



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Program Application Entry

Loudoun County: The Intersection of Tradition and Innovation

Loudoun County sits at the intersection of tradition and innovation, with a rich history of agribusiness that continues to propel the local economy as it has for generations and a first-class technology corridor that is advancing the world through forward-thinking enterprises. As Aerospace, Defense, Cybersecurity, and Health IT industries continue to locate and expand in Loudoun, creating a diversified economy that is invaluable to the entire region, we realize that the need to acknowledge and promote our rural businesses is greater than ever.

The story of where our food originates is quickly being lost and the farmers who work tirelessly to provide our daily meals forgotten. Loudoun County is fortunate to have a robust agricultural economy, with 1,200 commercial farms, containing thousands of Loudoun businesses, that are a major driver in the County's nearly \$2 billion tourism industry. The diversity found within Loudoun's farming community that includes generational farmers, second career farmers who want to get back to their roots, first timers, and women and minority farm owners, opens the door for that story to be told.

Farmer Trading Card Program

Agriculture is a good career, and there is a lot of opportunity to capitalize on that path in Loudoun County. However, it can be a lonely job. Outside of the weekly Farmer's Market, public interaction is few and far between, creating a disconnect between farmer and customer. Loudoun County Economic Development has a goal to close that gap and tell the story that the County is not just home to the most llamas, alpacas, grapes, hops, and honey in Virginia, but home to a wide variety of farmers from all walks of life. The Farmer Trading Card Program was created to tell the personal stories

of the County's farmers and introduce the community to the importance of farming in Loudoun, having access to locally grown food, and career paths that can be pursued in agriculture.

In April of 2021, Loudoun Economic Development partnered with Loudoun County Public Schools' Nutrition Services office to distribute 100,000 Farmer Trading Cards, featuring nine local farmers, throughout the County's elementary schools. Each card, designed in the style of a sports collectible, showcased the individual farmer on location with the product or animals they work with daily, providing a unique snapshot of life on a farm. The card backs offer a glimpse into the story of the farmer, replacing traditional stats with questions and answers about their love of farming, why and how they got started in their business and what they learn from farming. Featured farmers offered diverse products and services, including Alpaca fiber, beekeeping, mushroom farming, and traditional grain harvesting.

Turning Adversity Into Opportunity

To accompany the distribution of trading cards which coincided with Major League Baseball's opening day, a series of "Meet the Farmer" events were planned within the schools, offering a chance for students to ask questions, understand the possibilities within the profession, and learn how they might become the #LoudounPossible All-Star farmers of tomorrow. The Covid-19 pandemic didn't allow for in-person visits, so Loudoun Economic Development worked with the featured farmers to produce video vignettes that were shown within the schools and shared across social media.

In a year where Loudoun's farmers embraced new business models and became more flexible in their routines, this pivot seemed fitting for the program. The featured videos were well received by both the farmers and students, as they provided a more unique view of the farms themselves. Students were ecstatic to see alpacas, hens, and other farm animals broadcast directly into their classroom and the entire school system was fortunate to see ALL nine farmers, as opposed to select participants in a

limited number of schools. Due to the use of video, our reach was magnified tremendously through social media, allowing us to reach an entire community audience beyond elementary students.

Valued Partnership

While Loudoun Economic Development took the lead on creating and implementing this project, from conception to design and development, Loudoun County Public Schools' Nutrition Services was an invaluable partner that spearheaded the distribution of farmer trading cards to Loudoun's public, charter, private, and home schools. In addition to this communications program, the Nutrition Services program is committed to buying a portion of its produce from local businesses each year, further bridging the gap between the County's farms and residents, while providing a direct economic impact for rural businesses. The positive impact doesn't stop there, as the Director of Nutrition for LCPS, Elizabeth Mills, mentioned an increase in consumption of produce by the school children when they know where it was grown or if they've met the person who grew it.

Implementation: From Start to Finish

The "Starting Lineup" of featured farmers were chosen based on a nomination process and staff picks, with an intention to highlight the diversity of our farming community. As a dedicated program within Loudoun Economic Development, all costs were covered by the department to create a low barrier of entry for LCPS and to promote our rural businesses to a captive audience. Print and promotion costs for the entire program totaled \$5,300.

Our internal Marketing and Communications team provided all graphic design elements, video post-production, and social media promotion, while our Rural Development team assisted with videography and cross-collaboration between the schools and farmers.

With the help of Loudoun County Public Schools' Nutrition Services, farmer cards and videos were distributed to over 30,000 elementary school students. Through Economic Development's social media efforts, twenty-five posts resulted in nearly 9,500 additional impressions.

#LoudounPossible

According to the USDA's most recent Census of Agriculture, Loudoun County leads the Commonwealth in farms owned by women, Latinx, Hispanic, Asian, and military veterans. As the diversity of Loudoun's agriculture industry continues to expand, both in product and farmer demographic, Loudoun Economic Development is ready to tell the compelling #LoudounPossible stories one trading card at a time.

Executive Summary

Farmer Trading Card Program

Loudoun County Economic Development has a goal to tell the of the long tradition of agribusiness in the County that continues to this day. The Farmer Trading Card Program was created to tell the personal stories of the County's farmers and introduce the community to the importance of farming in Loudoun, having access to locally grown food, and career paths that can be pursued in agriculture.

In April of 2021, Loudoun Economic Development partnered with Loudoun County Public Schools' Nutrition Services office to distribute 100,000 Farmer Trading Cards, featuring nine local farmers, throughout the County's elementary schools. Each card, designed in the style of a sports collectible, showcased the individual farmer on location with the product or animals they work with daily, providing a unique snapshot of life on a farm. The card backs offer a glimpse into the story of the farmer, replacing traditional stats with questions and answers about their love of farming, why and how they got started in their business and what they learn from farming. Featured farmers offered diverse products and services, including Alpaca fiber, beekeeping, mushroom farming, and traditional grain harvesting.

In addition to this communications program, the Nutrition Services program is committed to buying a portion of its produce from local businesses each year, further bridging the gap between the County's farms and residents, while providing a direct economic impact for rural businesses. The positive impact doesn't stop there, as the Director of Nutrition for LCPS, Elizabeth Mills, mentioned an increase in consumption of produce by the school children when they know where it was grown or if they've met the person who grew it.

Overview

In April of 2021, Loudoun Economic Development partnered with Loudoun County Public Schools' Nutrition Services office to distribute 100,000 Farmer Trading Cards, featuring nine local farmers, throughout the County's elementary schools. Each card, designed in the style of a sports collectible, showcased the individual farmer on location with the product or animals they work with daily, providing a unique snapshot of life on a farm. The card backs offer a glimpse into the story of the farmer, replacing traditional stats with questions and answers about their love of farming, why and how they got started in their business and what they learn from farming. Featured farmers offered diverse products and services, including Alpaca fiber, beekeeping, mushroom farming, and traditional grain harvesting.

As the diversity of Loudoun's agriculture industry continues to expand, both in product and farmer demographic, Loudoun Economic Development is ready to tell the compelling #LoudounPossible stories one trading card at a time.