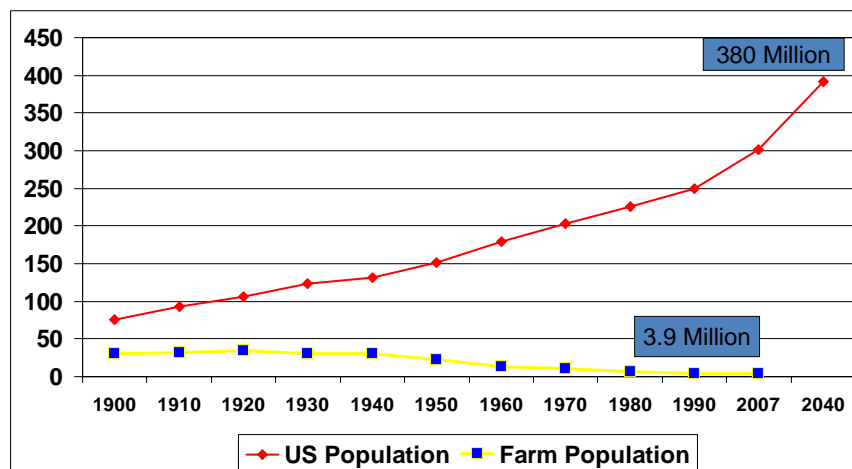


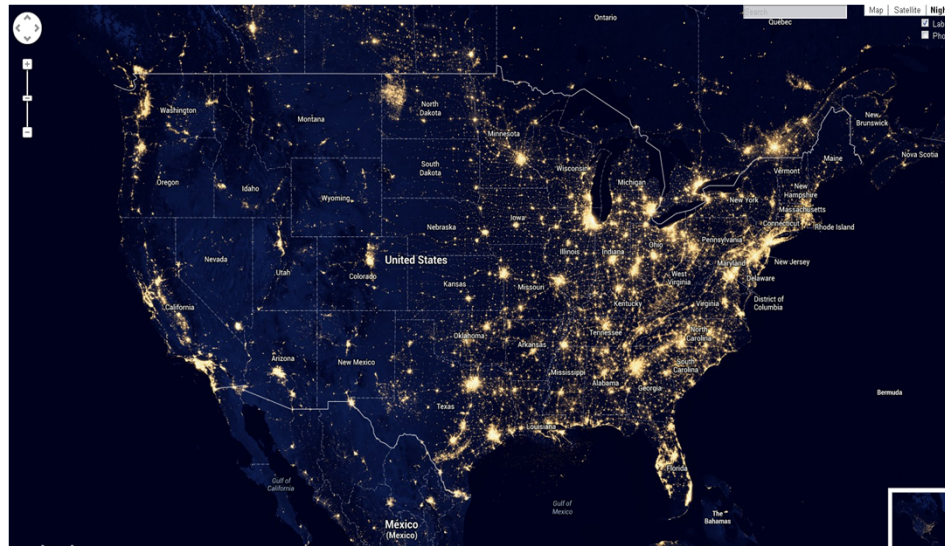
Agriculture as an Economic Development Tool for Local Communities

Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional
Commission
2013 Living Towns Workshops
Spencer Neale, VA Farm Bureau Federation

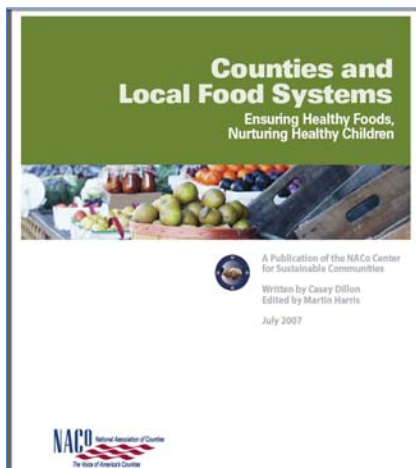
US population trends = growing
demand for food



Population Growth = Growing Demand



A New Driver – Food from a “Systems” Approach



Food Systems consist of all the interdependent steps...that go into producing the food that is grown and raised in a region. This includes: planting, raising, harvesting, storing, transporting, processing, packaging, marketing, and retailing of food, and involves farmers, suppliers, buyers, government and other stakeholders.

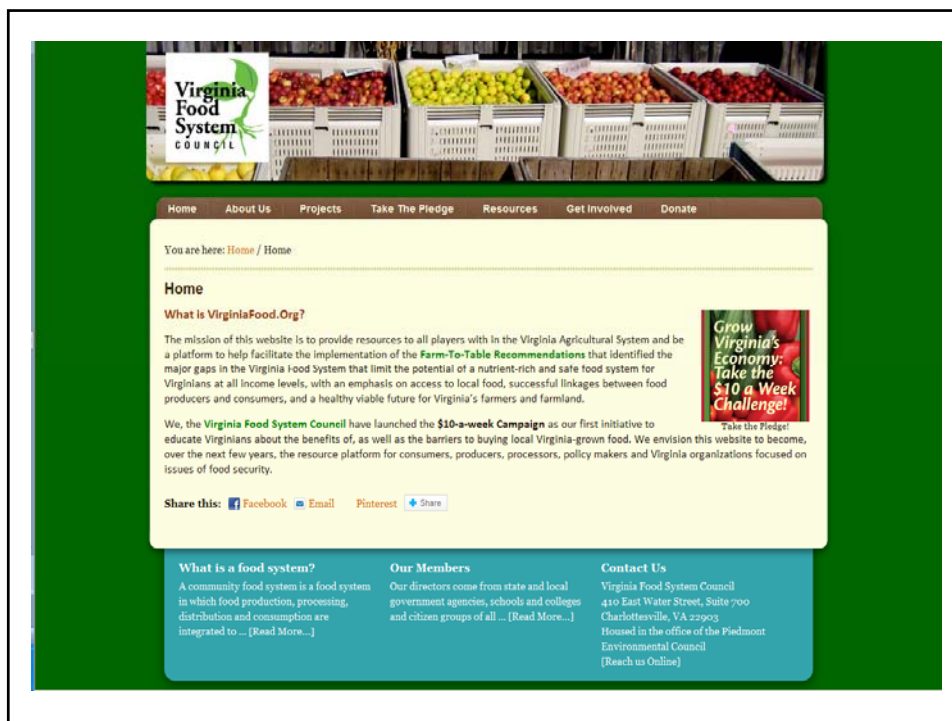
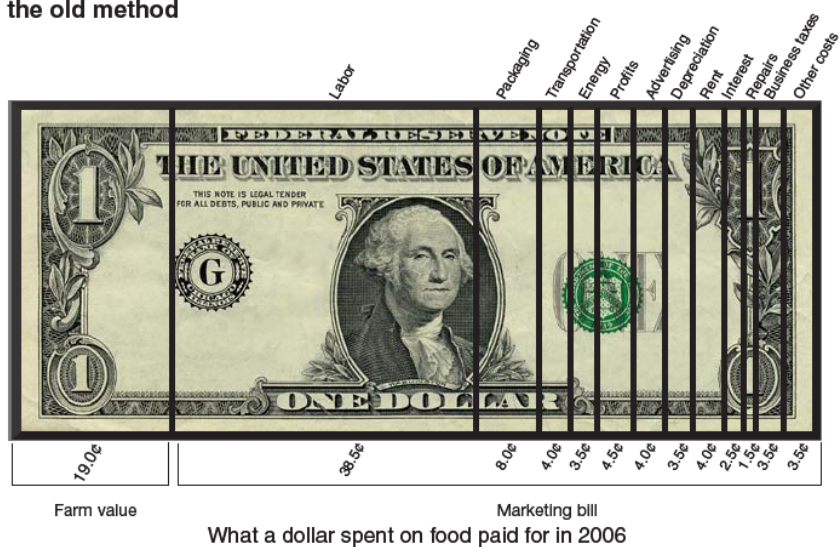


Figure 1
Farm share and marketing bill of the 2006 food dollar computed by the old method



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service.

Agriculture in the RRRC region

- 169,355 – 2102 population estimates
- \$179 million total value of ag products sold (2007)
- \$895,000,000 final value using Food Dollar
- 3,387 farms (2007)
- 609,000 acres in farmland
- 180 acres average farm size
- 343 farms with sales over \$50,000

Farm Productivity

	People per farm	Acres Farm- land p/p	Acre market value
U.S.	136	3	\$311
VA	162	1.05	\$358
CULPEPER	72	2.3	\$243
FAUQUIER	54	3.7	\$215
MADISON	23	7.8	\$196
RAPPAHANNOCK	18	9	\$115
ORANGE	62	3.26	\$727

Farm Bureau's Approach

- Recognized pending changes to marketing opportunities 10 years ago.
- Virginia agriculture extremely diverse
 - Close to large population centers
 - Excellent road systems
 - Access to ports for export
- Not a “large” vs. “small” farm issue
 - Growing population with static number of farms means increased demand and opportunities for all size operation
 - Virginia has healthy mix of small, medium and large farms

Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation & Rural Sustainability



Primary function to provide technical assistance in the form of grant writing, feasibility studies, business and marketing plans.



For projects, who do we work with/who needs to be at the table?

- Localities – often agricultural development officers
- VA Cooperative Extension
- VSU/VA Tech
- VDACS
- USDA
- Small Business Administration
- Small Business Development Centers
- Others


Transitioning – funding assistance for farmers and localities

- USDA Value Added Producer Grants
 - \$1.5 million for VA in last funding cycle
- USDA VDACS Specialty Crop Block Grants
- Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund USDA SARE Grants
- Regional Commissions and Elect Coops
 - More for economically distressed areas
- Tobacco Commission

Tobacco Commission Funded Projects With a Reach Outside the Region

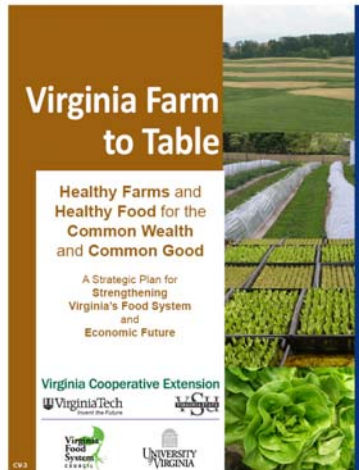


The screenshot shows the homepage of the Virginia Natural Fish Company. At the top is a navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT, MEET THE FARMERS, SHOP, MEDIA & EVENTS, DISTRIBUTION & RETAIL, CONTACT, BLOG, and TESTIMONIALS. Below the navigation bar is a section titled "From our farms to your table" featuring a photo of a pond and a list of products: Channel Catfish, Rainbow Trout, and Freshwater Prawns. Each product is described with its availability and where it can be found. At the bottom, there is a section for "Click here to visit our Online Shop" and a note about the company's commitment to quality and sustainability.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Virginia Food Works website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: ABOUT, SERVICES, WHERE TO PROCESS, and CONTACT. Below the navigation bar is a section titled "Who are we?" which describes the organization's mission and goals. It mentions that Virginia Food Works is a non-profit organization that works with existing and prospective producers of value-added food products to promote and support the local food system. The website also features a section for "What products can we assist with?" which lists various food products that the organization can help with, including fresh produce, value-added products, and food safety training.

Useful Publications



Laying the Foundation

Virginia Grown



Farmers Markets & CSA's



Buy Fresh Buy Local



Farm to School

Challenges to accessing opportunities at hand.

- Capitalization
- Management
- Labor
- Cooperative Marketing
- Infrastructure & Distribution
- Aggregation
- Convenience & Cost Factors (consumers)
- Competitive Factors Associated With Supply and Demand
- Farmers Competing With Each Other

REMEMBER- Keys to Success

- The farmers, entrepreneur, businessperson is/are the key component(s)!
- Economically viable, sustainable, and profitable models are critical.

Thank You

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