

Adopted 06/24/06
Board of Supervisors

Bedford County Agriculture Development Program

Mission

To promote the agriculture industry within Bedford County, to increase the economic viability of farming and to advise the Bedford County Board of Supervisors on issues affecting the sustainability of agriculture.

Goal

Develop and implement a continuing plan to sustain and enhance the rural economy.

Program Components

The Bedford Agriculture Development Program will include the following categories – Marketing, Land Preservation, Education and Other.

Marketing

Provide leadership and coordination for new and existing markets for agricultural commodities.

Include the equine industry as a fundamental component of rural economic development and provide for its expansion.

Actively seek grant opportunities to assist the agriculture community. Examples include:

- USDA Value Added Grant program
- USDA SARE Community Innovation Grants
- Farmers Market Promotion program

Develop an agriculture directory to include:

- Custom services
- Agribusiness service providers
- Direct marketers

Partner with Bedford City to revitalize the Bedford Farmer's Market.

Develop a "Bedford Grown" branded farm product program.

Land Preservation

Promote and assist in developing land preservation programs (e.g. Agricultural and Forestal Districts, Conservation Easements, Land Use Assessment Taxation, Purchase of Development Rights).

Education

Coordinate with the Bedford County School System to increase agricultural awareness and promote participation in agriculture programs.

Develop educational brochures that educate the non-farm public on agricultural issues.

Coordinate a focus group of agricultural lenders to study the economic viability of agricultural enterprises and the issue of generational transfer

Other

Utilize an agriculture development advisory committee to achieve the mission and goal of the Bedford County Agriculture Development Program.

Work cooperatively to support the rural development efforts of other departments (Economic Development, Tourism, Community Development, Cooperative Extension, etc.).

Assist County Government with legislative issues and lobbying efforts that affect agricultural vitality.

Dedicate space on the County website to include the following:

- Agriculture Statistics in Bedford
- Farmland Exchange (land for rent, looking to rent, custom services, etc)
- Farm Product Guide
- Links to county farm websites
- Farmers Market information

Apply to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to have an Agriculture Enterprise District designated for Bedford.