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**NEWS RELEASE**  
**February 6, 2017**

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## **WVDA ANNOUNCES NEW AGRICULTURE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**

**Charleston, W.Va.** – Today, West Virginia Agriculture Commissioner Kent Leonhardt has announced a new division within the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA). Agriculture Business Development will now be a standing division within the department under the direction of the executive division.

“Agriculture is a business and it is about time we start treating the industry as such,” said Commissioner Kent Leonhardt. “Our Agriculture Business Development Division will act as any other business development organization does. They will focus on aiding individuals to start new and expand already existing agriculture businesses.”

The new division will be responsible for the program oversight of the following areas: Agri-Business Development, Farmers’ Market Development, Veterans to Agriculture Programs Development, Food Distribution Program, West Virginia Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, International and Domestic Marketing Programming and the GHP/GAP Audit Program.

“With the creation of this new division we are putting a greater emphasis on helping new agricultural businesses start up and the existing ones grow,” stated Chief of Staff Norm Bailey. “With that in mind, the goal of the new division will be providing essential tools and strategies to our agriculture industries.”

Under the previous administration the Communications and Marketing divisions were combined into one division. With the restructuring of the Agriculture Department, Communications and Marketing will once again be separate with the Marketing portion of the division now falling under Agriculture Business Development as a sub-division. Additionally, there will be two other sub-divisions, Veterans and Development.

The director position for the new division has been posted and interested applicants can find more information at:

<http://www.agriculture.wv.gov/resources/Documents/Director%20of%20Agriculture%20Business%20Development%20%201-24-2017.pdf>.

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