

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

A focus on outreach and education helped define the Communications Division's goals in fiscal year 2006. The Division was involved in the planning and implementation of several school-based educational activities to teach students hands-on about West Virginia agriculture.

Communications Division is the definitive source for information about the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and agriculture in the Mountain State.

The *Market Bulletin*, WVDA website and "Today in Agriculture" (the WVDA's monthly public access television show) continued to provide the most-up-to-date agricultural news and information to West Virginia residents. Each continued to evolve and incorporate a wider variety of news and information while supporting the main goal of the Division – to be the definitive source of agricultural information in West Virginia.



Communications staff produced video footage for their monthly television show "Today in Agriculture." Grant-funded video equipment was also used to produce promotional and training videos for the WVDA. All production is done in-house, saving the state tens of thousands of dollars compared to the cost of commercial video production.

Several promotional videos were completed to support other WVDA division programs, which enabled Division staff members to continue to advance in their skills in video production.

The *Market Bulletin* remains the WVDA's most-requested publication, and for 89 years has been the



A Communications staff member talks with one of the 2006 Farm-City Poster Contest winners at the Capitol Market Farm-City event. The 2006 poster contest, themed "No Farm, No Food" drew entries from across the state. Farm-City Week celebrates the partnership between rural and urban communities.

state's leading source of agricultural information for farmers and non-farmers alike. More than 60,000 copies are printed each month and electronic subscriptions continue to grow.

The WVDA website is a cornerstone of the Department's communications efforts. The goal for the site is to provide "one-stop shopping" for anyone interested in agriculture in West Virginia. The *Market Bulletin* is available for download from the website, and WVDA news releases are archived on the site. Content for various WVDA divisions is added as it is developed.

The Division develops and maintains a wide variety of educational materials and provides the media with regular news articles on matters of public interest. The WVDA's monthly public access television show "Today in Agriculture" is shot, edited, produced and hosted by Communications' staff members and aired by the West Virginia Library Commission. Archived shows are available at the Library Television Network webpage (http://10.99.1.242:81/ltn/videomenu_TV.html).

Also, "Today in Agriculture" remains on the cutting edge of shows of its type, going into the field to bring viewers broad-interest agriculture stories from throughout West Virginia. Topics include stories on state agribusinesses and products and WVDA activities throughout the state to name a few. The show has a potential audience of more than



500,000 people in Charleston, Huntington, Logan and North-Central West Virginia. Library Commission staff is working to add Jefferson County to the show's viewing area.

The grant-funded video equipment is also used to produce promotional and training videos for the Department. All production is done in-house, saving the state tens of thousands of dollars compared to the cost of commercial video production.

Substantial savings have also been realized on production of *The Market Bulletin* through electronic subscriptions and improved mailing methods. Communications produced a postage savings of \$220,000 for the fiscal year.

Continuing cross-training among employees ensures organizational continuity and responsiveness to media and public inquiries. Communications staff have become more active in media relations and "Today in Agriculture" production, resulting in greater organizational flexibility.



One of the Communications Division's outreach efforts in 2006 was "Ag in the Classroom" held at elementary schools during National Agriculture Week in March.



Left: Communications develops and maintains a wide variety of educational materials which are available upon request.

The Division continued ongoing promotions, including substantial work with media at the State Fair of West Virginia and improved media materials for West Virginia agribusinesses attending the New York Fancy Foods show.

The Department's website (www.wvagriculture.org) is an important communications tool that is continually being assessed and updated. News releases are posted to the website within 24 hours of their release.

Continually increasing content makes the site the best starting point for anyone with questions about West Virginia agriculture, and Communications Division is positioning the website as "one-stop-shopping" for interested citizens. Detailed information and numerous links lead viewers to a wide variety of agricultural statistics and information. Convenient contact information for key Department personnel is also readily accessible.

Breakdown of Division's Support Requests

