floyd, Patrick, Carroll, Grayson, Washington, Scott, Lee, and Wise counties, ending in Dickenson County. The area is known for its connection to bluegrass music and often holds music festivals throughout the year. The Crooked Road opens up many agritourism opportunities. Although the trail is mainly centered on the area's passion for music, there may be possibilities of incorporating local foods and farmers to help further promote the county's agricultural industry.

More information at www.myswa.org/tcr/about

ADB's can examine local zoning and regulations to identify potential barriers to new hybrid enterprises. They can help farmers and producers consider their property in a new light by promoting, facilitating, or holding conferences or other events that highlight successful examples within the community or from surrounding counties.

ADB's can also help a community think more broadly about potential agritourism resources. While farm and food based activities are most common, some communities overlook unique regional attributes or sites of historical significance that can also be used to expand agritourism events.

An ADB can assist with establishing an official definition for "agritourism." If a county does not already have some sort of program in place, deciding on a definition can be central to outlining a strategy for increasing activities. Agreement on what activities are included under this designation will focus programs and policies correctly, help in resolving valuation and zoning issues, and allow for better measurement of success.

Development boards can help establish and organize networks, encourage connections between those with technical expertise and funding resources, and raise awareness of local opportunities. ADBs can also educate local producers on how expansion into agritourism can help them diversify their revenue, cope with increased costs, and provide supplementary income during bad production years.

Regional coordination with neighboring counties can integrate agritourism activities and attract larger crowds. Local foods directories or related websites help avoid conflicts and dilution of potential attendees, and highlight partnerships between farms and other local businesses (inns, crafts, restaurants) for joint promotional efforts. They can also highlight local heritage attributes that help promote agritourism in the area.



Photo courtesy of Tracie Coltrain

ADB's functioning in an educational capacity can point producers to examples and ideas for successful agritourism activities, provide links to resources in the community that are experts on liability and other related issues, and help organize broader activities such as farm and agricultural tours and trails.

While agritourism is often seen as a tool used by small- and medium-scale farmers, larger producers can also participate by dedicating portions of their larger farms to crops more suitable for local sales. In either case, ADBs can enhance awareness of tools for all levels of producers, and coordinate agritourism activities for the region, or organize nearby agritourism friendly farms into trails or larger tours and events.

Business Planning

The landscape of farming is changing. With the international scope of traditional commodity markets making prices more volatile, changes in federal support programs, and regional changes such as the end of the tobacco program, most farms need to find ways to be more entrepreneurial to survive. At the most basic level, ADBs can help by identifying and promoting local markets that are eager for more local production, and highlighting this demand as an opportunity for entrepreneurial farmers.

Since the first step of business planning is often the creation of a business plan, boards can provide professional referrals and training to area service providers to ensure the right tools exist to help agricultural entities with their unique business needs.

Local universities and higher education institutions often have some sort of economic development outreach program, but ADBs can create stronger links and better communicate industry and university knowledge to the agricultural community. An ADB

Activity

- ✓ **Define, support, and promote agritourism**
- ✓ **Call attention to specific ag-related opportunities**

may consider promoting, facilitating, or holding an information or training conference to bring together business professionals from a range of areas and provide opportunities for networking and information sharing.



Photo courtesy of Fauquier County Agricultural Development Department

Whether it involves investing in new facilities and equipment, hiring more labor to tend a new crop, or building inventory to access a new market, additional capital may be needed. Bankers are important partners that should both sit on the board and be made aware of new enterprise opportunities.

Boards can also be very helpful with identifying potential links between public and private sector resources, in the form of grants, cost-share sources, and low-interest loans.

Many of these funding sources are most accessible through leveraging and matching dollars, and the board can create a communication opportunity to bring diverse partners together.


Local Food Production

Just as ADBs can help individual farms tap into local market opportunities, they can lead a more systemic effort of communities to think strategically about building the local food supply. ADBs can help call attention to the broader issues affecting local food production, including policy, zoning, education, coordination, and other issues, or work in a collaborative capacity to assist other entities such as existing Food Policy Councils in their mission of improving local food systems and production.

	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
PRODUCTION	Inform: Create an online list or repository of information and links	Develop: Hold regular conferences or meetings to join industry experts with producers	Sustain: Establish a network that brings expertise to producers at the farm level
MARKETS	Inform: Compile a list of businesses interested in sourcing local products	Develop: Work with local entities to begin sourcing local products	Sustain: Coordinate initiative to source a majority of products from local producers

Some states have teams or networks that provide producers with access to experts in their industry in order to increase production and efficiency.

One example is the Kentucky Beef Network, which utilizes the Kentucky Cooperative Extension and the KY Cattleman’s Association to help producers improve animal health, genetics, forages, and marketing.



Case In Point: *Columbia County, New York*
Columbia County began its Hudson Valley Bounty program as a way to promote the county’s local produce and connect farmers with customers. The Hudson Valley Bounty brings local agriculture into homes and restaurants. With 229 farms, 251 restaurants, 29 markets, and a CSA initiative, the program’s mission is to open new marketing opportunities for farmers and increase awareness about the importance of sustainable farming to the local economy. The program has since spread from its core in Columbia County to nearby Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Washington, and Westchester counties. The counties also hold various events encouraging farmer-consumer interactions and promoting the health benefits of locally sourced foods. More information at www.hudsonvalleybounty.com/

Minnesota has established Dairy Profitability and Enhancement Teams, which consist of farm business management instructors, dairy extension specialists, and dairy industry partners who provide information about technologies, sustainable agriculture methods, and help enhance the long-term sustainability of dairy farms. Similar to these entities, ADBs can similarly amplify the efforts of local extension agents or associations in their mission of disseminating information to help producers.

Activity

✓ **Forge connections between farmers and existing community and education resources**

Forestry and Renewable Energy

Landowners frequently lack a long-term forest management plan, which over time can result in the growth of less desirable species and

haphazard harvests which do not maximize value for the owners.

Completing a forest management plan often serves to educate landowners and help them better utilize their resource to continue to provide for the future value of the land. These services offer expertise for modest fees, and the resulting plans can serve in an advisory capacity to help owners understand all their options.

ADBs can serve in an educational outreach role to seek forest landowners who do not have a plan to explain the value of carrying out long-term management and carefully timed harvests. Halifax County, Virginia has been noted as a model in their forestry

outreach programs for landowners, and this is also an area where regional collaboration can be an efficient way to deliver services.

Depending on their location, farms may include a significant amount of timber land which is often neglected as a resource. ADBs can facilitate timber management planning and organize educational workshops for landowners in coordination with the local forest service, as well as work to provide resource lists of loggers and consulting foresters. For example, ADBs could promote awareness of the Sustainable Harvesting and Resource Professional (SHARP) program, which seeks to ensure that sustainable forestry principles are followed on timber harvest sites.



Case In Point: *Benton County, Indiana*

Benton County has worked to combine economic growth through renewable energy production with its traditionally important agricultural sector. After struggling with debt, the county looked to wind farms as a method to bring in more money. In 2008, the county's first wind farm was established through Orion Energy Group. The turbines were placed on privately owned farmland, giving farmers a new income source through leases, while the land around each turbine can be used as productive farmland.

Since then, two more farms have been developed, bringing a total of 495 turbines to the county. The collaboration of agriculture and clean energy production has brought significant growth to the county's economy, including lower property taxes, new jobs, a tourism center, and the elimination of the county's debt.

More information is available at
www.bentoncounty.in.gov/windfarms

Renewable energy innovations continue to improve and emerge, so landowners may find new opportunities growing biomass for energy generation. Additionally, energy-saving technologies are increasingly being applied to farm operations, and state and federal cost-share programs often make these an important option for many farms looking to increase profitability of the overall operation.

Activity

- ✓ **Encourage the use of Forestry resources, including forest management plans**
- ✓ **Educate forest land owners about relevant programs**

An ADB with a strong communication network can exert influence to help educate and change the attitude of a community towards new industry opportunities, and provide information about financial resources that are available to producers who wish to upgrade their farm facility to be more energy efficient or to utilize renewable energy.

Community Development

County level entities such as ADBs should seek to promote diversity in the types of agricultural development activities they undertake and resources they develop. Given the county or region's community priorities, ADBs can promote that entities, whether larger commercial producers or smaller independent farms, can have wide-ranging impacts on the community. The ADB can play a key role in creating and using awareness of these effects to galvanize further action from stakeholders and the general populace.



Case In Point: Hood River County, Oregon

Hood River County is an example of a region which focused on expanding and promoting its defining features in order to market itself and boost its economy. The Fruit Loop, a 35 mile stretch of the Hood River Valley that is home to fruit stands, orchards, vineyards, lavender fields, alpaca farms, and other local produce has become a focal point of the area. The county began promoting the Fruit Loop as a tourist destination and an example of the importance of local agriculture in an age of commoditization.

Along with the expansion of the loop, the county sought further development of its port to grow its downtown Hood River economy as well. With grant funding, the county was able to bring in new businesses including a juice company and a brewery which make use of the Fruit Loop's agricultural products and add even more value to them, linking local agriculture to local industry.

More information is available at <http://hoodriverfruitloop.com> and www.co.hood-river.or.us/

In the end, effects will likely extend beyond the typical economic measurements of money and jobs, and include other things more closely associated with community building. The ADB can best assess the community's needs by maintaining a diverse mix of members on the ADB. Membership should represent a mix of large and small producers as well as some form of community representation to ensure all aspects of growth are addressed.

The term "**competitive yardstick**" is often used to refer to how cooperatives can promote competition in a market; however, the concept can be applied to ADBs as well. For example, ADBs can foster growth in agricultural areas and draw attention to a previously overlooked industry segment within a county simply by being in existence. Awareness tends to build on itself, and once the minimum need is reached, other areas can benefit as well. This increased focus on growth will naturally spread to other areas and encourage amplified business development in a community. As any industry grows in strength, support businesses will be established to address the needs of producers. This growth can lead to diversification and help alleviate agricultural industry monopolies.

Food Deserts and Food Security

Food Deserts have been defined by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as “communities, particularly low-income areas, in which residents do not live in close proximity to affordable and healthy food retailers. Healthy food options in these communities are hard to find or are unaffordable.”⁴⁵ Using the USDA ERS Food Access

Research Atlas online tool, there are large sections within Virginia that fall under the Low Income and Low Access (LI/ LA) regions that identify food desert areas.⁴⁶



Case In Point: *Dane County, Wisconsin*

The Dane County Food Council has been a leader in raising awareness and building bridges between local farmers and citizens whose nutritional needs are not being met. The council is comprised of nine members appointed to staggered three-year terms. The county was highlighted by the National Association of Counties as a model for other counties, and activities listed on the DCFC site include hosting an annual food summit, authoring a local Food Purchase Program Policy to increase purchases of locally produced foods by county food service facilities, and organized and co-sponsored several other conferences and events centered on increasing awareness of hunger and nutrition. Info at www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil/default.aspx

Food security results from stable partnerships between growers and producers, consumers, processors, buyers, regulators, and the logistics chain. ADBs can ensure all the pieces of this puzzle exist within their county, and bring about a concerted effort to help all stakeholders understand the importance of their roles and strengthen the entire community.

Promoting agriculture and the direct marketing of local foods in particular, can positively impact regions by providing more accessible fresh produce sources (i.e. local producers).

While state governments are increasingly focused on addressing food security concerns, ADBs can serve as partner in implementing activities at the local and community levels. Their work in promoting the diversity and strength of local foods can result in significant impacts in these areas, and farmers markets, community gardens, and mobile carts or trucks selling fruits and vegetables in a community are all pieces of the solution.

⁴⁵ www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/community-economic-development/healthy-food-financing

⁴⁶ www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas.aspx

Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

According to the 2007 and 2012 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms by Race and Ethnic Origin of Principal Operator has risen for each of the following categories: Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin. In Virginia, socially disadvantage race categories showing increases from 2007 to the 2012 Census were Asian and Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin, with the most significant increase occurring among the Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin category with an increase of 132 farms.

Any rapidly growing minority population faces specific obstacles in regards to agricultural development. In addition to the barriers other beginning farmers face, this population must also contend with a lack of educational resources available in their



Case In Point: *Food For Thought, Virginia*

As a particular example of addressing a lack of connection between farming and education, the Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation, Roanoke City Public Schools, and the City of Roanoke partnered to create Food for Thought, a program that focuses on “sustainable gardening, green lifestyle choices, the use of urban land for small scale vegetable gardening, and careers in related fields.”

The program includes curriculum that introduces students to food and its sources, and covers topics such as local foods, food sustainability, and making healthy food choices like these can help address issues related to farm labor pools and encourage a new generation of farmers and agricultural workers. Information at [www. foodforthoughtva.org](http://www.foodforthoughtva.org).

native languages, as well as cultural challenges in the credit, risk management, and land tenure arenas. With an ADB or similar entity to pay proper attention to their specific needs, this population can be a valuable source of innovation in the farm sector and a substantial addition to any county's cultural diversity. An ADB can help ensure any strategic or work plan includes initiatives to assist the socially disadvantaged segments within its community.

Education and Youth Development

ADB's can also play a partnership role in increasing the strength and prevalence of agricultural education in a community. While the focus of agricultural education often occurs at the college level, creating strong ties between community education institutions and the farm community can begin long before college or even high school. Programs are available that focus on incorporating local food and farmers into schools from the preschool level through the elementary level as well. Working with schools and higher educational institutions that are educating and informing the next



Case In Point: Fayette County, Kentucky

Locust Trace AgriScience Center is a career and technical high school that offers agriculture related program curriculum to area students including five main programs of study: Intro to Agriculture, Environmental and Wildlife Science, Agriculture Power Mechanics, Equine and Vet Science, and Small and Large Animal Science with sustainable agriculture as a focus in all programs. The facility was built with a focus on energy and environment in mind and includes many amenities and features that serve as a model for sustainable construction. Information at www.locustrace.fcps.net/.



Case In Point: Buncombe County, North Carolina

Warren Wilson College of Buncombe County (Asheville) operates an award-winning working farm in addition to a traditional liberal arts college. Staffed by 25-30 students and two full-time farm managers, the farm consists of 275 acres of crop land and pasture and primarily raises beef cattle and hogs, as well as a mixture of forage crops and produce. The farm's produce is sold seasonally through a mailing list, at a local market, and on location at the farm. Operating the farm in connection with the school provides hands-on learning opportunities for livestock and agriculture students, as well as veterinary medicine students. Information at www.warren-wilson.edu/~farm/

generation is an important role that can be assumed by ADBs. Education programs often result in new people becoming involved in agriculture activities and becoming better acquainted with producers in their area. This can drive interest in official agritourism activities or even just create a greater awareness of producer activities.

Local school systems can be encouraged to increase their use of local foods. Successful school lunch programs that utilize local foods can set an example for the purchase of

Activity

- ✓ Expand ag education in schools.
- ✓ Expand internship and placement programs
- ✓ Support and promote youth development programs

local farm products by serving as a demonstration of working with farmers' production, delivery schedules, and pricing needs. ADBs can help match producers who have the necessary certifications with schools, local colleges and other educational institutions and school systems seeking to purchase foods locally.

Examples of efforts include incorporating forestry education into environmental science classes, or better integrating high school curriculum with college preparatory requirements, hiring local farmers to teach some classes, both for

practical experience and to provide another income stream for local farmers during the off-season.

The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's Growing Minds program connects food, local farms, school gardens, and cooking in a way that starts healthy education at an early age, preparing a new generation of farmers and fighting the epidemic of childhood obesity. The program site states "The program provides resources and training to teachers, schools, Child Nutrition Directors, cafeteria staff, parents, extension agents, farmers, and other community stakeholders to encourage and sustain Farm to School efforts."⁴⁷



Case In Point: *Chatham County, North Carolina*

Central Carolina Community College of Chatham County worked with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association to produce community college curriculum for its Sustainable Agriculture program, first instituted in 2002. The program focuses on equipping students to be able to "develop and manage a profitable, environmentally sound and community-based small farm or agricultural business." The program uses area farmers as instructors and involves students growing crops, utilizing farm equipment, and engaging in other activities designed to give students a comprehensive understanding of operating an ag business.

The College's Pittsboro campus includes a five-acre student farm that serves as an outdoor classroom for the program, and students are able to select courses from a variety of subjects such as organic vegetable production, sustainable poultry production, and biofuels.

More information is at www.cccc.edu/sustainableag/

A focus on education and nutrition also serves to link with the mission of local universities; working with their existing programs to utilize resources can alleviate some of the burden from local producers in finding ways to be involved. Including representatives from educational entities in the county, from local school districts to colleges and universities can help ensure "buy-in" from these essential institutions. While many colleges and universities focused on agricultural educational may already have existing placement programs, other entities should be encouraged to consider such programs as well.

Outside of educational institutions and curriculum, engaging youth in agriculture from a young age can be a key activity undertaken by an ADB as it seeks to promote the future of agriculture within a county or region. While there are many variations and examples of youth oriented agriculture activities, some of the better known ones include 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA), which often operate in tandem with education institutions and schools.

⁴⁷ <http://asapconnections.org/growing-minds-farm-to-school/>

Labor availability is frequently mentioned as a barrier amongst farmers. Expanding agricultural youth programs and instituting initiatives such as farm internships can help expand entrepreneurial capacity and long term industry growth in addition to supplementing labor shortages.



Case In Point: Fluvanna County, Virginia

For nearly ten years, the Fluvanna County school system was without an agricultural education program; however, through a partnership with Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the Fluvanna Farm Bureau, a high school program was instituted that began an agriculture technology course that has quickly grown in popularity among students. In only its second year, the class reached capacity. The curriculum is closely combined with FFA after-school activities to provide students with context for their new skills and understand how they can translate into a long-term career in agriculture.

More information at

<http://fluvannaschools.catselbow.com/portal/?p=2359>

Future Farmers of America (FFA) helps expose youth to possible ag-related careers, and ADBs can partner with the organization to help promote their activities. The organization requires members to be enrolled in an agricultural education course and provides step by step instructions for establishing an agricultural education program if one does not already exist. The **4-H** (Head, Heart, Hands, and Health) program focuses members on action oriented learning activities that include science and community involvement. Their website states that 4-H encompasses more than 600,000 volunteers and 25 million alumni, providing an extensive networking opportunity for ADBs focused on youth development in their communities.

Policy and Legislation

After an ADB has assessed the needs of the community and established goals and strategies, these priorities can form the basis of the ADB's efforts in addressing local government policies. While an ADB is not a "food policy council" that

primarily functions as a consumer representative, there are elements of policy that affect agricultural development where ADBs can have an impact by serving as a voice for producers.

Based on the focus of the individual ADB, current and possible legislation can be examined to determine whether they enable or restrict agricultural activity within the county. An ADB may consider calling attention to certain areas where current policies inhibit agricultural development or activity.

Activities may include addressing local zoning and regulations that are potential barriers to new agricultural and agritourism enterprises, advocating for ordinances that



make forestry and agricultural practices allowable under Virginia state law, or policies that coordinate local food initiatives with local health codes.

ADB's should also consider what role elected leaders may play as possible members. There may be a role on the board for these individuals in an effort to facilitate strong relationships with legislators and their staff members, and seek to provide a unified voice on state and local policy priorities. Having these

officials as allies can help assure continued funding for local agricultural institutions such as Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the local office of the State Forestry Service.

ADB's can shed light on issues important to an area's producers, and propose or present potential changes without functioning as a lobbyist. Within the context of its mandate or the goals and strategies outlined in a county development or strategic plan, ADB's can bring together those necessary to enact change and help to create a legislative environment that encourages agricultural development.

Activity

- ✓ Advocate on behalf of agriculture
- ✓ Poll farmers to determine specific issues that need changing
- ✓ Encourage the drafting of ordinances that directly support agriculture



Photo courtesy of Freddie Wydner

ADB Alternatives

Since the ultimate goal is to develop and strengthen the overall agricultural industry and community rather than to simply establish an additional board or entity, many localities have successfully advanced agriculture without establishing a formal ADB or Director position.

Informal Agricultural Economic Development Networks

In some areas, no formal entities or organizations are tasked with agricultural economic development. Possibly because of a lack of funding, leadership, or resources, some areas or regions rely instead on the efforts of an informal network of county staff. Regardless of their composition, these networks may partner with established entities to supplement their effectiveness or extend their reach or influence.

Informal networks can be comprised of a mix of county staff members, members of economic development, community members, extension agents, farmers, landowners, or virtually any combination of interested parties, and may include paid and unpaid participants. Agricultural development activities can also be the result of a single individual with a passion for agriculture.

Even counties that choose to formalize their agricultural development activities under the authority of a board or director can benefit from cultivating informal networks within their region of influence. Each board or entity may experience variations in funding levels, so leveraging informal networks and partnerships can be an invaluable tool in prolonging existing funding. ADBs can then multiply their efforts by combining dedicated or well-funded activities with partnerships and the work of volunteer or community grass-roots entities to implement programs in areas with less funding.

Other Entities and Approaches

The following are just a few examples of institution-level models to consider when taking a broad-based regional approach to developing the region. While none of the examples are intended to provide exact models for replication, they do represent varied approaches to agricultural protection and development with a whole-community perspective.

At The Regional Level

Gorge Grown Food Network

www.gorgegrown.com



According to their website, Gorge Grown's mission is "to build a resilient and inclusive regional food system that improves the health and well-being of our community." Gorge Grown is a "network" that connects farmers, consumers, and the community. The network reaches five counties in Oregon and Washington and functions as a non-profit resource for farmers, food producers, consumers, policy-makers, educators, health promoters, and food enthusiasts.

Their main goals include focusing on education, demand, supply, and organization. Many of their projects are farmers markets, including one that focuses specifically on

increasing the Hispanic community's access to fresh and local foods. Gorge Grown also has a publication titled *Who's Your Farmer*, which is a free directory of small farmers and producers within the five-county region.

Another project by Gorge Grown Food Network is the Community Food Assessment, which “takes a big picture look at our food system in all its parts—production, distribution, consumption—so we can learn how it works and how to improve our food and farms.” The group has completed the assessment and it is available upon request.

Intervale Center

www.intervale.org



Located in Burlington, Vermont, the Intervale Center is a non-profit organization that focuses on strengthening the community foods system by being a resource to farmers and the community. The Intervale Center has been working to build a food system in their community that fosters food production, processing, distribution, and consumption for over 20 years.

According to their website, Intervale is able to fulfill their mission through:

- New farm incubation
- Farm business development
- Agricultural market development
- Agricultural land stewardship
- Food systems research and consulting
- Celebration of food and farmers

Through their Farms Program, the center is able to lease land, equipment, greenhouses, irrigation, and storage facilities to “small independent farmers.” They are also a part of the Vermont New Farmer Project, through which they help beginning farmers with business planning and educating them on additional outside services.

Along with services and resources, the Intervale Center also operates a year-round virtual food hub. Through the hub, the center is able to provide the community with high quality, local foods while also bringing a stable market and fair prices to producers.

Appalachian Sustainable Development

asdevelop.org



Operating since 1995, Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) focuses on the Appalachian areas of Virginia and Tennessee. The organization provides a range of services and information related to sustainable agriculture, forestry, and food access, and has started several related organizations to address specific needs.

Appalachian Harvest was started by ASD in 2000 to help transitioning tobacco farmers find an alternative source of income. The program taught farmers organic production practices, helped them achieve certification, and helped organize wholesale buyers for the products. ASD also founded the Appalachian Farmers Market Association to

help promote local farmers markets, and the “Rooted in Appalachia” branding program to provide signs and other promotional materials to businesses that use local foods. The organization’s forestry initiatives include a green wood products marketing program, and education and training resources. Food access activities include Healthy Families~Healthy Farms, which provides seconds from Appalachian Harvest producers to food banks and an outdoor classroom program called Learning Landscapes.

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

asapconnections.org



Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is a non-profit organization that works at the community level by assessing food systems through a Local Food Research Center. They build capacity and foster connections by helping local farmers connect with markets and improve the link between local food production and consumers. ASAP provides marketing support and training, publishes a “Local Food Guide,” operates the “Appalachian Grown”

branding initiative, and provides educational materials via the Growing Minds Farm to School Program.

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture

www.pasafarming.org



According to their website, the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture is “the largest statewide, member-based sustainable farming organization in the United States” and “grew out of the need for an educational and support system for farmers - both experienced and beginning - interested in non-traditional agricultural practices, such as organic, biodynamic

and grass-based farming, as well as the desire to create local markets for sustainably produced food.”

The organization provides numerous services, including a Farm-Based Education program, annual Farming for the Future Conference, community outreach program, and coordination with the Pennsylvania Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign chapter to help increase the connection between consumers and local producers.



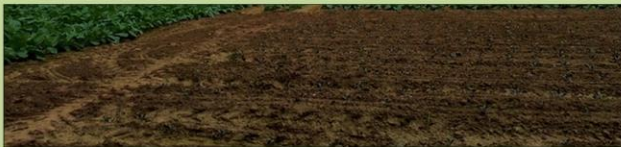
Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts



Case In Point: Lake County SWCD, Ohio

The Lake County SWCD is one example of an SWCD leading in agricultural development activities. After its formation in 1947, the SWCD began incorporating farm tour and forestry programs alongside Extension Service as soon as the 1950s. During the subsequent decade, it also began focusing on farmland preservation and urban erosion control. Over time, the Lake County SWCD has been recognized for its efforts, "even though (or because) it didn't do any of the typical soil and water district activities."

Information at www.lakecountyohio.gov/swcd/Home.aspx



Case in Point: Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District, Virginia

According to their website, "The Mission of the Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote conservation of our natural resources." According to their annual report, the Conservation District is responsible for maintaining the most effective use of technical assistance and funding for the conservation of natural resources. The Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical assistance and cost-share funding for a range of agricultural programs and practices that protect and enhance the natural resource base for farming. In addition, they also conduct ag-related activities within their service area, including Annual Farm Tours and an Environmental Education Outreach distribution program.

Information at <http://brswcd.org/>

Although not specifically tasked with agricultural development responsibilities, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) can be an effective body to address a wide range of concerns of the farming sector. SWCDs are often the lead agency in the development of a Farmland Preservation and/or Agricultural Development Plan. Accordingly, SWCDs are often uniquely positioned to determine and articulate the strategic needs of the local agricultural sector.

SWCDs administer Natural Resource Conservation Service programs such as the Environmental Quality Improvement Program which can help farmers establish infrastructure and practices such as fencing, laneways, and cover-cropping for rotational grazing or organic transition, ponds for produce irrigation, and manure storage and composting for fertility management on livestock operations.

SWCDs also may take an active role in farmland preservation, helping landowners prepare applications for a PACE program and even being the easement monitoring entity. They can also partner on educational programs which help landowners explore farm succession options, creating a network with private sector providers (such as attorneys and accountants) and public sector resources (such as university extension).

At The National Level

American Farmland Trust

www.farmland.org



For 35 years, American Farmland Trust has maintained a focus on using conservation easements as a tool to protect farmland from development. Through promotion of

voluntary conservation and enabling programs that address water and soil conservation, the trust has been on the leading edge of conservation efforts for years. The trust's website describes their work as advocacy, education, innovation, investigation, and collaboration. The trust publishes numerous documents in accordance with their initiatives, and has set up the Farmland Information Center as an information resource.

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF)

www.fb.org



The AFBF states they are "an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization governed by and representing farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social advancement and, thereby, to promote the

national well-being." The organization is active in many areas, including legal and legislative advocacy, and maintains numerous programs to assist with agricultural development, including a Young Farmers & Ranchers Program, Rural Development, and Agricultural Literacy.

Multi-County Partnerships and Regionalism

At times, a county may not be able to justify its own independent ADB or Ag Development Director. In regions where other counties have already implemented significant programs, it may be plausible for an individual county to take a multi-county or regional approach to its agricultural development activities. Even in counties with an established ADB, some initiatives may be better addressed through a multi-county or regional approach, and in some cases may require extending beyond state borders.

With a multi-county approach, county leadership may consider working with surrounding counties (typically contiguous) to pool resources that can work to everyone's advantage. In a regional approach, municipal borders are less important, and the focus is placed on common features of a region, whether based on heritage, climate, topography, or other characteristics.





Case In Point: New River Valley Region, Virginia

The tri-county area of Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties in Virginia began holding regular meetings in December 2012 to discuss ways of promoting the growth of the agriculture in the region. Representatives formed a steering committee in 2013, and were subsequently awarded a Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industry Development (AFID) planning grant as well as a grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to construct a regional strategic plan.

The committee established an Agriculture and Tourism Consortium to support the effort, which was made up of three distinct entities: a Management Team formed from chairs of multiple committees; a Steering Committee which was comprised of stakeholder representatives and key experts from the region, and various Subcommittees assigned specific tasks. Info at www.gilescounty.org, www.pulaskicounty.org, and www.montgomerycountyva.gov.

Critical Mass

One area in which a multi-county or regional approach is useful is when an activity requires critical mass to be viable. For example, some counties do not have the land base to support the beef cattle needed for a dedicated slaughter facility; however, pooling resources with surrounding counties to find a centralized location for the facility may make the project feasible.

As another example, farmers face the challenge of strong competition from farmers in other counties, but may lack the acreage and inputs to support new processing or aggregation facilities and capacity to compete. To achieve long-term growth,

Both multi-county and regional collaborations can be initiated with or without a formal ADB entity. County leadership, informal county networks, agricultural development entities, or an ADB can all engage in coordination and oversight of regional initiatives and resources, creating awareness through promotion or interacting with other counties to encourage development of programs or businesses that benefit many localities.

Regardless of the circumstances, multi-county collaborations and regionalism can amplify the efforts of individual county-based ADBs and other agricultural development entities, and there are numerous other examples where a regional approach makes greater sense than for individual counties to take an isolationist view.

Activity

- ✓ **Coordinate a region's agritourism organizations to work together and provide new and innovative ideas**
- ✓ **Publish a list of regional resources, such as processing or packing facilities**
- ✓ **Seek out existing agriculture entities**

infrastructure such as processing and aggregation facilities need to be established, but may take years to develop if supply is only based on a single county's production. A multi-county or regional approach can help producers seeking specific services better utilize existing facilities and nearby resources.



Case In Point: Pottawattamie County, Iowa

Pottawattamie County has reached beyond its borders to focus on regional cooperation and development. In 2007, Pottawattamie and eight other counties formed the Southwest Iowa Food and Farm Initiative (SWIFFI) which aims to create a regional food system and help producers sustain and expand their businesses. The program has worked with Iowa Western Community College to create the Dream to Farm program which offers training to new farmers in a variety of subjects. Pottawattamie County is also collaborating with neighboring counties in Nebraska and through the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership. Together, they work to encourage regional development, both in agriculture and small business. More information is available at <https://swiowafoodandfarm.wordpress.com/> and www.selectgreateromaha.com/Home.aspx

While many counties tend to focus on internal resources, making a point of utilizing external or regional resources can also strengthen agriculture within the county by providing for long term sustainability of farmers and producers. Incorporating this approach can also help the ADB be more efficient in the short term, and better able to leverage funding resources.

An ADB can play numerous roles when a county decides to take this approach. Although farmers may desire to have facilities as close as possible to production activities, ADBs can educate farmers and producers on the reality that some infrastructure and facilities require the necessary level of inputs to be viable. Producers can be made aware of and encouraged to travel when necessary to use facilities. The ADB can assist by creating an accessible list of nearby resources, whether they are located within the county borders or not, to better promote awareness.

As a county level agent, ADBs can facilitate knowledge and information sharing at the county

and regional level, and ensure cooperation when the time comes to initiate a project. Given their overarching knowledge of agriculture within the county or region, ADBs may also be best positioned to recognize when growth has produced the critical mass necessary to support the construction of specific infrastructural components.

Collaboration and Partnerships with Existing Entities

Multi-county or regional collaboration also makes sense in areas where contiguous counties share a significant resource or heritage site, or in situations where individual county-based boards are seeking to expand their activities to benefit a larger region.

In many counties, there are already organizations working either directly or indirectly on behalf of farmers. Because of the potential position and influence of an ADB, there are tremendous opportunities for such an entity to leverage its awareness of agriculture within the county by working with other established entities.

While leadership of many of these organizations may have been involved in the development of an ADB, the board can reach out to include other agencies or groups that have an interest in the viability of agricultural operations. ADBs can promote discussion about what resources each entity may be able to provide to agricultural economic development efforts, as well as further promote awareness of the many benefits that the farm sector can bring to the community.

Though not an exhaustive list, some examples of traditional partnerships as well as some that may be considered non-traditional are included below. Each entity or organization may be able to provide resources in different areas to help the development of agriculture within the county or region and serve as a potential partner for the ADB.

Cooperative Extension System: The USDA Cooperative Extension System is nationwide and includes a state office at a land-grant university and a network of local or regional officers in each U.S. state and territory. The intent of these offices is to provide useful, practical, and research-based information to agricultural producers, small business owners, youth, consumers, and others in rural areas and communities of all sizes.⁴⁸

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): The NRCS is tasked with being a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges.⁴⁹ The NRCS works through the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to promote and administer federal programs that help landowners achieve soil and water conservation objectives on their farms.

Farm and Agriculture Organizations: Farmer and rural advocacy groups, such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Grange, American Farmland Trust, or the National Farmers Organization work to promote the interests of the agriculture industry and rural America. These and other entities can have extensive networks and resources that already exist in a community.

Private Sector Farm Supply and Services: These entities will vary by locality, and may represent a mix of locally owned stores and service providers as well as chains and larger entities. Cultivating relationships with these critical components of the agriculture

⁴⁸ National Institute of Food and Agriculture (2013). "Cooperative Extension System Offices." USDA www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/

⁴⁹ USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. <http://nracs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nracs/main/national/about/>

industry can be essential to ensuring producer access to the equipment and supplies necessary to keep a farm operation updated and operating efficiently.

Finance: Along with local suppliers, county agriculture as an industry is also often dependent on financiers in the area. ADBs can help address producers concerns about the lack of understanding of agricultural issues amongst local banks by working in collaboration with bank management and staff to ensure a thorough understanding of the issues and opportunities unique to agricultural enterprises.

Economic Development Office: Several counties in Virginia have organized agricultural development efforts under the auspices of the local Economic Development Office. Standard economic development often receives funding and budgeting and has a dedicated staff. ADBs can work with such entities to include agricultural projects along with regular activities.

Chambers of Commerce: Chambers can be an ally in agricultural economic development given their focus on promoting a favorable business environment for all industries. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce serves as the voice of business at the federal level, and individual states have a state-level Chamber of Commerce. At the local level, there are numerous county and city-based chambers that have been formed to represent the business interests of their respective communities.



Tourism/Visitors Bureaus: Similar to Economic Development Offices, tourism and visitors bureaus often have dedicated funding and staff to carry out their mandate. Particularly in areas of overlap such as agritourism, ADBs can work within established programs to promote agricultural entities along with more traditional tourism destinations and activities.

Public Health Institutions: According to the National Network of Public Health Institutes, public health institutes are “nonprofit organizations that improve the public’s health by fostering innovation, leveraging resources, and building partnerships across sectors, including government agencies, communities, the health care delivery system, media, and academia.”⁵⁰ Such organizations can provide resources in some instances to assist with advocacy or research for ADBs focusing on policy change or implementation.

Virginia Agricultural Development Officers (VADO): The Virginia Agricultural Development Officers (VADO) was established in 2010 to promote the growth and vitality of agriculture in the state through networking, information sharing, and learning about development efforts being undertaken throughout Virginia. Reaching out, rather than isolation, can often maximize the effectiveness of programs, either through learning best practices, or through gaining insight into opportunities that have been previously undiscovered within the county but are having a significant impact in other areas of the state.

⁵⁰ www.nnphi.org/about/what-is-a-public-health-institute



OPERATIONS GUIDE

The previous sections in this guide have examined county level agricultural economic development entities in Virginia, highlighted notable programs in Virginia and other states, and outlined the broad range of roles agricultural development entities can assume.

Formalized ADBs can take an active, comprehensive leadership role in economic development by leading longer term initiatives and working closely with public and private partners in the county to ensure they are carrying out their responsibilities in the process.

ADBs working closely with public and private partners help ensure that responsibilities are being carried out.

Regardless of the circumstances of formation or original areas of concentration, these boards must be creative and forward-thinking in fulfilling their mission. A broad mandate can confer great responsibility and opportunity on such a board—including challenging the farming community, the general public, and county leadership to further the growth of agriculture.

This section is broken into two segments: **Forming an ADB**, and **Established ADBs**. Both present a basic outline, provide foundational steps, and ideal checklists for creation of and maintenance of an effective ADB.

- **Starting an ADB**

The experience of existing boards in Virginia and across the country has provided general steps to create an ADB. Whether these steps occur through the work of another formalized board, such as a Board of Supervisors, an informal advisory committee, or through the efforts of government agencies or private sector partners, the basic components of formation and strategic direction are similar.

- **Established ADBs**

Previously established boards face new challenges over time as community initiative wears off or those involved in establishment move on to other projects. Such boards require periodic reinvigoration to maintain effectiveness and relevance.

While some areas overlap between startup and those that have been in operation for some time, there are enough differences to merit a separate section devoted to each. Those forming a new board should review the section intended for established ADBs as well, as they may find points of consideration to address during formation.

Forming an ADB

1 GAUGE INTEREST

Begin to discuss the concept with leaders of the agricultural community and local government. It will take a concerted effort among committed individuals to create a successful ADB. Share ideas for the types of projects that could be undertaken, using success stories pulled from this report or from ADBs in other Virginia counties. If there is not broad-level support for establishing an ADB, further time and effort working on the next steps may not be justified.

Gauge the agricultural community and local government's interest in establishing an ADB before moving forward.

Conduct a stakeholder meeting. To determine whether or not a county could benefit from establishing such an entity, bring interested parties together to begin basic outreach and assess the current level of agricultural activities and policies in place to determine if more can be done to promote agriculture.

Hold an open planning session. Less formal than a stakeholder meeting, open planning sessions can be open to anyone who may be interested in agriculture or related industries in the community. This type of meeting will cast a wider net than the stakeholder meeting, and while it may result in a lesser focus on agriculture, it may also identify unlikely partners in promoting agriculture.

Conduct a survey. Surveys make it easier to gain input from a broader group, and do not restrict inclusion to those able to travel for meeting attendance. While it may be more difficult to gain specific information, surveys can help identify unlikely partnerships or "outside the box" ideas. This survey could also be undertaken after a *stakeholder meeting* or *open planning session*, as a first project for the new group to do together, both to gather broader information and input and to explore the commitment of individual partners to future cooperation.

2 GATHER THE TEAM

Form a temporary “leadership” team. Formally assemble and establish a team of leaders representing key stakeholder groups in a community. This will further reveal the level of support present in the community, and will provide insight into possible resources, barriers, or objections. Based on the level of expressed interest, preliminary meetings may evolve to include strategic planning sessions in which the team may begin the process of identifying possible partners and the types of projects the ADB could undertake.

Determine key leaders for the ADB and form a team of focused, energetic individuals.

The leadership team should include representatives of agricultural organizations (Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation, Farm Bureau, etc.), local government departments (planning and economic development), and the private sector (farmers, Chamber of Commerce, farm supply businesses). While this team could form an outline of the basis for an ADB, full representation of every sector of agriculture is not as important at this point as having energetic and focused individuals willing to reach out to a broad audience.

Engage decision-makers. The leadership team should hold meetings with the Board of Supervisors, Economic Development and Planning Departments, and Chambers of Commerce to explain the need for an ADB and how it might be structured. It is important that key decision makers see this as an opportunity and an enhancement to what currently exists, rather than competition or another obligation to fulfill.

Forming a new board is not an act that should be done for its own sake alone, and, in some cases, forming an ADB may not be necessary. If there are no compelling reasons to proceed to establishing a formal board, consider organizing the leadership team as an advisory committee rather than an official county board. Official boards often have constraints such as mandatory meeting notification windows, open meeting requirements, and publication of minutes that limit their flexibility in discussing sensitive topics at the brainstorming stage. Establishing a less formal entity may alleviate some of these concerns, particularly if a county is just beginning a new program. In the future, reassessing the circumstances within the county may reveal the necessity of formally organizing an ADB.

3 CREATE THE BOARD

Once the need for an ABD is established and the leadership team has laid the groundwork with the Board of Supervisors (BOS), an ADB or advisory committee should be formally created. The board can either be established by ordinance or ad hoc; either way, close connection to the BOS is essential. *Successful ADBs in Virginia repeatedly emphasized that a strong relationship with the Board of Supervisors was a key element for their success.* Beyond early and frequent communication, one simple way to accomplish this is by allowing the BOS to appoint some of the individual members within guidelines suggested by the leadership team.

Select members. Selecting the right members for the ADB is an important facet of achieving board effectiveness. Populate the board with well-rounded and highly-qualified individuals who are open to finding innovative ways to achieve county objectives.

Formalize the ADB and Board of Supervisors and select well-rounded, qualified members.

- **Include a broad cross-section of agricultural stakeholders.** Make the diversity of the agricultural sector one of the strengths of the ADB. Membership should include producers who can represent the interests of multiple types of farms – horticulture, livestock, commodity and direct market, food and forestry, production and agritourism, traditional and new. This will ensure a diversity of opinions and viewpoints on the board, and can lead to effective analysis of current issues and inclusive actions when implementing complex strategies.
- **Reach out to other economic sectors.** Include non-traditional partners to gather their views and educate them about needs and opportunities as well as determine what unique assets they may be able to provide. For example, a board should consider including representatives from educational, planning, public health, and food security sectors. Although representatives from these areas may know relatively little about agricultural production, they understand consumer needs and can help the farming community understand their value to the local community in a different manner.
- **Create a unique group.** Avoid including only existing agricultural leadership, such as those serving on the Soil and Water Conservation District or Farm Bureau Boards. Although these long-time leaders have commitments and relationships across the county, it is important that an ADB has a unique set of individuals and interests with a focus on agricultural economic development. The ADB should partner with other organizations to achieve common objectives, but members should not simply mirror them.

4 ESTABLISH STRUCTURE AND GUIDELINES

This critical step in the formation process will describe and outline in detail the internal structure governing the activities of the ADB.

Create a mission statement. Having an established mission or vision statement will ensure that all members, organizers, and partners are aware of and in agreement with the ultimate goal. The mission should directly capture the motivation of the organizing group of stakeholders and become the driving force of the organization. Honestly

Determine the ADB's mission and establish operational structure and guidelines.

assessing the needs and desired outcomes of the stakeholders in the beginning stages of the venture's formation can pave the way for a stronger, more efficient organization in the future.

Set a code of ethics. Given the often mission-driven nature of ADBs and similar entities, a code of ethics should be established early. Having these guiding principles will assist in making subsequent decisions and ensure the focus remains consistent. The code of

ethics should address topics such as authority granted to various members, including limits, principles for handling disagreements, confidentiality guidelines, and an outline of expected conduct. Other items deemed important by the organizing group should be discussed and included as necessary.

Determine the structure and operation of the ADB. There are many organizational structures exhibited by ADBs and related entities across the country, and no one structure can be considered the “best practice.” The most successful entities consider all stakeholder points of view and set up a sound organizational plan for meeting and establishing short and long-term objectives and internally monitoring progress. Often ADBs set this information down in the form of a comprehensive or strategic plan that contains a clear outline of the board’s goals and vision, critical items that need to be addressed, and potential partners for completing tasks.

Find an operational structure that best suits the ADB’s mission by considering all stakeholder points of view- there is no uniform “best fit.”

- **Determine governance.** While establishing an ADB, organizers should carefully consider who will lead the board and in what capacity. Depending on how active and cooperative individual members are, the ADB can function as a democratic entity or a more centralized structure, as determined by leadership.
- **Define powers.** To be effective, an ADB’s role should be clearly expressed and empowered in some manner to influence the development of agriculture. In some cases, it may be necessary for localities wishing to establish a formal ADB to empower the new entity with a legislative act. Entities without such basic information can be hampered by ineffective action or the inability to carry out their mission efficiently.
- **Establish basic operational procedures.** Key operational decisions include establishing meeting frequency (e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly), location, and format, as well as internal board positions such as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, etc., and the timing and scope of any intended reports.

Depending on the location, structure, organization, and authority of the board, operational procedures may need to establish open public access policies related to “Sunshine Laws” or the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Such policies may affect publishing board deliberations and meeting minutes, as well as the timing and location of meetings. In such cases, the ADB may need to require the recording, storage, and publication of meeting minutes to provide for citizen access to its deliberations and activities.

Set up a decision-making framework. Establish a procedure that includes an appropriate time period for discussion and information gathering but that also culminates in a decision point and clear action items. ADBs must decide whether decisions on projects and other important activities will be made by majority or unanimous vote, and whether decisions require consensus or unanimous agreement. Having this framework in place will prove invaluable as the board develops a work plan to carrying out complex decisions.

Establish sources of initial funding. Depending on the ADB's intended activities, funding may be needed for staff leadership, planning and research, expert speakers or field trips, and seed capital and matching support for individual projects. Sources may be from county allocations, state or federal grants (often requiring a local match), private foundations, individual or corporate investors and sponsors, and even new non-traditional sources such as Slow Money and crowd-sourcing. With adequate research into the types of funding that can be obtained from outside sources, local government investment can be very modest, leveraging significant return on a small amount.

Create necessary staff support and leadership positions. The ADB needs a paid staff person to organize meetings, prepare information and documents, and keep the ADB focused on mission, work plan, and follow-through. The position need not be dedicated full-time to the ADB; this may be a person from the planning or economic development department, cooperative extension, or the Soil and Water Conservation District. However, to assure that this person is able to devote adequate time and energy to the ADB, this assignment should be part of their job and supported by their supervisor.

- **Clearly define hierarchical structure and position roles.** Roles should be appropriate for the staffing level and should be designed for qualified individuals with experience in production, agriculture, and economic development. A lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of staff positions can hamper their effectiveness.
- **Outline and describe position tasks and expected deliverables.** This creates clear understanding of expectations and responsibilities that accompany a role.
- **Maintain a simple and clear chain of command.** The ADB should be able to report to 1-2 key staffers, rather than to multiple boards.
- **Avoid politicizing leadership positions.** Individuals in leadership positions should be the best qualified individuals for the job.

5 ASSESS THE LANDSCAPE

Whether done as a formal SWOT analysis or through another format, the ADB should conduct an assessment of the current state of agriculture in the community to better determine needs and priority areas.

Conduct a formal assessment of the area's agriculture and community.

Envision a successful future for agriculture. In this critical first step, ADB members envision a successful future in the agricultural sector as a whole and the potential roles of local government in building this future. This initial visualization would occur with the input of public and private stakeholders who will collaborate in achieving the vision.

Evaluate the existing state of agriculture. Take an in-depth look at current agricultural activities and determine their success and viability. Conducting this evaluation step will provide a comprehensive understanding of the current level of activity within the county and reveal which areas of the county need improvement compared to the vision established in the previous step. The ADB can then utilize the strengths that already exist in order to leverage change and focus resources where they are needed most or can do the most good.

- **Research and data collection.** Collect and analyze data both from private industry sources and publically available government sources.
- **Stakeholder and third-party meetings.** Hold outreach activities that gauge the interest of the broader community.
- **Field investigation.** Enlisting other personnel, such as county extension agents to speak one-on-one with major producers that represent sub-industries within the county can be a great way to get “buy-in,” and can provide very practical points to consider when establishing county priorities or an overarching strategic or comprehensive plan.
- **Public vs. Private Land and Ownership.** Ensure a thorough understanding of the county or locality’s mix of publically owned and privately owned land, including the status of any applicable energy and mineral rights. Such information may be useful when understanding and assessing certain ordinances and policies related to land use and development.
- **General assessment.** Asking questions such as “Are there any significant infrastructural advantages (canneries, produce packing houses, USDA meat processing facilities, etc.) that we can build upon?” or “Are there any significant heritage or historic sites in the region that make us unique?” or “Are there any unmet market opportunities?” can highlight previously overlooked advantages that can also be utilized in advancing the ADBs mission. The goal should be to find what makes your locality special and how the agricultural sector can build on it.

Pay attention to the nature of the agriculture industry in your area. A dichotomy often exists in agriculture between “traditional” commodity-oriented agriculture and a “newer” market-oriented value-added agriculture. In some counties, significant divisions among producers with different areas of focus have limited progress in building consensus behind new initiatives. These divisions are the result of significant cultural and historical changes taking place in rural counties, but rather than cause division, these differences should be used to develop activities which utilize the strength of both approaches to farming and promote mutual understanding.

Stakeholder and third party meetings are necessary to understand the environment in which the ADB will be operating, and can provide insight into an area’s outlook on agriculture and agricultural economic development. Open forums should include producers (farmers and ranchers), those involved with agriculture as an industry (lenders, input and equipment dealers, buyers), and others who may be considered stakeholders (schools, public health, community food security). Through this effort, ensure that personal views and preferences of staff do not bias research and meeting activity. Some key questions to ask include:

- Are there currently community ag activities underway, such as CSAs or Food Hubs?
- Do producers within the county already exhibit a collaborative spirit?
- Have producers self-organized into information sharing groups or organizations?
- Are there gaps in infrastructure, processing, and marketing?
- Are supply and demand in balance?
- Are there youth development programs in place?

6 DETERMINE A FOCUS

While many issues may be identified during the assessment phase of setting up the ADB, it is likely that manpower and funding resources will place some level of constraint upon initial activities. For this reason, it is important to prioritize the efforts and activities of the board. Over time, the roles of the ADB will likely expand to include more areas, but choosing a tangible and achievable goal should be the first priority of the newly formed board.

As the ADB digests the findings of its assessment activities, it may struggle at first to identify its role in the community. It may help to consider the broader context of the ADB within the community, and think of more categorical roles the ADB can fulfill.

Prioritize initial efforts and activities and determine a focus for the ADB.

ADB CATEGORICAL ROLES	
<p><u>COMMUNICATE/INFORM</u> Elevate communication and information sharing in the community</p>	<p><u>FACILITATE</u> Amplify current activities and assist entities working to further agriculture</p>
<p><u>BUILD PARTNERSHIPS</u> Connect the efforts of smaller organizations or link activities</p>	<p><u>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</u> Benefit agricultural businesses through traditional economic activities</p>
<p><u>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</u> Address food security, socially disadvantaged farmers, or education</p>	<p><u>ADVOCACY</u> Represent and promote the interests of the agricultural community</p>

Develop a written plan. During and after the evaluation and assessment process, gather relevant information in a written document that captures issues that were identified, strategies for addressing them, potential partners, goals, and timelines. The ultimate product should be a document that establishes a focus for the board, and includes a detailed outline of tasks, priorities, and primary responsibilities.

Create a strategic or other written plan to identify strategies for addressing issues.

The resulting document may be less formal and intended for internal use or be formalized and publically available. The final version of the plan should be developed after several rounds of

strategic planning with ADB members and community stakeholders in a process that identifies specific actions that will accomplish overall goals. Moving forward, the ADB should use goals consistent with the Board of Supervisors' vision for the county to develop and revise the plan assessing progress at least annually.

The document will be unique to each ADB, and will reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the agriculture industry within the area. The following are a few suggestions for plan content.

- **Identification of stakeholders.** Changes in the agriculture industry will affect many other industries within the community, therefore stakeholders and ways they will benefit from the plan should be identified.
- **Identification of the ADB's rationale.** Whether the ADB is being formed to address pressures and changes in the agriculture industry, loss of farmland, or future sustainability of farming in a community, the impetus for forming the ADB and its accompanying reasoning should be clearly articulated within the body of the plan. This will often take the form of the ADB's vision and mission statement.
- **Prioritization of existing agricultural industries.** The plan should clearly identify which industries on which the ADB will focus first. Initial priorities may include "low-hanging fruit" to give the board a few small successes soon after formation. Such early successes can build momentum for board members and the community.
- **Identification of policies and regulations that inhibit agricultural development.** At a fundamental level, these policies or regulations may be preventing the development or promotion of agriculture, and must be addressed before larger-scale initiatives can be put in place. Using the plan to highlight these areas can create broader awareness and set the stage for changes. These policy constraints or priorities could be at the local, state, or federal level. Even if the ADB cannot have a huge impact at these higher levels, there will be opportunities to build partnerships and develop networks.
- **Identification of agricultural entities and market options.** If the board intends to make the work plan a public document, this information can be included to help enhance current agricultural industry operations and increase economic development. Information should include an estimate of prospective revenues for potential alternative agricultural operations identified.
- **External examples and case studies.** During the review of the locality's current agricultural activity, collect external examples of successful programs, entities, businesses or farms. Sharing this information in the future can provide a source of best practices or ideas for other entities to pursue.
- **Identification of current and potential partners.** Through partnering and adopting an inclusive stance, an ADB can further leverage its resources. A feature of successful agricultural development agencies is that they develop relationships across numerous county and state agencies. If the ADB seeks to "create a big tent" when creating its work plan document, it can create common ground for both traditional and new farmers, urban and rural interests, arts and public health, etc. Entities that adopt a "territorial" mentality will be less effective, ignore resources, and fail to reach goals. Although farmers are the primary

constituency served, the ADB should bring many other interests to the conversation, and this should be reflected in the written plan.

- **A description and outline of implementation activities.** This part of the plan begins with describing any goals or issues being addressed, presenting the strategy that is intended to achieve the goals or address issues, then providing a list of actions that will be taken to implement the strategy. This should include a timetable for implementation and a description of how progress and results will be tracked. Setting clear goals and tasks has another benefit; new boards may feel overwhelmed by the work to be done, and focusing efforts on the immediate steps to be taken can keep the board working effectively, and prevent a feeling of overload.
- **Budgeting priorities.** The document should set forth a clear guide regarding allocation of funds to focus on priority areas as designated by the ADB. Providing structure at the funding level that reinforces the ADB's focus on core areas can prevent future issues with mission creep and inefficient use of funds.
- **An outline of communications and coordination activities.** Include collecting and disseminating information relevant to the mission of the ADB and coordination with other entities and organizations within the region. The written plan should identify what means the ADB intends to use to accomplish these activities.

The Washington State Main Street Program Guide and Handbook has several resources that can be adapted for the use of an ADB. One section provides suggested definitions for terms commonly used in work and action plans:

Goals “The goals are more specific statements of purpose, which can be clearly divided into a committee structure. Usually it is best for each committee to have only one goal. This goal should reflect the general purpose or mission of the committee.”

Issues “Issues are typically classified as ‘problems’ or ‘unmet opportunities.’ They are not usually focused on just one activity, but tend to be broader, encouraging a number of possible activities.”

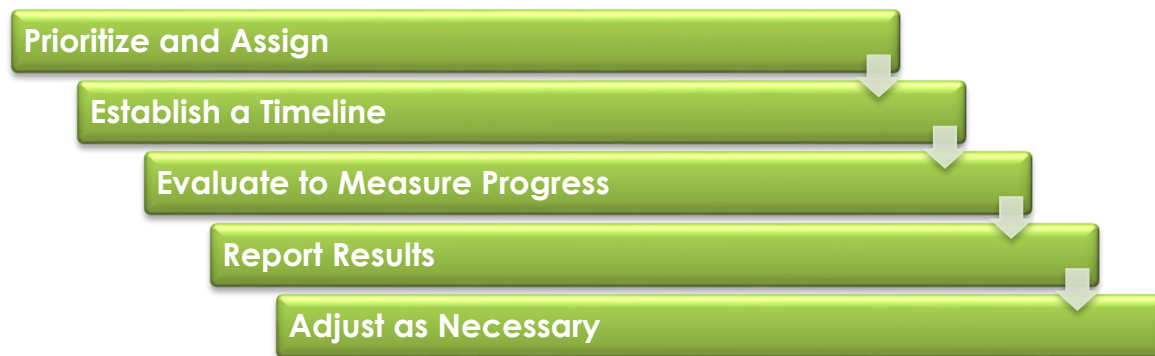
Objectives “Objectives are specific statements of how a goal will be reached. They usually outline the major areas of responsibility for committees.”

Activities “Activities are specific projects that have an identified timeframe. When completed, they are usually recognized as tangible accomplishments.”

7 IMPLEMENT

The ADB will need to choose specific steps for implementation, including well defined activities, timelines, and corresponding goals. Based on coordination with community partners and the overall mission, the ADB can begin implementing specific activities outlined in the written work plan that was created from the evaluation and assessment process. Regardless of whether the board chooses to organize by committee or work as a body assign tasks to individual members, this effort will require the following basic elements:

Determine steps for implementation including activities and timelines.



Prioritize and assign. The ADB will need to prioritize the order of the tasks identified in its work plan. Priorities can be given using a formal ranking system based on metrics agreed upon by the board, or can be more informally ranked by ease of implementation or urgency. Assigning responsibility to an individual, committee, or subgroup will foster ownership and encourage action.

Establish a timeline. Without at least an estimate of when they should be completed, activities will frequently languish. Setting realistic timelines will help responsible parties remain active and provide reference points for frequent re-evaluation.

Evaluate to measure progress. There are times when obstacles or new opportunities arise, changing a goal, timeline, or its priority level relative to the other activities of the board. Regularly measuring and evaluating progress will allow for adjustments to accommodate such changes.

Report results. Requiring that activities and progress be reported regularly, both internally to other board members and externally to any oversight body, as well as to the community, will further motivate sustained action and accountability.

Adjust as necessary. Over time, a county will see changes resulting from their actions, or encounter new issues that need to be addressed. Adjusting priorities to encompass newly identified areas of need should be a regular part of the board's activities.

ESTABLISHED ADBs

Boards that have been established and operating for some time likely have different needs than beginning boards. The following are some common areas that need to be addressed by established boards.

1 MAINTAIN COMMUNITY INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT

Over time, any project or initiative, including that of establishing an ADB, can suffer from a lack of interest as newness and excitement wears off for those involved. Effective boards are able to continue momentum from project to project and maintain both community and member interest over time.

Establish regular community meetings. Regular public meetings will keep the activities of the board fresh in the minds of the community, business leaders, and county leadership. Meetings provide opportunities to highlight the successful activities of the board and re-establish commitment from the community's stakeholders. They can also serve as a forum for gaining feedback and re-assessing the agriculture industry. Many boards have found the best timeframe for such meetings to be either semi-annual or annual.

To remain effective, continue engaging and involving the community.

Re-engage the agricultural community. Periodically revisit community involvement activities such as town-hall meetings, open forum meetings, etc. Some of these activities may have been conducted during the establishment of the ADB, or during the evaluation process prior to the first work plan, but should be revisited at key times to maintain communication and connection.

2 MAINTAIN BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION

Over time, it can be easy for the enthusiasm of ADB members to wear off. The following are suggestions for keeping board members engaged and active.

Keep ADB members involved to ensure the board continues to achieve its goals.

Maintain effective meetings. Poorly organized meetings not only fail to accomplish goals, they also diminish the morale of participants. Holding meetings in a business-like manner

creates a standard of professionalism that sets the tone for all ADB activities. Examples of effective meeting policies include:

- **Using appropriate meeting locations.** A good location will limit distractions, and be centrally located to allow all members to attend without undue hardship.
- **Distributing an agenda and pertinent reading materials before the meeting.** Having a basic agenda will help members understand and be prepared to discuss the business at hand and keep the meeting productive and focused.
- **Starting and ending meetings on time.** Meetings that consistently do not start or end on time inconvenience all parties involved and make it difficult to maintain member focus.
 - Limit socializing.
 - Make sure agenda items are appropriate for the length of the meeting.

Maintain the mission. While expansion and growth are good for the ADB, it is critical that the board maintains focus on its main purpose as roles and activities expand and ensure new activities and responsibilities move the agriculture industry forward.

Keep board members actively involved. Ensure that responsibility is spread as evenly as possible among members when tasks are assigned, and make sure assignments or areas of responsibility are clear to those who are tasked with them. Such practices can lessen member fatigue and increase involvement. It is critical that the activities undertaken by the board include all members, or in cases where the ADB operates with committees, that each member has a role within a committee.

Common Meeting Roles

Facilitator: Begins and ends the meeting, reviews the agenda and keeps the meeting on track, keeps the discussion organized, ensures the group abides by any established ground rules, and summarizes points of agreement.

Minute Taker: Distributes the agenda, assists the facilitator, and records major discussion points, decisions, and task assignments.

Timekeeper: Keeps track of remaining agenda items, and ensures that the meeting begins and ends on time.

Common Ground Rules for Meetings

- Respect each other and keep an open mind
- Criticize ideas, not people
- Offer solutions with critiques
- Give feedback directly and openly
- Avoid passing judgment
- Be supportive of other team members
- Be honest and specific
- Avoid multiple people speaking at once
- Avoid shut-down phrases such as "we already tried that," "it will never work," "yes, but..."
- Practice active listening
- Keep discussion relevant
- Share responsibility
- Focus on goals to avoid sidetracking, personality conflicts and hidden agendas
- Come prepared

Recognize individual and group accomplishments. The board, as a group, should take care to highlight individual and collective successes and communicate these successes to the community at large, either through the local newspaper or other community information forums. Recognizing accomplishments and highlighted successes will ensure members feel valued and encourage participation.

Request feedback. Give members a voice. The ability to provide feedback creates a feeling of ownership, and offers an avenue

for continued improvement. Members who feel they are a part of a "broken" organization are typically reluctant to continue pouring their efforts into activities.

Provide professional development opportunities. Bring in experts, show educational videos, and take field trips. Lifelong learning will keep members engaged and fresh in explaining the work of the board to outsiders. It will give them tangible examples of the types of projects that could be undertaken.

3 RESOLVE CONFLICTS

Within the operations of the board, members should actively avoid destructive conflict. Presenting issues clearly and keeping discussions in line with ground rules should keep discussions healthy and productive.

However, in a healthy group, it is inevitable that conflict will occur; boards should seek to have robust discussions, and recognize that disagreements are acceptable. The priority should be to resolve conflict in a positive way, and make sure that any discussions or disagreements better the activities of the board.

Seek open and honest communication. Clearly outline the issue at hand. At the heart of most conflict is some manner of miscommunication or misinformation; ensuring a complete understanding by all parties will often reduce conflict to one or two key points that can be more easily addressed. Members should engage in active listening, making sure they understand the opposing positions, ask appropriate questions, and summarize answers.

Give parties an opportunity to voice their opinion. At times, conflict can arise because members do not feel their opinions or viewpoints have been adequately heard or addressed. Give those involved an opportunity to speak uninterrupted, and instruct them to provide any facts or assumptions that underlie their position, rather than arguments based on emotions and feelings.

Suggest areas in which compromise is possible.

This allows the group or individuals to focus more on the areas of agreement within the issue, and discover any compromises that may be possible. Suggestions may come from those involved in the conflict, or from other members of the board.

Settle larger issues with the decision-making framework adopted by the board. In the end, the decision made must be one the group can agree on, and the board will need to reach agreement according to the established framework for making decisions.

Seek robust discussions, and recognize that disagreements are acceptable.

Active Listening

- Maintain eye contact and do not interrupt the speaker
- Be mindful of body language- crossed arms or fidgeting can send a negative message
- Repeat what the other person is saying (in your own words) to ensure you fully grasp his or her position
- Honestly consider alternative opinions- ask questions when appropriate and take notes
- Seek compromise in the conversation over persuasion

4 PREVENT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Because the membership of the ADB is often comprised of active participants in the agriculture industry (producers, business owners, etc.), there are naturally times when issues represent a conflict of interest for one or more members. There are many models available for establishing conflict of interest procedures and policies, but the board should agree on and establish a policy before a conflict of interest arises.

Establish conflict of interest procedures and policies before issues arise.

Maintain a list of each member's formal associations. The list should simply include any boards, associations, employee/employer relationships, or other relevant connections for

board members and should be updated as necessary. Having a list can help identify potential conflicts of interest in advance of any major initiatives.

Identify and acknowledge any conflicts of interest. Presenting and discussing possible conflicts before a meeting is underway will avoid the tendency to use a question of conflict of interest as an argumentative tool to invalidate opposing opinions. When an issue is up for discussion, members that recognize their own conflict of interest should make others aware of the situation. Other members should also have the right to ask about a possible conflict of interest as it pertains to other members.

Allow explanation of identified conflicts of interest. The interested party should be able to clarify his/her roles, and explain the extent of the conflict. After more information is provided, members can determine whether any action needs to be taken, or whether the interested parties' involvement actually constitutes a real conflict of interest.

Determine level of involvement for the interested party. If a conflict of interest is identified, the board's policy should govern whether the individual(s) must recuse themselves from any presentations and discussions entirely, or must simply abstain from any related votes. In lieu of an established policy, non-interested members may vote on the level of involvement of the interested parties, and agreement should be reached before proceeding.

5 MEASURE PROGRESS AND RE-EVALUATE

The ADB should establish benchmarks which can be measured and reviewed regularly. This allows members the chance to mark progress and celebrate achievements. At the same time, the ADB should not hesitate to regularly re-evaluate and assess its position and role within the community, as community and industries can frequently change. Many ADBs update on a set time-frame; evaluations are commonly held annually or every three years, depending on the level of re-assessment and the cost of activities.

Regularly re-evaluate and assess the ADB's position and role in the community.

Update the plan. Compile and reflect the results of any re-assessment or re-evaluation activities in the work or strategic plan document. The plan should be revisited regularly to record updated information, new initiatives, or the completion of tasks and goals. This will keep the document useful and relevant.

6 CHANGE STRUCTURE OR OPERATIONS

Established boards will need to actively manage several areas of operations to remain effective over time.

Manage the size and composition of the board. Determine the best balance of size and composition for ADB activities. For the most part, group dynamics dictate that larger boards have greater difficulty reaching consensus on issues and activities, though they may be best at ensuring all stakeholders are represented. Smaller boards may be able to reach decisions more quickly, but may suffer from homogeneity that limits their effectiveness. Skills for implementation of board activities may be different than the skills necessary for strategic decision making, and ADBs must effectively balance their

Actively manage ADB operations, including members, board effectiveness, and staff.

member composition to create the best possible mix of skills. The board need not have an expert in every area included in membership; many boards have found success by utilizing community resources and experts to

address certain issues rather than adding new members.

Manage member turnover. Boards are often formed with the energy of a few dedicated and passionate individuals; however, over time these individuals may move on to other projects or experience life events that reduce their involvement. When turnover is improperly managed, momentum can be lost. Having large-scale changes in membership over short periods of time can deprive the ADB of valuable contacts, relationships, and momentum at crucial times.

Boards can stagnate without turnover policies in place to ensure that new members join the board at regular intervals. On the other hand, boards that are too aggressive in limiting member terms and forcing turnover can rob the board of synergy and morale.

The board as a body should regularly assess their own composition to ensure that the skills of different members combine well to produce effective leadership, and are diverse enough to remain representative of the community. The ADB's policy should strive to maintain a healthy mix of new and more seasoned members on the board. This will ensure that fresh ideas and perspectives are brought by newer members while a core of more seasoned members remains to provide stability and experience.

Evaluate the ADB's effectiveness. Focus on the board's performance, incorporating internal evaluation procedures, as well external surveys and evaluation procedures designed to gather constructive feedback. The board should also consider regular internal evaluations of its meeting effectiveness as judged by the members.

Increase staff levels. Over time, the expansion of the ADB's roles and activities may necessitate adding paid and unpaid staff positions.

- **Assess and plan appropriately for new staff.** Before any staff is added, the board should reach consensus on whether the position is necessary, what roles and responsibilities it will represent, and where funding will come from for the position.

- **Consider an Agricultural Development Director position.** If the ADB decides to create such a position to oversee the activities of the board, a work plan related to the position itself should be a part of the process. Use information from the work plan to create a well-defined position description. This will allow the individual who assumes the role to use the key priorities and tasks identified for implementation to begin working. Having such a document will also make a strong case for the need for this position in the county.

Create an ad hoc nominating committee. The temporary committee should identify potential new ADB members and provide a rationale for their admittance, such as increasing the board's diversity, focus on a particular community issue, or other reasons.

Establish a procedure for orienting and engaging new members. Protocols such as training and orientation activities will acclimate new members to board operations and allow them to be more effective faster. Brief new members on recent and current projects, and ensure they are aware of the boards overall mission and major goals.

7 MAINTAIN FUNDING

While an ADB may find short-term sources of funding to aid in the board's formation, it will need to find a way to obtain long-term funding levels to continue its work.

Identify and obtain long-term funding to continue development activities.

Seek to establish stable multi-year funding. After obtaining some seed funding in the beginning and subsequently proving its value, the ADB should seek to acquire consistent multi-year funding. The ADB may be able use the regular county budget, or find other sources of renewable funding. This will allow longer-term projects to be carried out over time and ensure the ability of the ADB to achieve its mission and goals.

Insufficient funding for assigned tasks, or funding tied to political agendas, can limit the effectiveness of an ADB, and funding levels that change drastically from year to year can cause projects to be started but never finished. In cases where the ADB or county leadership has chosen to establish an Agricultural Development Director position, stable funding will also allow the board to attract well-qualified leadership.

Funding may be available from multiple sources including within the county/region it serves, or from outside sources such as state, federal, private foundation, or grant funding. Strategies for raising money for projects should be an integral part of any strategic plan that is created, and along with its other contents, the plan should clearly identify the sources of funds for specific projects or initiatives.

For ADBs formed with a multi-county or regional approach in mind, funding may also be shared among neighboring counties in cases where overlapping goals make such an arrangement efficient, mitigating costs for participating localities.

8 FUTURE STEPS AND GROWTH

Because of the potential breadth of an ADB's activities, future steps and growth will vary depending on community resources, needs, opportunities, and successes. However, there are several ongoing procedures that should take place regardless of the ultimate focus of the ADB.

Look to the future by determining steps for continued growth.

Continue evaluation procedures. Evaluation procedures should remain an ongoing activity as long as the board is in existence. Examine what progress has been made, and compare progress to the list of priorities established in the work plan. Reassessment will keep the ADB focused on relevant issues and concerns.

- **Identify the next project.** Ensure the board has another project lined up once one comes to a close. Positive morale and momentum can easily be lost if there are significant delays between project conclusion and the next task.
- **Evaluate the internal structure and operations of the board.** Completing projects will reveal structural weaknesses, inefficiencies, communication lapses, or other aspects that need to be addressed. Maintaining a flexible mindset will help the board improve over time and become as effective as possible.
- **Invite feedback through an assessment form or survey.** Board members can anonymously identify areas for improvement. Similar forms can be used with any oversight entities as well.

Emphasize networking. ADBs should seek every opportunity for networking. Opportunities exist both statewide with organizations such as VADO, within agriculture and planning subgroups within existing professional associations, and with Boards of Supervisors and planners at the state and national level. If an ADB can become known as an ag-development leader, knowledge and opportunity will often continue to flow.

Share successful practices. ADBs should make their information and practices available to other counties or entities in the region. This can be done by making documents and plans available online, or using existing networks to disseminate information on successful initiatives, highlighting the key components that led to success.

The USDA's Rural Development Office provides a Community Development Technical Assistance Handbook that contains a sample group assessment survey. It includes questions such as:

- How much honesty and openness is there in this group?
- How do members typically handle differences of opinions?
- How are important decisions usually made?
- How would you describe the atmosphere between members?

Document at: www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/offices/community-economic-development

Expand with a regional strategy. ADBs can expand to take a broader view and identify infrastructure and market opportunities in a region along with the critical mass needed to make production, processing, and sales viable and profitable. This should include identifying regional resources and partners and coordinating with industries in need. This activity may also include an expansion of the ADB's original mission and roles.

- **Assess and reach consensus.** Before adding any new roles for the ADB, board members should reach a consensus on whether to engage in a new activity area or take on a new role. Assessment at this stage will likely be very similar to the assessment process undertaken when the board was formed. Determine whether the new role is a definitely a good fit for the board, that county leadership is on board with the new assignment, that there are clear directives in place, and that the board has sufficient staffing and funding to take on the new area of responsibility.



ADB START-UP CHECKLIST

1. Gauge Interest

- Conduct a stakeholder meeting
- Hold an open planning session
- Conduct a survey

2. Gather the Team

- Form a temporary “leadership” team
- Engage decision-makers

3. Create the Board

- Select members

4. Establish Structure and Guidelines

- Create a mission statement
- Set a code of ethics
- Determine the structure and operation of the ADB
- Set up a decision-making framework
- Establish sources of initial funding
- Create necessary staff support and leadership positions

5. Assess the Landscape

- Envision a successful future for agriculture
- Evaluate the existing state of agriculture

6. Determine a Focus

- Develop a written Plan

7. Implement

- Prioritize and assign
- Establish a timeline
- Evaluate to measure progress
- Report results
- Adjust as necessary

ESTABLISHED ADB CHECKUP

1. Maintain Community Interest and Involvement

- Establish regular community meetings
- Re-engage the agricultural community

2. Maintain Board Member Participation

- Maintain effective meetings
- Maintain the mission
- Keep board members actively involved
- Recognize individual and group accomplishments
- Request feedback
- Provide professional development opportunities

3. Resolve Conflicts

- Seek open and honest communication
- Give parties an opportunity to voice their opinion
- Suggest areas in which compromise is possible
- Settle larger issues with a decision-making framework adopted by the board

4. Prevent Conflicts of Interest

- Maintain a list of each member's formal associations
- Identify and acknowledge any conflicts of interest
- Allow explanation of identified conflicts of interest
- Determine level of involvement for the interested party

5. Measure Progress and Re-evaluate

- Update the plan

6. Change Structure or Operations

- Manage the size and composition of the board
- Manage member turnover
- Evaluate the ADB's effectiveness
- Increase staff levels
- Create and ad hoc nominating committee
- Establish a procedure for orienting and engaging new members

7. Maintain Funding

- Seek to establish stable multi-year funding

8. Future Steps and Growth

- Continue evaluation procedures
- Emphasize networking
- Share successful practices
- Expand with a regional strategy

SELECTED RESOURCES

Contents

1. General
2. County Plans, Examples, and Templates
3. Staffing
4. Farmland Protection
5. Agricultural Viability
6. Land Use Planning
7. Assessment and Infrastructure Development
8. Farm to School
9. Agritourism
10. Generational Transition
11. Local Food Production
12. Forestry and Renewable Energy
13. Community Development and Impacts
14. Legislation
15. Funding and Financing

General**Cornell University Library**

– diverse food and development resource categorized by subject

Cornell University maintains several online library resource pages focusing on local food and development resources created by Cornell as well as others. Information is organized for easy access, allowing users to sort resources by region, subject, etc. Links for document-type resources and online content developed by the University are also provided. For example, the Cornell Farm to School Program website (<http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/>) is a complete site with more specific categories such as Food Service, Farmers, Teachers, etc. Additionally, this resource offers many links to data resources that can be used when statistically analyzing or evaluating a county's agriculture industry.

[http://guides.library.cornell.edu/local_food
and <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/ag-food-data-guide>]

**Center for a Livable Future Directory**

– repository of food policy resources, searchable by topic

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for a Livable Future maintains an in-depth repository of food policy resources on their website. The directory can be filtered by topic, document type, organizational tool, jurisdiction, geography, or year published, and includes topics from economic development to food processing, procurement, and production among many others.

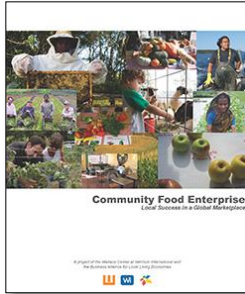
[www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/projects/FPN/resource/online/index.html]

**Extension Toolkit**

– resources for understanding economic impacts of local food system initiatives

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) brought together a team of economists and experts in food systems to create a toolkit for organizations seeking to better assess local and small-scale economic activity in their decision making. The Toolkit consists of seven modules and is available online, along with numerous other supporting resources, including case studies, presentations, and videos.

[www.localfoodeconomics.com]



Community Food Enterprise: Local Success in a Global Marketplace

– case studies for understanding local food landscapes

This source contains in-depth case studies of “community food enterprises” (CFEs), which can help agricultural development entities better understand their local food landscapes. The report includes both domestic and international businesses/organizations and focuses on answering several questions that are also relevant for agricultural development organizations.

www.ngfn.org/resources/ngfndatabase/knowledge/CFE%20Book_view.pdf



Dutchess County Agricultural & Farmland Resources

– general and municipal planning and development references

In October of 2013, the Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development assembled a list of Agricultural and Farmland Resources. While the list primarily focuses on Dutchess County and the Hudson Valley area of New York, it also contains numerous general and municipal level resources that can be useful for those beyond the state.

www.co.dutchess.ny.us/countygov/departments/planning/afrlist.pdf



Managing Group Conflict

– general information on conflict management

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, a part of the school's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, has published a guide to recognizing, managing, and resolving conflicts in communities. The guide explains four ways to manage conflicts: avoidance, accommodation, competition, and compromise. Communities and groups could find this guide useful for dealing with problems that arise over local issues, both political and not, as well as for recognizing the many solutions that can exist for common problems.

www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g2115.pdf

County Plans, Examples, and Templates

Reviewing other counties' plans can provide valuable insights on how to tackle specific issues and provide templates for a county constructing its own strategic plan. The following are just a few selected examples of counties that have taken different approaches in analyzing and evaluating the state of agriculture within their regions and turned that analysis into actionable plans to guide agricultural development.



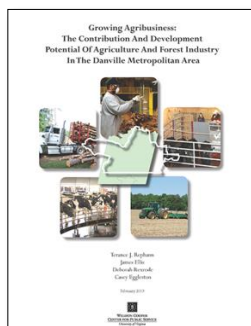
Connecting: Strategies to Better Kentucky's Agricultural Economy and Rural Communities

– example of county agricultural development

The Kentucky Agricultural Council's Task Force on the Future of Agriculture produced a document titled *Connecting Strategies to Better Kentucky's Agricultural Economy and Rural Communities*, which describes strategies in multiple areas such as Next Generation Farming, New Market Identification & Development, Regional Agricultural and Rural Community Development,

Education, Consumer Outreach, and Policy-Maker Education. The document serves as an example of an approach to evaluating and setting strategies for addressing agricultural development through a multi-pronged approach, and can be found at the Kentucky Agricultural Council's Website.

www.kyagacouncil.org/documents/KAC-Strategic-Plan-2013-18.pdf



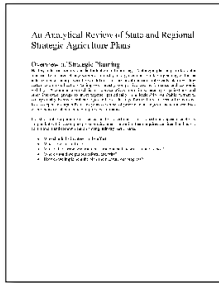
Growing Agribusiness

– example of comprehensive analysis for development and strategy

In 2013, the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service published *Growing Agribusiness: The Contribution and Development Potential of Agriculture and Forest Industry in the Danville Metropolitan Area*, a study that “examines trends in the Danville metropolitan area economy with particular attention to the changing size and composition of the agribusiness sector.”

“It measures the economic and government tax revenue footprint of the agribusiness industry using input-output analysis to illustrate its linkages with and continuing importance to the economy of the region. It also describes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to agribusiness in the region with information elicited from three focus groups drawn from the agribusiness industry and the general public and individual interviews with Pittsylvania County Agricultural Board members. This information is used to develop strategic priorities and policy recommendations to expand the size and influence of the agribusiness industry in a way that promotes the economic growth of the region and the well-being of area residents.”

www.coopercenter.org/node/2/publications/growing-agribusiness-contribution-and-development-potential-agriculture-and-fore



An Analytical Review of State & Regional Strategic Agriculture Plans
 – examples and comparison of various strategic agriculture plans

The Washington State Department of Agriculture created a comparison and review guide for strategic agriculture plans. This guide is useful for groups wishing to create a strategic plan by allowing them to compare other approaches and create a plan best suited to their organization and needs. This document helps groups assess what sections or issues are vital to their work, including timelines and evaluation processes.

<http://agr.wa.gov/FoF/docs/AgPlansReview.pdf>

Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan & Strategic Plans
 – example of county agricultural development

Loudoun County, Virginia, has been a noted example of successful agricultural development. As of 2013, the county made its Revised Comprehensive Plan available, which is “the set of policy documents adopted by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors intended to serve as a guide for development over the next 20 years and is the foundation for amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances to ensure the county's goals are implemented through the regulatory process.” In addition to the general plan, the county also produces several specific strategic plans for particular areas or issues, such as Heritage Preservation, Retail, Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility, and Telecommunications Facilities.

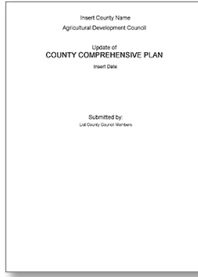
www.loudoun.gov/index.aspx?NID=106



Dane County Food Council Resources Page
 – information on council formation and other resources

Wisconsin's Dane County Food Council was the state's first food council, established with a resolution in 2005. The council has been active since and maintains a website with information on the Council's formation, their annual reports, and a resources page. Localities considering establishing a food council may find ideas for activities and lessons learned from the Dane County site.

www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil/default.aspx



Kentucky County Plan Template *–form for KY county comprehensive plans*

The Kentucky Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy provides an online PDF form for Kentucky counties to use when updating their county comprehensive plans. The template can be a useful starting point for counties that have not previously constructed their own plans.

http://agpolicy.ky.gov/funds/Documents/2015_countyplan-template.pdf

Staffing**Job Descriptions**

– examples of roles and descriptions for new positions

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for a Livable Future compiled a list of job descriptions to illustrate how “others have encapsulated the duties and responsibilities associated with a food policy council coordinator or director position.” The resulting list, which includes required knowledge, skills, abilities, education, and experience serves as a resource for those forming an ADB or agricultural development entity, and existing entities wishing to add a director level position.

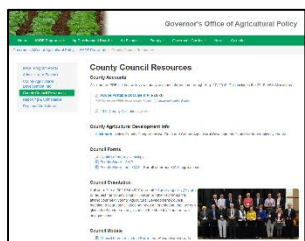
http://commprojects.jhsph.edu/communications/idFive/mod_clfResource/files/downloads/Food%20Policy%20FAQs%20Job%20Descriptions%20for%20FPC%20Coordinators2.pdf

**Farmbudsman RFQ**

– example of tailored job description for agricultural development position

Solano College Small Business Development Center published a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for their “Farmbudsman” position, which includes a list of desired qualifications in Exhibit B of the RFQ. These may be used as a basis for developing a tailored position description for an Agricultural Development Director or similar position.

<http://solanosbdc.org/sites/default/files/Farmbudsman%20RFQ%202-8-2013.pdf>

**The Kentucky Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy Website**

– resources for agricultural development entities

The Kentucky Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy website maintains a page on Agricultural Development Boards and County Agricultural Development Councils that provides information on Kentucky's Councils' composition as well as a list of resource documents for Kentucky Councils. This information

can serve as a useful guide for localities interested in establishing a similar entity or system within their counties or regions. The site's resources include forms and documents such as a County Council Application Prioritization Sheet for projects to present their proposals to the Council for ranking and funding, information on how to conduct a county asset inventory, and other operational resource documents.

<http://agpolicy.ky.gov/funds/Pages/councils.aspx>

Farmland Protection

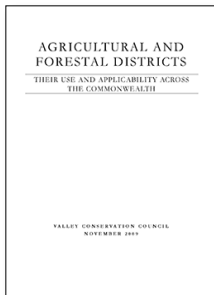


A Model Purchase of Development Rights Program for Virginia
 – resource for beginning Purchase of Development Rights initiatives

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Farmland Preservation Task Force issued a two-part report titled *A Model Purchase of Development Rights Program for Virginia*, setting forth a strategy for stemming the tide of farmland and forest losses. Part one of the report was published in June 2004, presenting information on the *Suggested Components of*

Local PDR Programs. This report serves as a resource for those localities wishing to begin Purchase of Development Rights initiatives. Part Two, *A Proposed State-level Program to Complement Local PDR Programs*, was published in November 2005.

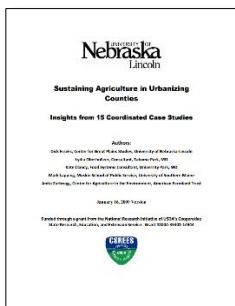
[www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/pdf/pdfprogram.pdf]



Agricultural and Forestal Districts
 – comprehensive study reporting benefits and drawbacks of AFDs

The Valley Conservation Council completed a comprehensive study of Virginia AFDs in 2009 titled *Agricultural and Forestal Districts: Their Use and Applicability Across the Commonwealth*.

[<http://valleyconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AFD-Rpt-FIN-SH-corr.pdf>]



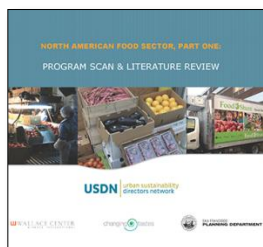
Sustaining Agriculture in Urbanizing Counties
 – case studies on farmland viability in developmentally pressured areas

Sustaining Agriculture in Urbanizing Counties, a 2009 report containing 15 case studies of counties from across the US, was completed to “identify conditions under which farming may remain viable in agriculturally important areas that are subject to substantial development pressures.” The report also contains sections on various zoning and urban growth policies, PDR and TDR

programs, and relevant survey questions posed to participants.

[<http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Sustaining-Agriculture-in-Urbanizing-Counties.pdf>]

Agricultural Viability

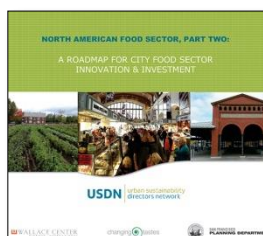


Wallace Center Two-Part Study

– developmental, economic, and strategic considerations for food systems and agricultural development entities

The Wallace Center at Winrock International, along with other partners, including the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, Changing Tastes, and the San Francisco Planning Department, has provided a two-part study to help “develop a roadmap for cities to create innovative, resilient, and productive local and regional food systems that deliver near-term benefits and sustainable value.”

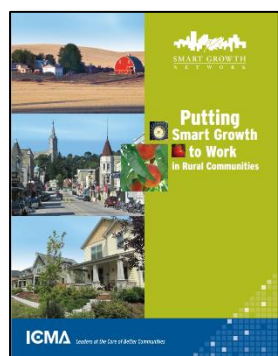
While Part One is largely focused from a city or urban perspective, the **Program Scan & Literature Review** provides a wealth of information that county level agricultural development entities (such as ADBs) can utilize as they assess the group's focus and make decisions regarding their activities. One section of the document presents various economic output multipliers categorized by supply chain segment along with relevant source citations.



Part Two of the study, **A Roadmap for City Food Sector**

Innovation and Investment also provides information that can be adapted to county-level development activities. The document suggests a guide for developing an overall effective strategy.

www.wallacecenter.org/resourceLibrary/roadmap-for-city-food-sector-innovation-and-investment.html



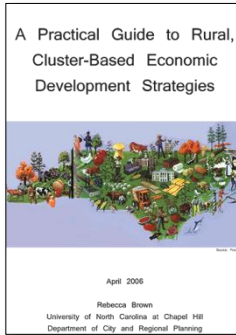
Putting Smart Growth to Work

– growth strategies for rural communities

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) offers advice to rural communities needing to balance growth and attracting new industries with maintaining traditional rural lifestyle and protecting natural resources in their report *Putting Smart Growth to Work*. The piece outlines three important goals for rural communities; supporting the rural landscape, helping existing places thrive, and creating great new places.

http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/documents/kn/Document/301483/Putting_Smart_Growth_to_Work_in_Rural_Communities

Land Use Planning



A Practical Guide to Rural, Cluster-Based Economic Development Strategies

– strategies for developing a positive environment for agricultural industry

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of City and Regional Planning produced *A Practical Guide to Rural, Cluster-Based Economic Development Strategies* that discusses the “cluster-development” approach to development. It provides a useful point of view for an ADB or other development entity to use in assessing the necessary components to foster a favorable environment for the agriculture industry.

<https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent/uuid:e1dc1da9-50d5-4eb8-982d-5a8b5ca1ebdb>



Your Conservation Easement: A Landowner's Guide

– a guide to easement stewardship

Your Conservation Easement: A Landowner's Guide is an informative document that communicates the idea behind easements when introducing such land use planning initiatives. The document was produced by The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests but provides an easy to understand explanation of the idea behind “Easement Stewardship.”

www.forestsociety.org/sites/default/files/CES_Landowners_Guide.pdf

Assessment and Infrastructure Development

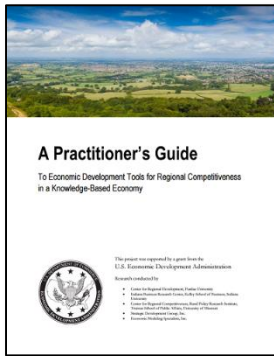


Investment Evaluation Tool

– Information and worksheets for project planning and evaluation

The Wallace Center (www.wallacecenter.org) has created a Microsoft Excel-based Investment Evaluation Tool for “city food sector innovation and investment” providing both information and worksheets that groups can use to plan and evaluate potential projects and includes other resources such as a risk management tool and local economic multipliers for assessment.

<https://wallacecenter6.squarespace.com/resourcelibrary/roadmap-investment-evaluation-tool.html>



A Practitioner’s Guide to Economic Development Tools for Regional Competitiveness in a Knowledge-Based Economy

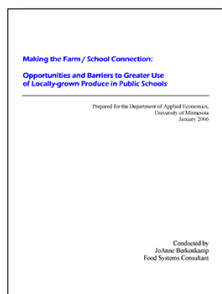
– “how-to” guide for economic analysis tools

As part of a project supported by a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, multiple parties assembled *A Practitioner’s Guide to Economic Development Tools for Regional Competitiveness in a Knowledge-Based Economy*. The document covers four “tools,” including Industry Cluster Analysis, Regional Innovation Index, Occupational Cluster Analysis, and Guidelines for Regional Organization and Investment Decisions. The document discusses the tools and provides examples of their use, along with corresponding links to websites where the tools can be found.

Guide:
http://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/guide/practitioners_guide.pdf

Statistical Tools:
www.statsamerica.org/innovation/index.html

Farm to School

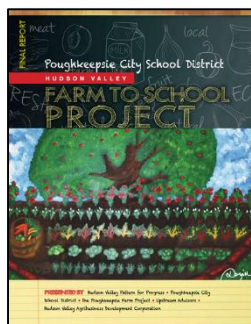


Making the Farm/School Connection

– discussion and insight on sourcing locally grown foods for schools

The University of Minnesota produced *Making the Farm/School Connection: Opportunities and Barriers to Greater Use of Locally-grown Produce in Public Schools*, which presents a discussion of common issues related to sourcing local foods for a school district, and provides key insights from different points of view, such as a school foodservice director and distribution network.

www.leopold.iastate.edu

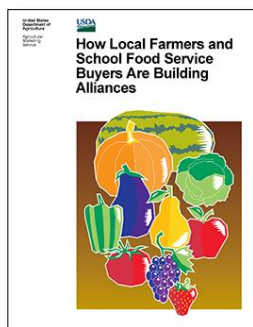


Farm to School Project

– report on local food procurement program

After being awarded a competitive USDA grant, The Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) published a report on the results of a project with the Poughkeepsie City School District to develop a local foods procurement program for the school as well as a system for food system learning and engagement. The report highlights how the project was completed and documents its results.

www.localeconomiesproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Pok-F2S-Final-Report.pdf



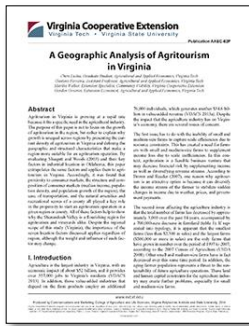
How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers are Building Alliances

– information on barriers and strategies of schools procuring local foods

A 2000 USDA Agricultural Marketing Service report titled *How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers are Building Alliances* presents information about how school food service directors evaluate a food vendor, and discusses potential barriers to entry for producers as well as strategies for small farmers who are seeking to enter the market.

www.ams.usda.gov/AMsv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3102250

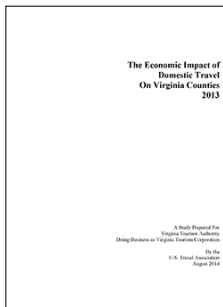
Agritourism



A Geographic Analysis of Agritourism in Virginia
 – report discussing farmer expansion into agritourism

The Virginia Cooperative Extension's (VCE) *A Geographic Analysis of Agritourism in Virginia* states that “Agritourism is a feasible business venture that may decrease financial risk by supplementing income as well as diversifying revenue streams.” The report outlines how expansion into agritourism can help farmers diversify, cope with increased costs, and help provide supplementary income during bad production years.

<https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/AAEC/AAEC-62/AAEC-62-pdf.pdf>



The Economic Impact of Domestic Travel on Virginia Counties
 – discusses figures and facts related to domestic travel in the state

According to *The Economic Impact of Domestic Travel on Virginia Counties, 2013*, “Domestic travel expenditures increased 1.4% percent to \$21.5 billion in 2013, not adjusted by inflation.” Domestic travel activities have wide-ranging effects on the state as a whole according to the report, accounting for direct support of 213,000 jobs and generating more than \$2.8 billion in tax revenue, an increase of 3.6 percent from 2012 figures.

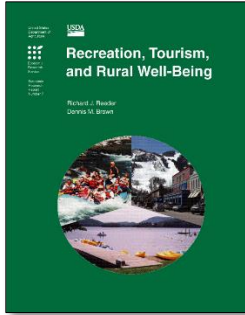
www.vatc.org/uploadedFiles/Research/2013EconomicImpactofDomesticTravelonVirginiaandLocalities.pdf



Of Wine and Wildlife
 – a framework for categorizing agritourism

Of Wine and Wildlife: Assessing Market Potential for Colorado Agritourism is an Economic Development Report produced by Colorado State University and Extension that provides a framework for categorizing agritourism: On-Farm Activities, Food-Based Activities, and Heritage Activities. The “Heritage” category begins to touch on an expanded definition of agritourism by including historical sites and associated events and activities.

<http://webdoc.agsci.colostate.edu/DARE/EDR/EDR07-15.pdf>



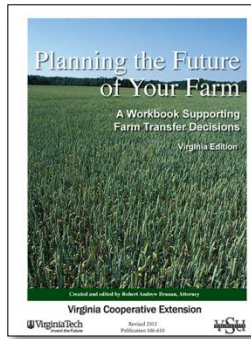
Recreation, Tourism, and Rural Well-Being

– report on impact of recreation and tourism in rural counties

The 2005 USDA Economic Research Report *Recreation, Tourism, and Rural Well-Being* reports the results of using “regression analysis to assess the effect of recreation and tourism development on socioeconomic conditions in rural recreation counties.” Basic findings of the report included the fact that rural tourism and recreational development had positive impacts on communities, but results varied depending on the area and the type of recreation that was emphasized. The report also found negative consequences, including increased rental rates and pressures on infrastructure.

www.ers.usda.gov/media/302182/err7_1_.pdf

Generational Transition



Planning the Future of Your Farm – workbook for farm planning

The Virginia Cooperative Extension's document, *Planning the Future of Your Farm*, uses a workbook/worksheet format to break the process of farm transition into steps. ADBs can collect such resources and make them available at the individual farm level to ensure the information is well-distributed among the farm community.

http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/446/446-610/446-610_pdf.pdf



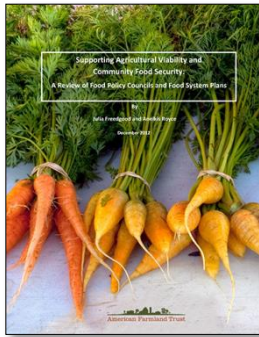
Virginia Office of Farmland Preservation Website

– resources and information on farmland preservation

The Virginia Office of Farmland Preservation, organized under the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, was established in 2001 and maintains several resources on its site, including information about various programs related to farmland preservation (Certified Farm Seeker Program, Century Farm Program, Virginia Farm Link Program), as well as a list of tools and resources (Farmland Preservation Tools, Farm Transition Resources).

www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/index.shtml

Local Food Production



Supporting Agricultural Viability and Community Food Security
 – examination of food policy, education, coordination, partnerships, etc.

Supporting Agricultural Viability and Community Food Security: A Review of Food Policy Councils and Food System Plans contains a comprehensive examination of “the big picture of food” by focusing on policy analysis, education, coordination, and partnerships and food policy councils.

www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/_pdf/projects/FPN/academic_literature/AFT_NNPHI_WhitePaper_FINAL.pdf



Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems
 – view of national trends for agricultural development entities

Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems is a 2015 report published by the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). The document provides a broad view of national trends that can provide insight for ADBs and other agricultural development entities. The document covers a variety of topics, including local and regional food producers, food safety, consumer motivations for buying local, local vs. retail price comparison, environmental impact, and policy effects on local and regional systems.

www.ers.usda.gov/media/1763057/ap068.pdf

Forestry and Renewable Energy



University of Tennessee Biofuels Initiative

– document outlining possibilities for renewable energy

Summary document SP702-A, published by the University of Tennessee Extension, discusses numerous forms and possibilities for the production of renewable energy such as woody bio-fuels. The document discusses standard uses such as firewood and charcoal, as well as more innovative uses such as pyrolysis and bio-oil.

http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_agexbiof/9/



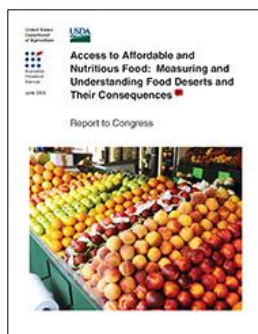
Virginia Department of Forestry Resources

– information on Virginia forestry programs, services, and resources

The Virginia Department of Forestry provides information regarding forestry related programs and services as well as resources for various users, including educators and adult education and outreach. Programs include Forestland Planning, information on Incentive Programs, Conservation Easements, and finding forestry consultants.

www.dof.virginia.gov

Community Development and Impacts



Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food

– policies, programs, and case studies related to community food sourcing

A 2009 USDA ERS report to congress titled *Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences* includes several ideas for policies and programs, including some brief case studies that highlight programs that have met with success in the past. Topics discussed include areas in which ADBs are having or can have a significant impact, including community level interventions such as farmers

markets, community gardens, and mobile carts or trucks selling fruits and vegetables in low-access areas and food deserts.

www.ers.usda.gov/media/242675/ap036_1_.pdf

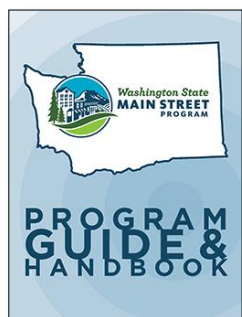


The Main Street Four Point Approach

– adaptable program for agricultural development entities

The National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation developed The Main Street Four Point Approach®, “as a unique preservation-based economic development tool, ... is the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets—from cultural or architectural heritage to local enterprises and community pride.” Despite the program's development as a downtown revitalization tool, many of the principles and materials used in the program can be adapted for use in beginning and furthering agricultural development initiatives and programs. The basic program outline is available on the National Main Street Center's main website. The site also provides (free of charge) numerous handbooks on its publications page.

www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/#.VZ1v5szD-70

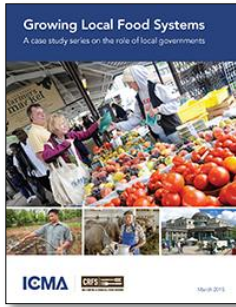


Washington State Program Guide

– adaptable guidebook for beginning programs

The Washington State chapter of the Main Street Program published a program guide and handbook in 2013, which provides details such as checklists for getting started, samples of articles of incorporation, bylaws, and first year operating budgets.

www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/WSMSP%20Program%20Guide%20%20Handbook.pdf

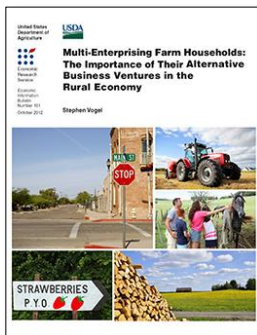


Growing Local Food Systems

– case studies on the role of local government in regional food systems

Along with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) produced, *Growing Local Food Systems: A Case Study Series on the Role of Local Governments* a series of case studies in 2015. The report highlights four counties in different states (North Carolina, Georgia, Maine, and Michigan) and presents background information as well as covering the Key Projects and Lessons Learned.

http://foodsystems.msu.edu/uploads/files/15-454_Local_Food_Systems_Case_Studies_Series-FINAL.pdf



Multi-Enterprising Farm Households

– report on economic impact of multi-enterprising farms

In 2012, the USDA's ERS published a report in an October Economic Information Bulletin called *Multi-Enterprising Farm Households: The Importance of Their Alternative Business Ventures in the Rural Economy*. The report highlights the importance of farm operators who use their resources to earn income from “off-farm business ventures and on-farm activities independent of commodity production,” and reveals the economic impact of this segment of producers on the local economy.

www.ers.usda.gov/media/939221/eib101.pdf

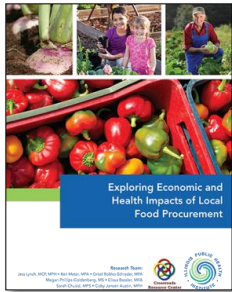


Cultivating a Competitive Advantage

– case studies on county programs addressing community needs

Cultivating a Competitive Advantage, a 2014 document published by the National Association of Counties, provides case studies of counties throughout the US that have enacted programs to address issues and needs within their communities. Some of the categories include Business Attraction and Workforce Development, Community Planning, Food Systems, Renewable Resources and Redevelopment, and Transportation and Infrastructure. Several counties included in the report have been also used as examples throughout this document.

www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/2014_RAC_case-studies.pdf



Public Health Institute and Crossroads Resource Center Report
 – plans for adding, funding, and measuring impact of local foods

The Illinois Public Health Institute and Crossroads Resource Center published a report that “highlights practical, effective strategies for communities to add locally sourced food to their institutional food systems; recommends ways to conceptualize and measure economic and health impacts; suggests effective funding strategies; and includes **Critical Analysis of Economic Impact**

Methodologies, which discusses the literature on the economic impact of local foods.”

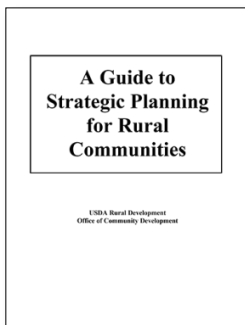
http://iphionline.org/pdf/Critical_Analysis_Exploring_Economic_and_Health_Impacts_of_Local_Food_Procurement.pdf



Development at the Urban Fringe and Beyond
 – information on the effects of urban sprawl on agriculture

The 2001 USDA Economic Research Service report *Development at the Urban Fringe and Beyond: Impacts on Agriculture and Rural Land* discusses the history of the issue of urban sprawl and its effects on agriculture at the national level. The information can help county level entities understand the pressures faced by agriculture.

www.ers.usda.gov/media/536851/aer803_1_.pdf

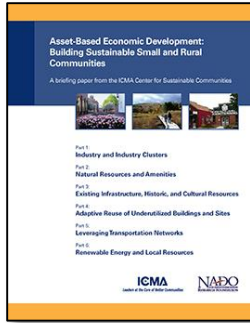


A Guide to Strategic Planning for Rural Communities
 – information on using strategic planning for community development

The USDA Rural Development Office of Community Development has compiled a guide to aid communities in creating and executing strategic plans. The guide offers examples of issues which could be addressed, as well as a three-phase process to development: strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation. Each phase is broken down into steps which stress

important aspects of the phase and note important areas which need to be addressed in order to create a lasting and successful strategic plan.

www.rd.usda.gov/files/CED_strategic.pdf



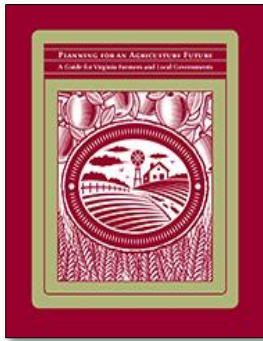
Asset-Based Economic Development

– strategies for developing existing assets for economic growth

ICMA's *Asset-Based Economic Development: Building Sustainable Small and Rural Communities* discusses ways in which communities and counties can use their existing assets to develop their economic potential. The article lays out six focuses communities can take; Industry and industry clusters, natural resources and amenities, existing infrastructure and cultural resources, adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings and sites, leveraging transportation networks, and renewable energy and local resources.

http://icma.org/en/results/sustainable_communities/resources/blogpost/901/Asset_Based_Economic_Development_and_Building_Sustainable_Rural_Communities

Legislation



Planning for an Agriculture Future

– guide for determining farm-friendliness of a locality's ordinances

"Planning for an Agriculture Future," a guide for Virginia farmers that was adapted from an American Farmland Trust document, includes several questions to ask to determine whether a given locality is "farm friendly" and provides a basic assessment tool for the local environment.

www.vaco.org/legislativenews/REO%20Checklist.pdf

Funding and Financing

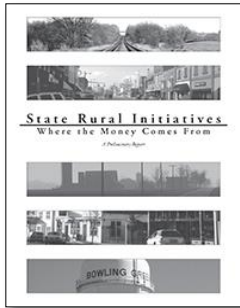


Funding Sources

– list of agencies providing funding in food-related areas

One of the resource pages maintained by Cornell University's online library focuses on funding sources. The list maintained on the site includes individual agencies that often provide funding in food related areas and links to other sites where lists of funding programs can be found.

<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=31298&p=199466/home#s-lg-box-611586>



State Rural Initiatives

– outline of state programs funding rural development

The Southern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments published a report in 2006 titled *State Rural Initiatives: Where the Money Comes From*, outlining over 40 state level programs established to fund rural development programs. With overviews organized by size and program type, this document is an excellent source of ideas for county-level programs, ADBs, and entities focused on larger regional or multi-county approaches.

http://slcatlanta.org/Publications/AgRD/funding_for_rural_development.pdf

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Implementation Matrix Form

The following is a sample implementation matrix that can be used to organize the goals, tasks, or assignments in a work plan or strategic plan organized by an ADB.

Sample Implementation Matrix

Category	Task	Partner	Priority
County Government			
Board of Supervisors			
	Add agriculture as a primary focus area in the county's long-term strategic plan.		
	Decide whether to install an Agricultural Development Director position.		
Agricultural Development Board			
	Use key recommendations from BOS to develop a long-term work plan for the ADB.		
	Advocate on behalf of agriculture.		
	Hire individual to staff ADD position (If BOS chooses to create such a position)		
Agricultural Development Director (ADD)			
	Oversee implementation of work plan.		

Appendix B: Survey Instruments

Survey of Virginia County Agricultural Economic Development Efforts

We are currently working on a project for the Center for Rural Virginia and VA FAIRS to help counties develop more effective Agricultural Development Boards (ADB). We are gathering information about county level agricultural economic development efforts in Virginia to help us learn how local initiatives and organizations can be more effective. We will share our results and analysis to help you learn from the experience of other counties and to explore possibilities of working together on the state level. All information will remain confidential and compiled with other counties.

This survey should be completed by the person providing support to the primary local entity working on Agricultural Economic Development.

Matson Consulting www.matsonconsult.com 803-233-7134

Name: _____ Locality: _____

Organization/Agency: _____ Position Title: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Website: _____

1. What local board, committee, or department has primary responsibility for Agricultural Economic Development? _____

2. How are your agricultural economic development activities and priorities determined?

3. Which of the following issues are you addressing?

<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmland Preservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulations
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> Ag Financing	<input type="checkbox"/> Farm Transition
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Foods	<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Agribusiness Recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning/Land Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Access
<input type="checkbox"/> Agritourism	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

4. What programs have you seen in your county that has/have had the greatest impact in promoting agricultural development?

5. What additional programs or activities has your organization considered undertaking?

Agricultural Development Board (ADB) Questions

January 2015

- 6. Does your county have an Agricultural Development Director? No Yes
- 7. Does your county have an Agricultural Development Board (ADB)? No Yes

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO EITHER QUESTION 6 OR 7, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. IF NOT, THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT.

- 8. When did your county create an Agricultural Director position or ADB? _____
- 9. Was this ADB created by local ordinance? No Yes
If so, what is the website of the ordinance? _____
- 10. What is the annual budget of the ADB? _____

- 11. What are the ADB's sources of funding?

- 12. How many staffing hours per month are available to operate the ADB and activities? What is the source of this staffing (paid ADB employee(s), county in-kind, and volunteer)?

- 13. How often does your ADB meet? _____
- 14. How many ADB members? _____
- 15. How are those members selected? _____

- 16. Do you publish your ADB meeting minutes online? No Yes
If yes, what is the website? _____
- 17. Do you have a work-plan for the ADB? If yes, how often is it updated?
 No Yes _____
- 18. What advice would you give to a county thinking about establishing an ADB? What would you do differently? _____

Thank you for your feedback

Follow Up Survey (administered by email)

Thank you for your recent participation in the **Survey of Virginia County Agricultural Economic Development Efforts**, either at the recent VADO meeting or online via SurveyMonkey. We at Matson Consulting are working in collaboration with the Center for Rural Virginia and VA FAIRS to help counties develop more effective Agricultural Development Boards (ADB). As part of these efforts, we are working to analyze the information that was gathered to be included as part of a larger written report.

We received a tremendous response to the survey, and it is your answers that are making this initiative a success. For those who are interested, we would like to make sure that you are able to get the information and analysis as it is prepared.

We are trying to rank the most important issues that your county is currently addressing. Would you please complete one follow-up question by responding to this email?

*Please choose your county's **top five** most important issues from the following list. Number your selections with 1 as the most important, and 5 as the least important of these top five issues.*

County: _____

Please Choose and Rank Your Top Five

- Ag Financing _____
- Agribusiness Recruitment _____
- Agritourism _____
- Education _____
- Farm Transition _____
- Farmland Preservation _____
- Food Access _____
- Forestry _____
- Infrastructure _____
- Local Foods _____
- Marketing _____
- Regulations _____
- Zoning/Land Use _____

If you want to receive periodic updates of the survey information as it is prepared and analyzed please let us know.

Please send me summary updates: _____ Yes
Please reply to Matson Consulting at jthayer@matsonconsult.com.

Appendix C: Distinguishing between Rural and Urban

Distinguishing between rural and urban counties can be difficult due to the many definitions of urban and rural areas and localities. Using these different definitions can result in wide range of counties being categorized as either “rural” or “urban” (see the figure below).



The Census Bureau defines urban and rural areas strictly on the basis of population size and density. This designation results in two types of areas classified as urban⁵¹: Urbanized Areas (UAs) of 50,000 or more people and Urban Clusters (UCs) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people. The “rural” classification encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. However, these classifications take geographic boundaries into account, such as city limits or county borders, making it difficult to apply this classification system in the case of analyzing county level information.



According to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB),⁵² “Metropolitan Statistical Areas have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties. Micropolitan Statistical Areas have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties. Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas are delineated in terms of whole counties (or equivalent entities), including in the six New England States. If specified criteria are met, a Metropolitan Statistical Area containing a single core with a population of 2.5 million or more may be subdivided to form smaller groupings of counties referred to as Metropolitan Divisions.”



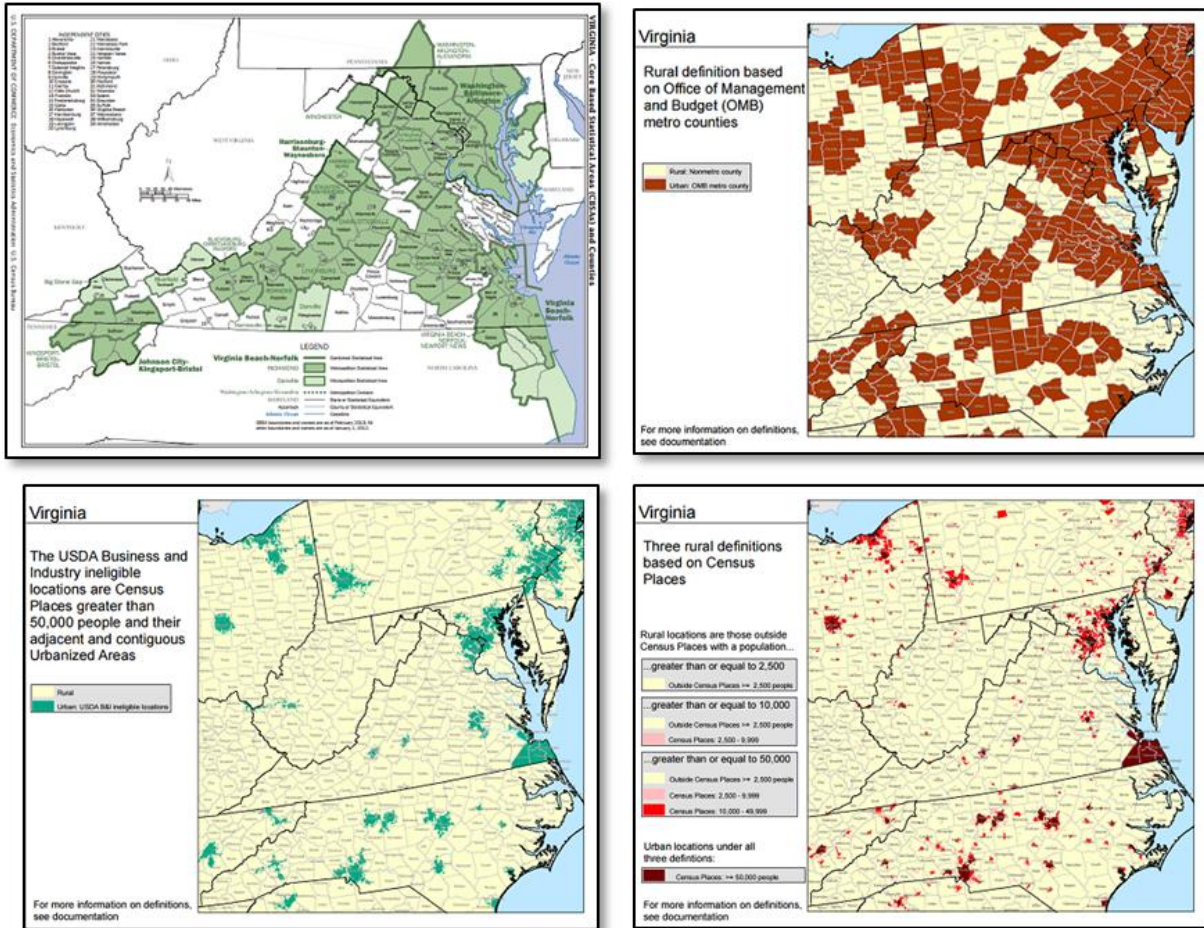
The USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) has added to the classification by providing additional criteria for defining rural and urban areas. Definitions have been developed to address a range of governmental and legislative needs, and including definitions that depend on numerous factors other than designation as metro/non-metro or population. These classifications and their underlying definitions are provided to enable more in-depth research and the ability of policy-makers to better target various programs, and encompass county and multi-level classifications. ERS considers counties as the “standard building block for collecting economic data and for conducting research to track and explain regional population and economic trends;”⁵³ the ERS website also states the most common data used for analysis of rural areas is the OMB-defined non-metro county and county equivalent units.

⁵¹ www.census.gov/geo/reference/urban-rural.html

⁵² US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 13-01 dated February 28, 2013. www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b-13-01.pdf.

⁵³ www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications.aspx

Figure 16: Various Rural/Urban Statistical Designations in Virginia⁵⁴



⁵⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration U.S. Census Bureau. Virginia-Core Based Statistical Areas and Counties. www2.census.gov/geo/maps/metroarea/stcbsa_pg/Feb2013/cbsa2013_VA.pdf
 USDA ERS State Level Map-Virginia. Comparison of nine alternative rural definitions from the 2000 decennial census. www.ers.usda.gov/datafiles/Rural_Definitions/StateLevel_Maps/VA.pdf

Table 13: Respondents and Rural/Urban Designation

Locality	Rural/Urban (BEA Metro Areas)	Metro/Non-Metro (ERS RUCC 2013)
Albemarle County	R	3 (U)
Arlington County	U	1 (U)
Augusta County	R	3 (U)
Bath County	R	8 (R)
Bedford County	R	2 (U)
Bland County	R	8 (R)
Campbell County	R	2 (U)
Essex County	R	6 (R)
Fauquier County	U	1 (U)
Franklin County	U	2 (U)
Isle of Wight County	U	1 (U)
King and Queen County	R	8 (R)
King William County	U	1 (U)
Loudoun County	U	1 (U)
Lunenburg County	R	9 (R)
Nelson County	U	3 (U)
Northampton County	R	8 (R)
Orange County	R	6 (R)
Page County	R	6 (R)
Pittsylvania County	R	4 (R)
Powhatan County	U	1 (U)
Prince George County	R	1 (U)
Roanoke County	R	2 (U)
Rockbridge County	R	6 (R)
Smyth County	R	7 (R)
Virginia Beach	U	1 (U)
Washington County	R	2 (U)

Appendix D: Making the Case for Agriculture

Supporting agricultural development has many benefits to the surrounding community. Beyond merely growing crops, agriculture has the potential to create new sources of revenue, education, and economic growth for an area. Detailed below are some of the ways in which agricultural development can take shape and be incorporated into plans for community growth.

Making the Case for Agriculture: Agritourism

The past decade has seen an emerging emphasis on drawing customers out of urban areas into rural locales. Agritourism has become a mainstream farm marketing concept as of 2010, and has grown from simple “u-pick” operations (where visitors pick produce themselves) to larger ventures offering other forms of education and entertainment.

According to the latest Census of Agriculture, agritourism and recreational farm services brought in over \$15.2 million to Virginia, a more than \$2.3 million increase since 2007. While the value of these activities increased over this reporting period, the number of farms engaged in agritourism has dramatically increased from 476 farms in 2007 to 814 farms in 2012, a 71% increase.⁵⁵

Agritourism reconnects society with its agricultural past, encouraging new people to visit local farms.

This agritourism movement reconnects society with its agricultural past, allowing and encouraging those who might never otherwise visit a farm to do so. Numerous examples agritourism exist, from “u-pick” operations, corn mazes, winery tours, and hayrides, to more intensive entertainment activities, some of which include overnight accommodations or tours for school children during the week.

This form of marketing is often referred to as “value-added.” This value is realized in the opportunities for the farmer to market the experience of purchasing farm products straight from the source, as well as other things such as educational experiences and processed items. Additionally, these activities save the farmer the cost of transporting items to an off-farm market.

Challenges remain for these operations, particularly the expense of insuring against the liability of having the public visit a farm, which is an inherently unsafe environment for the inexperienced. These operations sometimes questioned as to whether they are actually “farms” or “agriculture” for the purposes of use valuation and zoning.

⁵⁵ (2012) “Income from Farm-Related Sources: 2012 and 2007.” USDA Census of Agriculture.

Making the Case for Agriculture: Agritourism

The Code of Virginia, in § 3.2-6400, officially defines "agritourism activity" as "any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, wineries, ranching, historical, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions. An activity is an agritourism activity whether or not the participant paid to participate in the activity." The Agricultural Marketing Resource Center provides a broader definition: Agritourism "describes the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation to enjoy, be educated or be involved in activities."

Localities considering the promotion of agritourism activities should ensure that the community and producers are well-equipped to handle such an industry, and should carefully consider the associated benefits and challenges.

Making the Case for Agriculture: *Biofuels*

The growing biofuel industry is creating a new avenue for agricultural development and energy production. The United States is leading the way with an estimated 940 thousand barrels of biofuel produced a day in 2012. Of these, 876 thousand barrels were ethanol and 64 thousand were biodiesel.⁵⁶ The use of plant-based materials to create fuel source is not a new concept, but it has developed over time from simply burning wood to more innovative methods such as using food crops, grasses, algae, organic waste from landfills, and forestry waste. Newer technology has allowed for the creation of liquid fuel from biomass, more efficient burning practices, and the use of biomass in manufacturing traditionally petroleum based products such as plastics.

With greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels becoming an increasing problem, biofuels are seen as one of the solutions. While still emitting carbon dioxide

The biofuel industry can offer new income sources for farmers in the form of energy crops.

when burned, biomass production is more efficient than fossil fuels in that it also uses much of that carbon dioxide during its growth stage. Biofuels are also more sustainable and

renewable, as they can be produced locally instead of imported from across the country or abroad.⁵⁷

The Virginia Department of Forestry also outlines numerous ways in which expansion of the biomass fuel industry benefits both individuals and businesses. Materials which would normally be waste, such as manufacturing residues and wood waste from paper and timber processing can be sold to biofuel producers for additional profit and to reduce the need for waste disposal. Communities can similarly benefit, reducing the size of landfills and allowing for additional revenue from selling organic waste instead of burning it or leaving it to decompose. Burning waste from residential or commercial sites would now bring about a community benefit in the form of energy production instead of only releasing excess carbon dioxide into the air.

For farmers, the biofuel industry can offer new income sources in the form of energy crops. Algae, grasses, corn, and woody plants can be grown and harvested for energy production. This new revenue stream is important for rural development and job creation, as well as for transitioning farmers from struggling sectors into new markets. With the increasing education and interest in renewable energy, biofuel production can continue to become more environmentally friendly, opening the door for other green energy sectors (e.g. wind, solar, geothermal, etc.) to make their way into agriculture, which reduces the demand for foreign fuels.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ International Energy Statistics. U.S. Energy Information Administration. Accessed July 2015. www.eia.gov/cfapps/ipdbproject/iedindex3.cfm?tid=79&pid=alltypes&aid=1&cid=regions&syid=2008&eyid=2012&unit=TBPD.

⁵⁷ (July 2014). Biomass Energy Basics. National Renewable Energy Laboratory. www.nrel.gov/learning/re_biomass.html.

⁵⁸ Virginia Department of Forestry, "Bioenergy and Biofuel Resources." Accessed July 2015. www.dof.virginia.gov/energy/bioenergy.htm

Making the Case for Agriculture: Community Impacts

While it is logical for direct economic impacts to arise from the establishment and operation of an agricultural business at both the small-scale and commercial levels, there are some less obvious community and economic impacts that should also be considered. These impacts, mostly associated with smaller producers and their activities, have gained recent attention.

According to information reported by USDA ERS in an October 2012 Economic Information Bulletin⁵⁹, as well as in subsequent articles by the author⁶⁰, farm households engaging in activities outside the farm and regular production provide additional benefits to the surrounding community and economy. While these reports focus on income figures generated by these "portfolio entrepreneurs," by logical extension, these activities also translate into other community benefits such as employment, community stability, and in the case of agritourism activities, increased traffic to rural businesses and communities from visitors drawn to the region.

These same farm households affect the community as they engage with it, joining the PTA, volunteering for the fire department, joining a church or other volunteer organization, and making purchases at local stores and restaurants. In terms of direct impact

Smaller producers engaging in community activities may contribute a greater percent of their revenue back to the area.

to the local community, smaller producers engaging in these activities may actually contribute a greater percent of their revenue back to the community in which the farm is located; this is because they have the ability to capture additional profits in pricing through direct marketing, resulting in a higher margin of return which remains within the community. The ERS Economic Information Bulletin found "*On-farm diversification activities and off-farm business ventures each accounted for about half of these income-generating activities, but off-farm businesses had the largest impact on the local economy by generating about 80 percent of total non-commodity business income earned by farm households.*"

The report continues, reporting that "*Off-farm businesses operated by farm households generate strong links to the nonfarm economy. In 2007, off-farm businesses generated \$21.6 billion in profits based on estimated sales of \$111.6 billion, contributed an estimated \$54.6 billion in value-added income to the gross regional products of their local economies, and paid out \$24.5 billion in wages and salaries to 853,100 part-time and full-time employees.*"

⁵⁹ Vogel, Stephen. (October 2012). Multi-Enterprising Farm Households: The Importance of Their Alternative Business Ventures in the Rural Economy. Economic Research Service. United States Department of Agriculture.

⁶⁰ Vogel, Stephen. (April 2013). The Importance of Farmer-Owned Nonfarm Businesses in the Rural Economy. Amber Waves. United States Department of Agriculture.

Making the Case for Agriculture: *Development Supported Agriculture*

There is often conflict between preserving farmland and developing land for other uses such as housing. Development Supported Agriculture (DSA) is a movement that seeks to include farms in subdivisions in order to provide a solution to this issue. Rather than presenting farmers with the option of either keeping their land for farming or selling it for development, this concept incorporates farming into the community in a positive way.

Development Supported Agriculture allows for farmland to be incorporated in development planning.

In a typical DSA, a portion of land is set aside for agricultural production and related basic infrastructure needs such as wells, sheds, and storage for equipment. The cost of the land and infrastructure is incorporated into the residential lot cost, and the farm is then leased to a farmer under the oversight of the community. To limit exposure of residents to pesticides, most examples require that the farm be managed organically.

Current examples vary widely in their approach. Some DSAs are formed with the motivation of saving the farm and focus more on integrating housing into a farm area; for others, the farm is seen as one amenity among many in a high-end development. Management structures also vary, ranging from total farmer control to management by developer-hired staff. With either approach, the stakeholders obtain benefits: residents have access to fresh produce, farmers have access to affordable land and infrastructure as well as a ready market, and developers are able to preserve greenspace while gaining a valuable sales amenity.

Making the Case for Agriculture: Farmland Preservation Programs

The conversion of farms to other uses puts pressures on remaining farms and the entire agricultural sector and can create a negative cycle: Farmers become pressured to match yields on less productive and increasingly fragile lands; increased competition for remaining farmlands can spur bidding wars for leased lands, as many farmers need to maintain acreage and gross income to generate cash flow to cover debt; farms sell and disappear, and neighbors stop reinvesting in their own operations and facilities; service providers suffer because there are fewer farms and less acreage; and larger farms begin to seek volume discounts outside of the county, rather than working with local dealers.

Implementing programs to address farmland protection and preservation needs within a community can help stop the loss of productive farmland in a community.

Converting farms to other uses not only diminishes farmland, but also hurts remaining farms and farmers.

PACE, PDR, and Similar Programs

According to American Farmland Trust, as of January 2014, at least 27 states have state level PACE programs. Of these, 16 also have local PACE programs. Four additional states have PACE programs at the local level only.⁶¹ Successful programs generally use a combination of funding sources to purchase conservation easements, using local and state dollars to leverage federal funding through the USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.⁶²

The goal of PDR, PACE, TDR, and other programs is to slow land loss and stabilize the farm economy. These programs seek to create stable parcels of agricultural land to serve as cornerstones for future farming communities. In addition, the programs often help keep land affordable for farming by removing the development value from the cost of purchase, providing liquidity to invest in new value-added enterprises, or updating aging facilities; in cases where the farm is being inherited, they can help settle estate planning issues for non-farming heirs.

Establishing a PDR program can directly address the preservation of agricultural land in a community, but developing such a program based on the model developed by VDACS may also qualify a county for state and other funds for purchasing development rights. The creation of a local program would also establish a clearinghouse for issues related to the loss of farmland and tie local personnel into the statewide network of PDR program managers.

⁶¹www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/PACE_FIC2014.pdf

⁶²www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/farmranch/

Making the Case for Agriculture: Farmland Preservation Programs**Ag and Forestal Districts**

According to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), several features of Agricultural and Forestal Districts promote and preserve agricultural land uses such as

1. Guaranteeing land use value taxation, provided land use eligibility requirements are met (even if the county rescinds the land use program).
2. Safeguarding the rural character of a region by preserving agricultural and forestal land.
3. Offering protection from eminent domain.
4. Preventing local governments from enacting laws within a district that would unreasonably restrict farm structures, farming or forestry practices unless the restrictions are directly related to health, safety and welfare.⁶³

In Virginia, counties are permitted to designate Agricultural and Forestal districts to protect working farm and forest land. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) reports that, as of May 2014, there are 30 localities representing 340 districts, protecting more than 734,000 acres in the state.

Agricultural District programs require less public funding than PDR programs, and they are often more easily accepted by farmers wary of restrictions on land use than agricultural zoning or TDR programs. These programs can vary from centralized programs organized from the state level to those with highly structured county boards.

Farmland preservation programs can help stop the loss of productive farmland.

⁶³ Loudoun County Agricultural and Forestal District Program FAQ's." (2013). Loudoun County, VA. www.loudoun.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5534

Making the Case for Agriculture: Legislation and Policy

There are numerous areas for ADBs to consider when determining what role they may play. The following presents some common policy examples grouped by category.

Economic Development Policies

Examples of policies in this realm include encouraging new county institutions and entities such as cooperative extension service or soil and water conservation district personnel to work with neighboring jurisdictions to explore opportunities for agricultural preservation and niche farming. Examples of regional collaboration include the sharing of extension specialists among neighboring counties, or working with other counties to establish infrastructure such as a value-added food processing center.

Economic Development policies can encourage new county entities to partner with neighboring jurisdiction.

Land Use Policies

Policy examples include conservation subdivision provisions, incentives to encourage the provisions of more open space including farmland, conservation easements to preserve farmland, review of publicly purchased land for prime farmland designation, increasing the buffer between agricultural and residential uses and ensuring compatibility of any proposed developments, requiring Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies, ensuring that new development promotes agricultural uses, ensuring that single-family residential development on large lots minimizes the demand for public infrastructure, and allowing agricultural development within other zoning districts.

Conservation and Environment Policies

Potential policies can be examined by asking important questions about what lands should be targeted and what techniques are most effective for protecting them. Examples include emphasizing the importance of continuing to support existing institutions and programs related to agriculture development, such as existing Farmland Preservation Boards, Agricultural Priority Areas, Voluntary Agricultural Districts, the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements, the Present Use Value Tax program, outreach on the importance of farmland preservation, or any allowances of agricultural activities by right that have previously been established.

Unified Development Ordinances

While it may not be practical in some areas, a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) can be adopted by county leadership and can be used along with a County Comprehensive or Strategic Plan to implement official county policies. The UDO can contain provisions for guiding planning policy as it relates to agricultural operations and farmland preservation.

Making the Case for Agriculture: *Legislation and Policy*

Purpose and Intent

Purpose and Intent related policies can outline and explicitly state the goals of the county as they are related to agricultural development. For example, they may outline details of the county's intent to address future needs, growth and change in jurisdiction, conservation of land and water resources, preservation of groundwater quality and supply, recognition of geologic features, soil and topography attributes, improvements of air quality, appropriate use of the land, and provision for the needs of agriculture into the future.

Development Areas

Some counties have included policies to establish "development tiers." Policies related to these tiers limit the encroachment of unnecessary infrastructure and serve as guides ensuring that any development occurring within a designated tier is in line with the county's objectives for that area.

Agricultural Use Standards

Counties can establish agricultural uses within city and county limits and outline them for future development. For example, counties may determine whether or not

Counties may determine whether or not agricultural uses are allowed by right or by permission.

agricultural uses are allowed by right or by permission, and in what districts. The term *Principal Uses* often indicates activities are allowed by right, while *Accessory Uses* are

allowed by right if in conjunction with a principal use, and *Uses Not Included* are not allowed at all.

Agricultural Zoning

Often there is no specific agricultural zoning category, as distinct from rural residential. While zoning regulations in residential areas are in place to protect the health and safety of the public, and regulations often restrict employees and visitors for the purposes of addressing traffic and noise issues, farms have unique needs for accessory buildings, worker housing, advertising, public parking, and facilities which should also be addressed.

Farm businesses: Many successful farm businesses add value to their raw product before it leaves the farm, but Residential Rural Zoning categories often limit home-based occupations to a minimal number of employees. This limits the creation of farm-based businesses.

Housing: Existing regulations sometimes require farmers to subdivide a tract when adding housing facilities for family members or seasonal workers instead of setting up housing units on the same farm tract. This can ultimately lead to the further splitting of farm units, inefficient low-density development patterns in rural areas, and possible conversion of farmland to other uses.

Accessory Buildings: When a farm already has an accessory dwelling, it can often be difficult to add other accessory buildings. Farms need the flexibility to add new enterprises and staff to remain viable.

Making the Case for Agriculture: *Legislation and Policy***Cost of Community Studies**

Some counties have used Cost of Community Studies to better assess the current state of land use in a community. Developed by American Farmland Trust, Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies compare the fiscal contributions and requirements of various classes of land use. Interestingly, several North Carolina counties, in completing these studies on the local level, found that residential properties actually cost each county more in needed services than they provide in revenue, while farm and forest landowners pay more than their fair share of taxes.