



**Virginia Foundation for Agriculture,
Innovation & Rural Sustainability**
A Cooperative Development Center

**Supporting value-added
agriculture in Virginia**

vafairs.com



Our Team



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*Ag Development
Specialist*



Our Services

Cooperative Development

- Assist groups forming cooperative businesses

Business Development

- Grant application assistance
- Enterprise research, white papers, and user guides
- Feasibility studies
- Business planning
- Strategic planning
- Legal structures and risk management
- Renewable energy and Energy efficiency
- Ag development, entrepreneurial workshops, and seminars

Farm Relief Fund

Bull Pen

Our Audiences

- Farmers
- Local Governments
- IDAs
- State & Federal Agencies
- Rural Businesses
- College Students
- General Public

Our Partners



Committed to the future of rural communities.



Our Clients

Aquaculture

- Cherrystone Aquafarms
- Rappahannock River Oysters
- Mid-Atlantic Aquatic Technology
- VA Aquafarmers Network, LLC

Craft Beverages

- Farm wineries (numerous)
- Blue Bee Cider
- Stable Craft Brewing
- Virginian Distillery Company
- White Oak Mountain Meadery

Dairy

- Mt. Crawford Creamery
- Harvue Farms
- Homestead Cheese
- Homestead Creamery
- Moo Thru
- Richlands Creamery

Meats

- Kelly Turkeys
- Papa Weaver's Pork
- Shenandoah Processing/Shenandoah Valley Organic
- Alleghany Meats
- Grayson's Natural

Produce

- Agriberry
- Messick's Farm Market
- Miller Farms Market
- Good Earth Peanut Co.
- Cullipher Farm
- SVPA

Ag business complexes

- Olde Dominion Ag Foundation & Ag Center
- Highlands Agriculture Center
- Appalachian Ag Exposition Center (APEX)

Other Ag business

- Central Virginia Poultry Cooperative
- Tangier Island- Oil



Educational Resources & Special Events



- Virginia Agritourism Conference
- Virginia Food & Beverage Expo
- Virginia Farm Bureau Annual Convention
- Attend, Speak, Sponsor at 40+ conference/year throughout Virginia

VIRGINIA FARM RELIEF FUND

- Established 2022
- Emergency Fund of VAFAIRS
- Accept monetary donations
- Allocate donations in event of natural disaster, application available
- **Trigger:** United States Department of Agriculture declares a Virginia county as a primary or contiguous eligible county



Grant & Loan Programs

Federal Programs

- USDA RD Value-added Producer Grant
- USDA RD Business & Industry Loans
- USDA RD Rural Business Development Grant
- USDA RD Community Facilities Programs
- USDA RD Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Grant
- USDA RD Meat & Poultry Processing Expansion Program
- USDA AMS Local Food Promotion Program
- USDA AMS Local Meat Capacity Grant
- USDA AMS Farm Market Promotion Program
- USDA AMS Meat Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant
- USDA AMS Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program
- USDA FNS Farm to School Grant
- USDA/VDACS Specialty Crop Block Grant
- USDA NIFA Rural Cooperative Development
- USDA NIFA Small Business Industry Research Grant
- USDA NIFA Community Food Projects
- USDA Urban Agriculture & Innovative Production Grants
- Southeast Dairy Innovation Initiative (SDBII)
- SBA Loans
- FSA Microloan Program

State Programs

- Virginia Cattle Industry Board
- Virginia Tobacco Commission
- Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund



Grants

- A financial assistance support mechanism providing money, property or other direct assistance in lieu of money, or both, to an eligible entity to carry out an approved project or activity in support of a public purpose and not the direct benefit of the grantor.
- Grants are not “free” money.
- Grant awards are conditional, the grantee must comply with grant terms
- Grants typically require a match of cash or valued in-kind goods/services
- Grant awards may be subject to state/federal income taxes
- Once a grant is awarded, the recipient is responsible for managing the grant funds and ensuring that the project or initiative is carried out according to the grant agreement. This may involve submitting progress reports, tracking expenses, and meeting specific project milestones.

Common Grant Requirements

- Proof of Eligibility
- Taxpayer ID (EIN, SSN, etc.)
- IRS Determination Letter or State Corporation Commission Cert. of Good Standing
- Dun & Bradstreet Data-Universal-Numbering-System Identifier (DUNS Number)
- SAM.GOV UEI, System for Award Management Unique Entity Identifier
- UEI is required for Federal grants and registering on www.grants.gov
- Articles of Incorporation or By-laws or Self-Certification
- Application Procedure
 - Request for Application (website or Federal Register)
 - Application Form (paper or digital)
 - Application Deadline(s)

General Application Tips

- Multiple private and government grants available
- Determine your financial need and research grant availability
- Research grant program requirements and previous awards
- Contact the Grantor prior to RFA announcement
- Identify a third-party Grant Applicant, if necessary
- Engage a grant writer if necessary (consultant, SBDC, lender, etc.)
- Begin working on grant application as early as possible
- Don't change your business to "chase" grant dollars
- Answer all applicable questions
- Answer all applicable Optional questions
- Answer all applicable questions thoroughly
- Check spelling, grammar and math

Application Tips- Narrative

- Contact Grantor prior to RFA with general/program questions re: your project
- Research the grant thoroughly to see if it fits your needs
- **Be sure both You and your Project are eligible for the specific grant**
- **Follow Directions**
 - Word and page limits, font size, and margin widths
 - Place attachments in proper appendix and in proper sequence
 - EX. Multiple Federal agencies require Form SF-424, but the requirements for completing SF-424 will vary by agency and grant program
- Answer all applicable questions in a concise but thorough manner with as much detail as possible in the space provided
- Cite third-party data and reports to validate your claims
 - Are additional third party documents required, like a feasibility study
- Include both letters of support and commitment
- First impressions count, check spelling and grammar
- **Answer the questions**

Application Tips- Budget

- Avoid modifying your business/project to “chase” grant funds
- Be certain that requested expenses are eligible
- Sometimes limits are imposed on expense types, indirect expenses and match
- What type of Match is required or allowable?
- Federal grants, know the difference between Supply and Equipment
- Describe the budget item as required by grant which may include:
 - Description of the item and its project role
 - Brand and capacity, if applicable
 - Per unit cost, number of units to be purchased
- Check your math, be sure all numbers match across ALL submitted documents

Value-Added Producer Grant Program

USDA- Rural Development Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP)

- Nationally competitive federal grant program
 - Funded by Farm Bill
- Created to help **farmers** start or expand value-added, producer-owned businesses
- **Who can apply?**

Farmers, ranchers, fishermen, loggers, farmer/rancher co-ops, producer groups, and majority-controlled producer businesses who:

- Produce and own more than 50% of the subject agricultural commodity
- Do not contract out production of agricultural commodity
- Maintain ownership through the sale of the value-added product

Priority funding for veterans, beginning and socially-disadvantaged farmers, small/medium family farms, and farmer cooperatives





What is Value-Added?

- **Local Foods:** Commodity sold within state or within 400 miles
- **Change in Physical State:** Commodity processing (grapes into wine or retail meats)
- **Produced in a Manner that Enhances Value:** Non-standard agricultural production like organic, grass-fed, free-range
- **Physical Segregation:** Non-GMO, identity preserved, no-rBGH
- **On Farm Renewable Energy:** dairy manure into methane and electricity generated on the farm, or corn into biodiesel generated on the farm

*Generation of energy from wind, solar, geothermal or hydro sources are not eligible.



VAPG Grants

PLANNING GRANT

AWARD MAX: \$75,000

1 Year

Pays for: Business plans, feasibility studies, marketing plans, legal evaluations, and the like

WORKING CAPITAL GRANT

AWARD MAX: \$250,000

Two Tiers: <\$50k and >\$50-250k

Up to 3 Years

Pays for: Post-harvest costs including direct processing, marketing, and operating costs: inventory, packaging, labeling, supplies, non-family labor, utilities, legal and accounting expenses, credit card fees, farmers market fees, etc.

****All working capital applications over \$50,000 require a business plan. A feasibility study & business plan are required if applicant has less than 2 years producing and selling the value-added product and is applying for more than \$50,000.**



Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative (SDBII)

The Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative (SDBII), with support from USDA AMS, offers grants to dairy businesses in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico.

The program provides grant awards to revitalize and spur innovation in the dairy industry across the Southeast. This includes grants to support precision technology investment, farm infrastructure improvement, specialty processing equipment investment, exploration of alternative revenue, transition planning, and business management.

Two rounds, Spring and Fall. Spring is Farm Business and Fall is Dairy Processing



SDBII Grants

SPRING ROUND: DAIRY FARM BUSINESS GRANTS

Farm Infrastructure Improvement Grant

\$100,000 maximum award

25% matching funds requirement

- Improvements to existing facilities to reduce the impact of heat stress and seasonal milk production swings
- Investments in raw milk storage, cooling capacity, and/or transportation efficiency
- Modernization and improvements to milk harvest
- Improvements to feed and forage management and storage opportunities
- Improvements to animal housing and environments
- Water, waste, and manure management improvements
- Investments to improve farm business structure

Precision Technology and Management Grant

\$150,000 maximum award

25% matching funds requirement

- Improve animal health, well-being, and/or performance
- Enhance labor efficiency
- Reduce energy costs or environmental impact (i.e. carbon-footprint or GHG emissions)
- Increase utilization of the farm's land base



SDBII Grants

FALL ROUND: DAIRY PROCESSING BUSINESS GRANTS

- Diversify dairy product markets to reduce risk and develop higher uses for dairy products
- Promote business development that diversifies farmer income through processing and marketing innovation
- Encourage the use of regional milk production
- Value-chain and commodity innovation and facility and process updates for dairy process
- Product development, packaging, and marketing of dairy products

Beginning Processor Grant

\$30,000 maximum award

**No matching funds
requirement**

Project Examples

- A feasibility study for a new value-added venture on an existing dairy farm.
- Business and leadership training for an existing value-added dairy business.
- Food safety plan for a new or existing value-added dairy business.
- Forming a corporate structure and/or succession plan for a new or existing value added dairy business
- Hiring a Certified Crop Advisor to consult on grazing practices

Specialty Equipment Investment Grant

\$150,000 maximum award

**25% matching funds
requirement**

Project Examples

- Purchase of a vat pasteurizer to create a new line of flavored milks.
- Purchase of a cream separator to produce cream products.
- Purchase of a new cheese drain table to increase capacity of cheese production



Results

(3 years)

\$48+ million economic impact
to rural communities

45+ Business Plans &
Marketing Plans

15+ Feasibility Studies

75+ Grant Applications

500+ New/Beginning Farmers Assisted

15+ Cooperatives Assisted/Established

2 White Papers

10+ Producer Workshops/Events

\$90,000+ Awarded in Bull Pen



Let's Get Started!

- 1) Meet with VA FAIRS staff to discuss eligibility, business details, application assistance, and project needs
- 2) Complete and return our client questionnaire w/ staff visit
- 3) Client Contract Signed and Down Payment Received

Our Services:

Write grant application and accompanying documentation.
Support through submission, award, and reimbursement.

Fees for Service:

1.5% Grant Request + **25%** Additional Documentation (ie: Business Plan)





Contact Us

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