

MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

"The Basis of All Wealth is Agriculture"



The primary goals of the Marketing and Development Division are to maximize opportunities in domestic and international markets for West Virginia food and agricultural products, to increase rural development and agricultural diversity, and to professionally manage West Virginia Nutrition Programs that serve needy families in West Virginia.

Staff of the Marketing and Development Division serves as the primary liaison to various commodity groups, including beekeepers, beef cattle, poultry, farmers' markets, specialty foods, livestock and horticulture associations and others. The Division also provides traditional marketing services, such as market news and price reporting. This continuous contact with producers permits Division staff to identify and develop marketing opportunities as they arise.

Agribusiness Development

Agribusiness producers have come to depend on the services provided by the Division as evidenced by the steady stream of inquiries. As the need for producer services increases, the Division has increased its level of efficiency to deal with the increased demand. The technical assistance currently being provided is evolving and strives to complement the increased capabilities and opportunities that exist as producers continue to grow.



Participants in the New York Fancy Foods Show revealed an increase in sales and contacts. Division personnel were responsible for leading trade shows in Canada and in 2008 lead a trade mission to Australia.

2008 Highlights

- 400+ "West Virginia Grown" Agribusinesses in operation
- Over 250 percent growth in startups of new Agribusiness companies in the last 10 years
- West Virginia agribusinesses employ over 1,500 people
- Revenue impact of over \$100 million annually on the West Virginia economy

The Division continues to partner with the Collaborative for the 21st Century in developing a "Farmer to Chef" initiative which pairs West Virginia farmers with chefs from gourmet restaurants and resorts. The first benefit is fresh, high quality products (produce, meats, and eggs) for the chefs and ultimately consumers, and the second is increased sales and market recognition for the farmers.

Agritourism Development

Agritourism promotion has become a major thrust of the Division. Two workshops were held for entities involved in agritourism. The first Agritourism Directory was printed and is widely used and distributed.





In addition, a website (www.visitwv farms.com) has been established and is being used by visitors and by West Virginians wanting to learn more about vacation opportunities within the state.

The Department is part of a seven-state Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension (SARE) Grant for the next three years, which will provide additional training opportunities for those involved in the agritourism industry.

August 2007 marked the first agritourism month designation at the state's welcome centers. Plans are currently in the works for a return trip to the Southern Christmas Show in Charlotte, N.C., which will provide an excellent opportunity to showcase agritourism opportunities with West Virginia.

Specialty Crops Grants

The Department is administering \$100,000 of USDA-funded Specialty Crops Grants, which promote a wide variety of local food-related projects. Several West Virginia entities qualified to receive grant monies, along with several farmers' markets that will use the funds to increase their marketing efforts and visibility throughout.



Apiary Program

The Apiary Program helps promote beekeeping as a branch of agriculture in West Virginia and to minimize the incidence of apiary diseases, parasitic mites and other pests through inspection and treatment programs – as well as drought-related supplemental feeding and bee-replacement programs specially funded by the West Virginia Legislature. Staff provides educational seminars to enhance beekeepers' management

skills and to entertain and educate the general public.

- Registered 1,200 beekeepers maintaining 13,279 colonies in 1,779 apiaries.
- Inspected 7,179 colonies in 810 apiaries.
- Diagnosed 20 cases of American Foul Brood disease involving 65 colonies.
- Pollination assistance and grading of over 1,400 colonies for shipments of honeybees for California pollination.
- Distributed supplemental corn syrup and replacement bees to drought-hit beekeepers in all 55 counties.
- Distributed Apiguard treatments to registered beekeepers for the prevention of Varroa Mites.

Equine Management

The year 2007 marked the return of the Equine Management Program to the Department. The Equine Program in West Virginia has an economic value of over \$8 million dollars with an estimated 60,000 animals in the industry.

The equine management specialist traveled the state and met the owners of various equine businesses. This industry includes all aspects from 4-H members and 4-H riding clubs, commercial stables, equipment owners, feed businesses and veterinarians.

Continued emphasis was placed on the development and distribution of the *Equine Events Calendar*, *Equine Industry Directory* and the *Equine Management Handbook*.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The program distributed \$494,630 worth of federally funded vouchers to income-eligible senior citizens throughout West Virginia. In addition, Phase II of the program allowed for the distribution of five-pound bags of West Virginia apples to homebound senior citizens in the Title IIIIC program (meals on Wheels).

Free Services

	Product development
	Strategic planning
	Raw material and resource identification
	Water activity, pH and nutritional analysis services
	Packaging and labeling assistance
	FDA approval assistance
	Partnership agency involvement
	Product education and process training
Marketing and sales consulting	Contact Marketing & Development at 304-558-2210
Product promotion opportunities	
Distribution avenue assistance	

West Virginia Farmers' Markets

The Department of Agriculture manages three farmers' markets throughout West Virginia: Outdoor market at Capitol Market, Logan Farmers' Market and Inwood Farmers' Market.

Promotional activities included "Capitol Market Goes to the Capitol," with vendors setting up shop at the State Capitol Complex select days during the months of July and August.



Inwood Market began a remodeling program during the spring and summer of 2008, and featured several open houses throughout the year, which produced an increase in

sales. Product lines were increased to 140.

Inwood Market continues to be the only farmers' market with biodiesel fuel available for purchase. The Market has established a loyal customer base by selling the product by the gallon, rather than by the barrel.

Logan Market continues to experience good growth from the local community, as well as from visitors to Chief Logan State Park and ATV riders from the Hatfield McCoy trail.

The market has an annual fall event entitled "A Taste of the State" that includes product sampling and apple butter making, along with a popular Spring Fest.

Food Distribution

The mission of the Food Distribution Program is to provide federally purchased food to West Virginia Child Nutrition Programs and qualified recipient agencies that serve low-income and needy families. Food is provided by the USDA and through the Fresh Produce Program of the Department of Defense Farm-to-School Program.

Deliveries are made to recipient agencies at least monthly and, more often, twice monthly. The Food Distribution Program operates from a 66,000-square-foot leased warehouse. More than 12,000-square-foot of that is freezer and cooler space.

Recipient Agencies:

- 701 schools.
- 53 additional child nutrition programs.
- 22 child and adult care feeding programs.
- Two food banks serving 301 reported food pantries and 59 homeless shelters, two soup kitchens and other charitable organizations.
- 1,193 agencies in total that receive deliveries.

Livestock Grading and Marketing

The Division provided unbiased grading services to approximately 12,000 farmers and collected livestock market news at 12 West Virginia auction markets on 90,000 head of livestock. Staff also supervised 10,000 acres of state-owned farm properties that provide beef and potatoes for 19 state institutions.

Twenty-two percent of the total gross revenue to farmers in West Virginia comes from the production of beef cattle, and Division programs help producers maximize the value of their herds through marketing and development programs.



These activities provided \$14 million of added cash proceeds of beef cattle in 2007. This outstanding marketing program has been extremely successful and continues to see growth at approximately 2-5 percent per year.