



## **Agriculture Economic Development Advisory Board 2018 Report**

The Bedford County Agriculture Economic Development Advisory Board, (Ag Board) continued to address many Agriculture related issues during 2018. The following are some of the topics and programs the Ag Board worked on during the past year.



### **Expanding Agricultural Education in County Schools**

The Ag Board was excited to work closely with the Bedford County School System and the Board of Supervisors to provide the needed Agriculture Education courses for all students within the county. In recent years, student numbers have increased and Agriculture classes have expanded. During 2018 full agricultural education programs were launched at Bedford Middle School and Staunton River Middle School. These classes have been an overwhelming success and we want to thank the BOS for funding this effort.

### **Expansion of Bedford Special Feeder Calf Sales**

Beef cattle production is the number one farm commodity in Bedford County. The Ag Board has supported an effort by the Bedford Beef Producers Association, the Extension Office, the VA Department of Agriculture, The Virginia Cattleman's Association and Spring Lake Livestock Market to develop value-added cattle marketing opportunities. Historically, these types of marketing efforts have resulted in cattle selling for more money which in turn puts more money in our producer's pockets. This partnership resulted in the development of co-mingled feeder calf sales held at Spring Lake Livestock Market. This cooperative cattle marketing effort requires producers to follow specific guidelines including weaning and vaccinating their cattle. Cattle are consigned to the sale in advance and producers agree to have their cattle evaluated by a VDACS livestock grader. Upon delivery to the sale, cattle are comingled together from participating producers and assembled into uniform lots by sex, weight and grade. Based on initial success of sales held in 2017, the program was expanded in 2018.

In 2018, three special feeder calf sales were held at the Spring Lake livestock market. Producers pooled their cattle together and marketed a total of 1143 head. Using sales data and other cost of production information, an economic analysis demonstrated that these cattle sold for an average of \$94.45 more per head than if they had been sold independently at weaning, resulting in an additional \$107,958.00 in income for these producers.

## 2018 Bedford County Fair is a Huge Success

The 2018 Bedford County Fair continued its tradition of being a fun, safe and educational family event. The fair was made possible by the work of many volunteers and the contributions of area businesses and leaders. The fair stayed true to the traditional elements of the event such as Agriculture Competitions and Exhibits, Equine Events, a Youth Livestock Show, Antique Farm Equipment Displays, an Antique Car Show, Food Vendors, Mid-Way



Rides and Ole McDonald's Farm. The Bedford County Fair Pageant continued to be a tremendous event and over \$35,000 in scholarship prizes were awarded. Educational tours and displays were expanded for approximately 500 county fourth graders. About 18,000 adults and young people attended the free gate, free parking fair at the Glenwood Center in Huddleston. We estimate that the fair had at least \$320,000 of onsite sales. One county official estimates the fair had a total economic impact of around \$850,000 in Bedford County.



### Farmers Markets

The Ag Board continues to support all of the county's Farmer's Markets. The Ag Board has worked closely with Bedford Main Street and the YMCA on the planning and support of the Bedford Farmers Market. The Ag Board is also excited about the continued success of the Forest Farmers Market. The Ag Board will continue to identify ways to assist, promote and even expand our Farmers Markets throughout the county.

### 7th Annual Coyote Lottery

With the ongoing coyote predation problem in the county the Ag Board continued a "first of its kind" Coyote Lottery. The contest gives one entry for every coyote checked in. A total of over 120 coyotes were checked in during the 2018 campaign. The lottery is funded totally by private funds. \$3,000 in prize money was raised this past year. The Board has received reports that the coyote population and damages are being managed more effectively partially due to the lottery and the incentive it offers hunters. The Board depends on the cooperation of Bedford Southern States Co-op to facilitate checking in the coyotes.



## Tobacco Commission Grant for New Facilities

The Ag Board has worked with and supported the county Extension Office in their efforts to seek funding from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (VTRRC) to assist agricultural producers in Bedford and other Southside localities with value added improvements to their operations. Work was continued on a proposal funded in 2017. The Central Virginia Pasture, Crops and Livestock Systems Program (CVPCLSP) was designed to provide assistance to producers to enable their ability to make improvements to their operations. The CVPCLSP offered producers in a 14-county region an opportunity to apply for a cost share incentive of up to \$3,300.00 for improvement practices.

In 2018, a total of 68 projects were funded in the 14 county area. For every dollar invested in these programs by the VTRRC, producers invested an additional \$3.09. Consequently, for the 68 projects completed, there has been economic activity in the participating communities of \$777,159.00. Bedford numbers: 5 projects completed - \$78,665.00 in producer investment - \$16,132.00 reimbursed from grant funds.

Bedford County had an additional opportunity to participate in a VTRRC funded program led by the Franklin County VCE unit in 2018. This program, targeted specifically at sheep and goat producers, was designed to provide assistance to producers to enhance their ability to make management improvements. Unique to this program, applicants could apply to start a new operation by purchasing breeding stock. It also had a youth component. Due to Extension efforts, two producers applied to this program. This program was structured similarly to our other grant programs where producers could apply for a cost share incentive of up to \$3,300.00 for improvement practices. In 2018, two projects were completed. These two projects resulted in producer expenditures of \$23,868.02 to enable improvements to their operations. A total of \$5,962.00 was reimbursed to these producers through the grant.



## Expanded Support of Youth Livestock Projects

The Ag Board has been a longtime supporter of the Central Virginia Livestock Show. After receiving news that Bedford youth were largely successful at the show but received the least community support and lowest market prices at the sale the board addressed the issue. The Board worked with county Ag teachers and Extension Agents to increase promotion for animal projects. The effort was successful in assisting all Bedford youth at the Central Virginia Livestock Show.

## Revitalization of the Bedford Beef Producers Association

A group of cattlemen together with Cooperative Extension, Spring Lake Livestock Market and members of the Ag Board have been working cooperatively to revive the Bedford Beef Producers Association. This effort has included developing educational programs for

members, recruiting new directors to serve on the board of the association, and the association becoming a sponsor of the special feeder calf sales at Spring Lake livestock market.

### Governor's Conference of Agricultural Trade

The Ag Board and Bedford County were represented by Traci Blido and Joy Powers at the 2018 Virginia Governor's Conference on Agricultural Trade. The Board also partnered with Economic Development and sponsored local FFA and 4H members' attendance.

### Partnership with Local 4-H Livestock Club

The Ag Board is one of the biggest supporters of the local 4-H Livestock Club. The Board's support includes achievement recognition, the individual support of members to fundraisers and serving as guest speakers and club leaders for the club at their activities and meetings. 4-H members are also regular attendees of board meetings where they report on meetings and are welcomed to discuss matters with the board.



### Promoting Continued Education for Local Agriculturists

The Ag Board continues to recognize the value of continued education in the agriculture industry. The Ag Board has promoted events such as the National Forage and Grassland Council Meeting, Virginia Tech Beef Health Meeting, American Farm Bureau Meetings, Virginia Farm Bureau Meetings and Expos and many more.

### Governor's Conference of Rural Prosperity

Bedford County was represented by Ag Board member, Joy Powers, at the Governor's Rural Prosperity Conference in Lexington, Virginia. At the conference Powers was able to hear the State's plan to revitalize rural Virginia. The information gathered has been helpful in aligning the Board's plan with state level programs.

### Representing Bedford at the State Capitol and Bring the Capitol to Bedford

Members of the Ag Board represented Bedford County at the State Capitol to advocate for Bedford agriculture. Also, through the Farm Bureau members of the Ag Board hosted dozens state legislators and staff for farm tours. The event gave the participants a unique chance to actually visit local farms and engage with real farmers. The event was viewed as an overwhelming success.

## Bedford One Ag Tours

The Ag Board supports the Economic Development Department's Bedford One program for county students. Several Agriculture based businesses and some of the members of the Ag Board have hosted Bedford One tours.



## Bedford Grown Brand

The Ag Board will continue to promote our local produced agriculture products and our Bedford Grown Brand Program. This program has drawn both state and national attention.

## Promoting Agri-Tourism

The Ag Board will continue to promote our county's Ag Tourism as a huge part of our county's economy.

## Bedford Broadband Service

The Ag Board is pleased with the county efforts for the much needed countywide broadband. This will have a positive effect on our Agriculture Producers and their families. The Board will continue to be available to assist this in anyway.

## Multi-Use Ag Complex/Facility

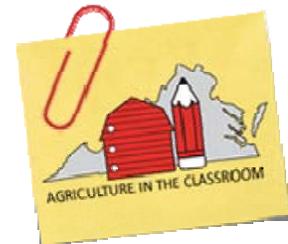
The Ag Board has continued to work towards the development of a large agriculture complex/facility in the county. Land and money are the big hurdles with such a project. The Ag Board will continue to keep the need for such a facility as a high priority for the future.

## Bedford County Agriculture Web Page

The Ag Board maintains an Agriculture web page in conjunction with the county's economic development department's web page. The Ag Board feels this online presence is a great way to inform individuals about Ag related events and functions and provide county agriculturists a place to list their products and services. Go to:  
<http://www.bedfordeconomicdevelopment.com/agriculture-in-bedford-county-virginia/ag-board/>

## Agricultural Literacy

In March Farm Bureau members, farmers, fair pageant winners, FFA and 4H members read to elementary students across the county to raise agricultural literacy. The Farm Bureau Women's Committee provides each class that participates with a book.



## Support Local Farm Bureau

The Ag Board works closely with the local Farm Bureau, Young Farmers and Women's Committee to promote their programs and projects. The Ag Board has one member that represents the Farm Bureau. (Many Ag Board members are members of the Farm Bureau and attend their events and annual meeting each year).

## Special Guests and Speakers during the year included:

- Dr. Tony Francis, Bedford CTE Director
- John Graham, Local Producer and Farmer's Market Participant
- Greg Zody, Director of Community Development
- Kyra Thompson, Liberty University
- Jana Fedele, Bedford Farmer's Market
- Dorothy McIntyre, Forest Farmer's Market
- Brandon Strosnider, Staunton River Agricultural Education Teacher
- Brittany Lawyer, Staunton River Middle School Agricultural Education Teacher
- Spencer Blakenship, Liberty High School Agricultural Education Teacher
- Cymber Stanley, Liberty Middle School Agricultural Education Teacher
- Dr. Douglas Schuch, Superintendent of Bedford County Schools
- Ethan Jackson, Virginia FFA President
- Joshua Powers, Smith Mountain FFA President
- Andy Dooley, Board of Supervisor
- Charla Bansley, Board of Supervisor
- Ken Palmer, Bedford County Fair & Equine Enthusiast
- Carolyn Fellows, President of the Bedford Women's Club and the Bedford Co. Fair
- Mary Jo Boone, CEO, YMCA
- Many local residents also attended meetings throughout the year

## AEDAB in the Future

The Ag Board worked with Reid Wodicka to establish a strategic plan for the Ag Board's goals for the next ten years. Our goals will grow and change as the county's agricultural industry does but currently our plans include:

- Ensuring the expansion of agricultural education to **all of the county's middle and high schools**
- Assess the need and potential role of an **Agricultural Marketing and Industry Specialist with the Economic Development Department**
- Find **new and expanding markets** for Bedford produced agriculture products
- Continue to invite **Agriculture Experts** as guest speakers to the Ag Board meetings
- Increase awareness, promotion and expansion of **Bedford Grown products** and the **Bedford Grown Brand**

- **Promote the Bedford County Fair** as the premier Agriculture, education and entertainment family event, not only for our county, but for our region
- **Help promote and expand the Farmers Markets** throughout the county
- Continue to assist and **promote our Equine** community
- **Work to obtain a large multi-use facility, Agriculture Complex** to hold large agriculture and non-agriculture events
- Continue to **work closely with the Bedford Farm Bureau, the Young Farmers and the Women's Committee**
- Work with **Bedford Tourism** to encourage and promote Ag related events and attractions
- Continue to **look for programs, grants and alternative resources** to assist Bedford County producers offset the rising cost of doing business
- Continue to work to help **protect and preserve our county's farms, prime farm land and water**
- Work with the Bedford County School System to provide all students the opportunity to take **Ag Education Courses**
- Work to assist the county's **FFA Chapters** and **4H Clubs** whenever possible
- Continue to **educate the public** on the importance of Agriculture to our county
- **Work with The Bedford County Sheriff's Department and Bedford Fire and EMS** on handling emergency situations related to farms and agriculture
- **Work closely with Bedford County Staff, Cooperative Extension, the Planning Commission, the Tourism Department, the School System and the Board of Supervisors** to continue to make the county's agriculture community a strong and viable part of our county's economy today, and in the future

It is our honor and pleasure for the Ag Board members to serve Bedford County, the Board of Supervisors and our Agriculture producers.

Respectfully Summited,

Jeff Powers, Chairman  
Bedford County Agriculture Economic Advisory Board & Members