

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

What does Agriculture Day/Week Stand For In Virginia Beach?

“Learn the Facts”

What does Agricultural Day/Week stand for?

It is a day (*March 15, 2011*) and week (*March 13-19*) to recognize and celebrate the abundance of food provided by agriculture. Every year producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies, and countless others across America join together to recognize the many contributions by agriculture.

What does agriculture mean to Virginia Beach?

As stated by our leadership, agriculture plays a vital role as the third key industry of our local economy. The estimated economic impact of agriculture was \$122 million in 2010 and the five year average was \$114.2 million. Agriculture in our city is a very diverse business consisting of various size farm operations, such as: soybean, corn and wheat farms, livestock farms, fruit & vegetable farms, farm stands, and equestrian operations. The City's year around “Farmers Market” is home to fourteen full time tenants that provide a venue to shop local Ag products and take part in Ag education (*Heritage Center events, Farm Days, Fun on the Farm*) as well as over 100 annual events that provide free entertainment for all ages (*Hoe Downs, Car Cruising etc...*)

Other note worthy accomplishments by agriculture in Virginia Beach this past year would be:

- During the calendar year 2010, the ARP program enrolled 572.04 acres of farm and forest land (*56 development rights purchased*) to bring the number of protected acres to 8,621.81 acres. So far through mid March, 209.85 acres have closed in 2011 bringing the total acreage enrolled in ARP to 8,831.66.
- The Virginia Beach Farmers Market had 103 annual events for 2010 with an estimated 500,000 plus visitors to the market. For 2011 there are 109 events planned so far.
- Brand new to the Market in 2010: Taste of the Market Tours and Farm to Table tours which brought in over 250 visitors through these piloted programs in the first non-advertised year.
- Farmers Market Educational programs had 1,300 area school children take part in the Rural Heritage Educational Program last year. Our goal is 2,500 in 2011 as well as adding more volunteer help to our AG Education Team.
- In 2010, the Virginia Beach 4-H Program enrolled 5,178 youth, 542 adults and 45 teen volunteers in its programs. Volunteers in the 4-H Program provided 18,269 hours of service valued at \$356,428; ranking Virginia Beach the second largest 4-H Program in the State.
- In 2010, there were 236 active Virginia Beach Master Gardener (*VBMG*) volunteers that collectively contributed 24,793 hours of service valued at \$518,917 and provided horticultural information to over 32,014 residents. (*continued on page 2*)

**To learn more about local agribusiness visit
www.VBgov.com/agriculture.**

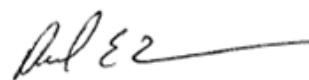
***Celebrate Agriculture Week
Eat locally grown products!***

What does Agriculture Day/Week Stand For In Virginia Beach? *(continued)*

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- VBMG volunteers worked in 24 program areas including: “Ready, Set, Grow,” an environmental stewardship program which reached 2,093 Virginia Beach City Public School students and teachers; “VBMG Speakers Bureau” which delivered 84 presentations to 2,058 members of civic groups; and the “VBMG Help Desk” which provided information via email, telephone, or personal contact to 1,017 citizens.
- More than 709 college students and adults attended financial literacy workshops conducted through our Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) program to learn how to develop and improve financial skills.
- A total of 933 youth participated in various financial literacy workshops and seminars offered through FCS program.
- The Reality Store, another FCS youth program, reached more than 850 students. The simulation provided students with opportunities to experience what financial responsibilities they may encounter when they reach adulthood. Volunteers in the FCS programs provided service valued at more than \$12,200.
- Our Nutrition Program Assistants reached more than 17,000 Virginia Beach residents, teaching them how to shop, purchase and prepare good nutritional meals for their families.
- The Virginia Dare Soil and Water Conservation District 9th Annual Tire Recycling Project collected over 2,122 tires in 2010. This program saved over \$19,200 by not having to pay disposal fees at the regional landfill as well as eliminated tires from being taken to the local landfill. The 2011 Program takes place March 16th and 17th.
- The 2010 Plastic Pesticide Container Recycling Program collected 25,807 gallons, equal to 5.2 tons which represents 3,406 containers, earning our 4-H Clubs \$1,057.70 for their participation.
- “Why Not Wednesday” at the Sandler Center created an opportunity for our farmers to join the Wednesday evening event and market their produce. The result was an eighteen week farmers market as part of the Sandler Center festivities that brought fresh locally grown produce to the Town Center area from mid May to Labor Day. The weekly event allowed tourist and Town Center residents to take advantage of the fresh produce and provided first hand exposure for our local Ag community. Come visit the Farmers Market at “Why Not Wednesday” in 2011!
- 2011 will be the 28th year of the Pungo Strawberry Festival which features the Virginia Beach 4-H Livestock Show and Sale annual event. The 2010 Festival had an estimated attendance of 175,000.
- Buy Fresh Buy Local is in its 2nd year of operation and creating a strong emphasis/awareness to eating and buying local.

These are only a few of the accomplishments we have seen here in Virginia Beach over the past year and we look forward to another great year. Spring is here and the farmers will start working their fields for planting corn and many of the fruits and vegetables are either in the ground or will be soon. Give thanks to your farmers for their contribution to this great community.



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