

# West Virginia Department of Agriculture

Walt Helmick, Commissioner



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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **2016 WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE TO BE HONORED BY WVDA AT STATE FAIR OF WEST VIRGINIA**

**Charleston, W.Va.** – Four women will be honored at this year's State Fair of West Virginia for their contributions to agriculture. The 2016 Women in Agriculture awards will be handed out on Sunday, August 14 by the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) during a reception.

This year's honorees come from all different backgrounds. As farmers, foresters and educators, the inductees have made great strides in their respective fields and inspired a new generation of women to continue in their paths.

"All four of our inductees are talented, hard-working and dedicated to improving agriculture in West Virginia," stressed Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. "These ladies are wonderful examples of what it takes to make agriculture a success."

The biographies of the honorees will be featured in the Agriculture Annex throughout this year's fair. This year's inductees are:

**Barbara McWhorter** -- McWhorter attended WVU in the early 1980s and found her passion in forestry. She has served as the NRCS State Forester since 1996 and has devoted her career to advocating for the conservation of natural resources, and specifically, for forest resources as a renewable resource. Her knowledge of conservation education, technology development/training and conservation programs has been passed on to thousands of landowners. Barbara developed the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP) which has provided more than a million dollars of financial and technical assistance to hundreds of state woodlands. She was also the key developer of forestry skills materials used at the International Envirothon Competitions hosted in WV. In addition, she was a collaborator on the creation of the WV Forest Stewardship Partnership, which is dedicated to managing vegetation and soil on state and private lands. She also serves as an agency provided Adjunct Professor with WVU's Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design. Barbara and her husband Ralph are parents to three sons, Tyler, Hunter and Bryce.

**Charlotte Hoover** -- Hoover is a 6th generation farmer in Pendleton County where she owns and operates 390 acres as C and Double D Farm. Her operation consists of 40 cow/calf pairs, approximately 75 sheep and a few goats. She also currently provides a home for several peacocks and has been known to have emus in the past. While maintaining the livestock herds, Charlotte is conscientious of the environment. She has constructed a waste storage facility and a feeder barn. A natural trout stream running through the property has been fenced and improved with tree plantings and stream bank reinforcements. A rotational grazing schedule is also used to maintain pasture health. Access to two caves on the farm have been fenced to protect the endangered Virginia Big Ear Bat. In addition to the regular farming activities, Charlotte is instrumental in the Potomac Valley Partnership. She has served as Minority Advisor for the Pendleton County USDA Farm Service Agency and will serve as Chairperson for the next three years. Charlotte resides in Moyers, WV, with her fur babies, Suzy, Jessica and Fifty. She enjoys frequent visits from her daughter, Danielle and new granddaughter, Dani.

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**Donna Brooke-Alt** -- At only 20 years old, Donna was faced with a difficult decision after her father's untimely death. With a passion for farming, she and her brother decided to continue Brookedale Holsteins, the dairy operation their father had started. When times became tough, she and her husband, Donnie, diversified by adding vegetables, a corn maze, and then greenhouses. Currently, Brookedale Farms consists of agritainment, greenhouses, cropping operation and most recently added, an event barn. Although Donna's brother has taken over the dairy operations with his son, she still has a vested interest and manages the books. In addition to staying busy on the farm, Donna is one of the first women directors for Farm Credit of the Virginia's board and has served in that position for the past 13 years. Donna resides in Fort Ashby with her husband, Donnie, and sons, Devon and Derek.

**Vera Page** -- Page's love of agriculture began at three years old when her grandad would take her on horseback to salt the cattle on Sunday afternoons. It was a simple tradition that encouraged Vera to become a proponent for agriculture. Vera was the 4th generation to graduate from West Virginia University. While at WVU, Vera participated on the livestock judging team. She was the 1974-75 Angus Queen, the 1975 Mineral County Fair Queen and 1978 Forest Festival Princess. Following graduation in 1979, she was the first female to be hired straight out of college to serve as a County Director for the Farm Service Agency. She served in that role for 34 years prior to her recent retirement. Currently, Vera, along with her family, own and operate a total of 2,004 acres. Their operation focuses on registered Angus cattle. Vera resides in Burlington with her husband Howard and daughters, Margaret and Sarah.

For more information on the WVDA's Women in Agriculture program or the honorees, contact WVDA Communications Officer Buddy Davidson at [bdavidson@wvda.us](mailto:bdavidson@wvda.us) or 304-558-3708/304-541-5932.  
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