



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT *Division*

The WVDA Business Development Division fosters economic growth, consumer confidence, and sustainability in West Virginia's agricultural industry by empowering producers and agribusinesses through innovative solutions, dedicated resources, and cultivation of partnerships.

**The WVDA Business Development staff commit to:**

- Connecting agribusinesses with resources and market opportunities
- Increasing consumer awareness of WV agriculture
- Growing the next generation of agribusinesses
- Fostering economic impact through community partnerships
- Facilitating profitable agriculture business development



## West Virginia Grown

The Business Development Division houses the West Virginia Grown program, the state's premier branding program since 1986 for agricultural products. The West Virginia Grown logo provides an assurance to buyers that the product was grown, produced, processed, packaged or manufactured in the Mountain State, and that their dollars are going back into the local economy. West Virginia Grown is an important component in helping to grow and diversify the state's economy, as well as expand local food systems, while addressing food insecurities, throughout the state. **Join today as a producer, partner or supporter.** <https://agriculture.wv.gov/ag-business/west-virginia-grown/>. [wvgrown@wvda.us](mailto:wvgrown@wvda.us).



## Veterans & Heroes to Agriculture

Veterans & Heroes to Agriculture Program was designed to integrate law enforcement, fire fighters, emergency medical service, first responders, veterans, active-duty military, and/or their spouses and family into the field of agriculture, and support those currently working in this discipline. Classes and activities may include using post-mine land for agricultural development, promoting high tunnel crops and production, expanding the apiary industry, developing non-potentially hazardous food industries, exploring niche crops, raising livestock, increasing the aquaculture industry and helping veterans promote their agricultural products through farmers markets and cooperatives. <https://agriculture.wv.gov/ag-business/veterans-and-heroes-to-agriculture/>.



## 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.



## Business & Production Planning

WVDA Business Development staff act as liaisons, coordinators, and facilitators helping develop products and agribusinesses for producers, packers and manufacturers of food in the state. Business Development currently has six (6) Planning Coordinators located in various areas of the state to provide immediate and direct services to customers. In addition, there is also a meat and poultry and dairy coordinator specializing in these products.



## Product Label Review

Business Development Staff offer assistance in product development by way of a complimentary label review for foods made or packaged in WV. The WVDA review follows the labeling requirements of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Product Label review is required for all goods sold at a WV Farmers Markets and all products sold under the WV Grown Program. Contact, <https://agriculture.wv.gov/ag-business/label-review/>. [productlabeling@wvda.us](mailto:productlabeling@wvda.us).

## ✓ 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 marketing 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: <https://agriculture.wv.gov/ag-business/agritourism/>. [agritourism@wvda.us](mailto:agritourism@wvda.us).



## ✓ Marketing Assistance

WVDA Business Development offers assistance with:

- Branding & merchandising strategies
- Agricultural cooperatives & Producer Organization
- Digital Marketing & E-Commerce platform
- Promotional Activities
- Value-added products

## USDA Programs

### ✓ Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI)

The Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program is designed to build resilience in the food supply chain, particularly in the middle stages of production, processing, and distribution. It aims to create better market opportunities for small farms and food businesses, support the development of value-added products, and ensure fair prices and wages while creating new job opportunities.

The WVDA administers this program and provides funding for both infrastructure and equipment grants to build resilience across the middle-of-the supply-chain while strengthening local and regional food systems.

For more information: <https://agriculture.wv.gov/resilient-foodsystemsinfrastructure/>



### The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program

The Farm to School Program is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture that encourages the incorporation of local products into the school meal program, integrates agricultural education into the classroom, and cultivates and expands school gardens.

The WVDA, in conjunction with the WV Department of Education, staff the Farm to School Alliance, which aims to strengthen farm to school networks and partnerships. For more information and resources: [www.wvfarmtoschools.com](http://www.wvfarmtoschools.com).

## ✓ 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 annually after a competitive review and selection process to eligible participants. Past subgrantees have received funding for such things as community based honey extraction equipment and specialty flowers. 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 benefits that are exchanged for eligible foods at authorized farmers' markets and roadside stands. For more information: [seniorfarmersmarket@wvda.us](mailto:seniorfarmersmarket@wvda.us).

Seniors may apply for benefits beginning June 1 at their local senior center. Benefits are available for redemption June 1 - October 31st. Farmers can apply to be a vendor and receive vouchers on/or about March 1st. Visit [agriculture.wv.gov/ag-business/seniorfarmers-market-program](https://agriculture.wv.gov/ag-business/seniorfarmers-market-program).