



2010 VACO Annual Conference

# **Influencing Rural Partnerships and Enterprise**

Presented By:

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Pittsylvania County Ag Development Director

# Formation of the Ag Development Board and the Ag Development Director

- Early 2007 – Ag Visionaries visit with County Administrator
- June 2007 – Ag Development Board officially recognized by the county Board of Supervisors
- August 2007 – ADD position advertised
- November 2007 – ADD chosen
- December 2007 – ADD employed

# Ag Development Board

## Goals & Objectives

1. Update the county Land Use policy.
2. Establish an ag commodity clearinghouse.
3. Identify markets for commodity products.
4. Analyze the viability of the Danville Livestock Market.
5. Develop diversified Value-Added markets.
6. Promote and advance bio-fuel technologies.
7. Design a computerized farmer's market.
8. Research new marketing opportunities such as aquaculture.
9. Work with the State Secretary of Agriculture to encourage new agri-business growth.
10. Record a promotional DVD regarding the ag products in the county.

# The ADD Directive

“The ADD 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.”

# Unique Attributes of an ADD

- The ADD can work directly with the farming community in a greater capacity than Extension.
- Direct access to the County Administrator.
- Direct access to the state Secretary and Commissioner of Agriculture.
- One point of contact for the farmers.
- Brand new position – blazing a trail.
- Work side-by-side with Economic Development.
- Sky's the limit to researching new opportunities.
- Currently, there are only 12 counties focusing on Ag Development – VADO.

# Successful Rural Enterprise Efforts



# Successful Rural Enterprise Efforts



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# Successful Rural Enterprise Efforts

Pittsylvania County Agriculture Development | Home - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.pitcoagriculture.org/

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## Pittsylvania County Agriculture Development



### Pittsylvania County Agriculture Development

Welcome to Pittsylvania County, where agriculture and agribusiness are progressive, thriving, and influential aspects of our community. From the perfectly planted rows of crops, the loving of cattle in the distance, fruits ripening in the summer sunshine, to the service providers and equipment dealers, Pittsylvania County is host to a varied array of agricultural entities. As the county's number one revenue generator, agriculture is supported heavily by the community and our local leaders. As Virginia's largest landmass county, we are ideally suited for an ever expanding agricultural base in which research, product development, and marketing intertwine as one to enhance new and emerging food and wood product technologies.

#### Market Data

[Livestock and Grain Market Data](#)

#### Weather

[Weather Update](#)

### Latest News

**Fall Farm Self-Guided Tour** - The Ag Development Board in conjunction with the Historical Society of Pittsylvania County and Preservation VA invite all to enjoy the fall season and the beauty of the changing leaf color while visiting the area's vast agricultural enterprises. The locations on this self-guided tour along with a map of the county can be found in the Star Tribune. Better hurry though, the leaves are changing fast and remember to support the locations on the tour!

**Farm Link** - For those who are interested, VDACS has instituted an internet based database for farmers who either want to lease/purchase property or who want to rent/sale farmland. The website is [www.vafarmlink.org](http://www.vafarmlink.org). The application process is very simple and only takes a few minutes.

**Veterans Day** - All county offices will be closed in observance of Veterans Day on November 11. Please offer a heartfelt thanks to all veterans for their sacrifices to our country.

**VADO** - The Virginia Ag Development Officers will be meeting in Amherst County on Wednesday, November 10.

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# Successful Rural Enterprise Efforts

- Updates to county Land-Use policy
- Additional recognition of farmer achievements by the BOS
- Congressional candidate forums focused on ag topics
- Creation of new markets like aqua-culture
- Union of farmers and schools for produce sales
- Providing valuable resource information during prospective industry visits with the Economic Development team
- Maintaining a direct and open dialogue with all state and national elected officials along with the Secretary of Ag for the state and Commissioner of Ag for the state
- Enhanced and expanded marketing opportunities for numerous cattle farmers – Angus heifers to Turkey

# The Rural Enterprise View

From within the farming community, the ADD position along with the incorporation of an Ag Development Board has been successful.

There is still a sense of separation between Ag Development and Economic Development even though we work well together, for example the praise given to a new industry versus the praise given to a young farmer getting started.

Even with the ADD and Ag Board, the value of agriculture as the county's #1 industry has lost its prominence – it is not as glamorous as an industry moving to the area providing 200 jobs. BUT...we are working to change this perception!

# Opportunities

Establish a stronger sense of pride for the county's and state's #1 industry – **AGRICULTURE**

Work even closer with county officials to design ordinances which are ag friendly and encourage ag development

Continue to educate the BOS and general public on the benefits of a strong ag base

Break the chains of exclusivity and open the arms of inclusivity during all economic development discussions and brainstorming sessions

Questions?

