

# West Virginia Department of Agriculture Business Development Division

The **WVDA Business Development Division** supports the economic development of West Virginia's agriculture industry by fostering the growth of agribusinesses in domestic and international markets. Business Development works with agripreneurs, including veterans and youth, to assist in the areas of market development and opportunity, marketing, technical assistance and training/educational programs.

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*WV Agriculture, at a glance*

**20,000 Total Farms • 3,600,00 Total Farmed Acres • \$241M in Ag Exports (2017)**

## Business & Production Planning

### WVDA Planning

**Coordinators** act as local liaisons, coordinators, and facilitators, helping develop agriculture projects and assist agribusinesses. They participate in economic and business development efforts, while addressing food insecurities and building resiliency in local communities.



## Veterans & Warriors to Agriculture



The **Veterans & Warriors to Agriculture** program's mission is to recruit, re-train, and mentor men and women currently serving, or those who have served our country, for new career opportunities in agriculture. From business planning to capital investment, the program assists servicemen and women in the transition from the battlefield to agriculture enterprises.

[vetstoag@wvda.us](mailto:vetstoag@wvda.us)

## West Virginia Grown

The Business Development Division houses the **West Virginia Grown Program**, the state's premier branding program for agriculture products. The West Virginia Grown logo indicates to buyers that the product was grown or processed with quality ingredients (in the Mountain State), and that their dollars are going right back into the communities where they live. West Virginia Grown is an important component in helping grow and diversify the state's economy, as well as expand local food systems throughout West Virginia. [wvgrown@wvda.us](mailto:wvgrown@wvda.us)



## Product Label Review

Business Development Staff offer assistance in product development by way of label review of foods and cosmetics made in West Virginia. WVDA review addresses compliance with federal labeling requirements (FDA Guidelines) which include The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.



[productlabeling@wvda.us](mailto:productlabeling@wvda.us)



# WVDA BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

*And there's more!*

## AGRITOURISM

Best described as the intersection of agriculture and tourism, West Virginia agribusinesses offer visitors a unique on-farm education experience. West Virginia farms are open year-round for classic activities such as corn mazes, Christmas tree pick your owns, on-farm markets and pumpkin patches, as well as some unique features in agri-tainment including field ziplines and farm to table experiences.

Business Development staff provides agritourism business planning tools as well as cross promotion opportunities to help the Mountain State's rural communities engage in creating farm visits and extended stays.

**For more information:** [agtourism@wvda.us](mailto:agtourism@wvda.us).

## FOOD SAFETY

### Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Audits

The WVDA operates under a USDA cooperative agreement to perform GAP Audits for West Virginia farmers/producers. This third party audit is required by some wholesalers, hospitals, retail grocery chains, higher education institutions, and others to guarantee the highest degree of food safety and traceability.

Those participants who successfully complete a GAP audit are eligible to receive a reimbursement of up to 75 percent of the cost with a maximum of \$750. Reimbursement funds are issued via Specialty Crop Block Grant Funds.

### Produce Safety Rule/FSMA/On Farm Readiness Review

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and newly initiated Produce Safety Rule (PSR) reflect a whole-farm and nationwide effort to implement risk assessment, prevention and inspection as tools to ensure consumers a safe and healthy food supply.

WVDA participates in all components of the program through a cooperative agreement. The Business Development group provides outreach and education on these important programs.

**For more information:** [produce@wvda.us](mailto:produce@wvda.us).

**For a free On Farm Readiness Review program for qualified growers:** [ofrr@wvda.us](mailto:ofrr@wvda.us)

## MARKETING ASSISTANCE

The WVDA Business Development Division assists farmers and agribusinesses in both the start-up and growth phases by providing assistance in finding market opportunities, helping to develop marketing and business plans, providing product development and technical assistance, and by broadly promoting West Virginia agriculture, both domestically and abroad.

## USDA PROGRAMS

### Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG)

The purpose of the SCBG program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as "fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture."

The WVDA administers this program and disburses SCBG funds after a competitive review and selection process from an outside panel. Past recipients have ranged from universities to local elementary schools to commodity associations.

**For more information:** [grants@wvda.us](mailto:grants@wvda.us).

### Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

The SFMNP is a federally funded grant program, administered by the WVDA, that provides low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at participating farmers' markets and roadside stands.

Only farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands authorized by the WVDA may accept and redeem vouchers.

### Farm to School

Farm-to-School is a program that encourages the incorporation of local products into the school meal programs, integrates agricultural education into the classroom, and cultivates and expands school gardens.

West Virginia's Farm To School effort is spearheaded by the West Virginia Farm To School Community Development Group (WVFTSCDG), a public/private task force made up of the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, The West Virginia University Extension Small Farm Center, New Appalachian Farm and Research Center, and the Collaborative for the 21st Century Appalachia.