Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Horticulture & Produce Marketing Programs

Rick Baker; rick.baker@vdacs.virginia.gov

Getting Started In the Greenhouse School

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Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Division of Marketing = Grading Services, International Trade and Domestic Sales & Market Development

Responsibility: Create, maintain and expand markets for Virginia agricultural products

Domestic Sales and Market Development is represented by (7) regional market development managers including:

Butch Nottingham – eastern region (produce)  757-787-5876
Phil Hickman – northeast region (grains)  804-371-6157
Bill Scrugss – south central region (tobacco)  434-432-7770
Danny Neel – southwest region (cattle, produce)  276-228-5501
Dave Robishaw – northwest region (tree fruit, wine)  434-984-0573
Gail Moody Milteer – southeast region (peanuts, cotton, produce)  757-569-1100
Rick Baker – middle Atlantic region (horticulture, produce)  301-275-2077

Key Promotional Programs

Virginia’s Finest & Virginia Grown

Shippers Directory, Food and Beverage Show and Directory
What We Do Day to Day:

Meet with growers getting started or wanting to expand sales/markets.

Contact and meet with buyers - Conduct buyers tours

Take growers to meet with buyers

Keep up with industry trends and requirements – quality – packaging (GAP – Good Agricultural Practices)

Attend and participate in industry trade shows and special events:

- Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit
- Middle Atlantic Nursery Trade Show
- Specialty Food Shows
- Southeast Produce Show
- Canadian Produce Marketing Association Trade Show
- Chain store annual grower meetings
- Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show
- Numerous seminars and workshops

USDA Specialty Crop Grants

Economic Development Grants for Larger Projects

Work with and advise agriculture commodity groups: Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association, Virginia Green Industry Council, Virginia Wine Board, Grain Growers Association, Virginia Apple Growers, Virginia Christmas Tree Growers, Virginia Pumpkin Growers and more.

Where to Sell What You Grow

Do your homework and be ‘very’ good at what you do to compete and be successful

Contact buyers before you plant

Grow what the market needs

Sell at the farm – roadside stand

Farmers Markets – require time and personality

CSA – community supported agriculture – pick up - deliver – supply

Wholesale buyers and brokers (Virginia Produce, Produce Source Partners, Lancaster Foods, Coastal Sunbelt, Hearn Kirkwood, Shemins, rewholesale plant yards)
Contract Growing (Parker Farms)

DSD – direct store delivery

Sales to retail buyers - regional buyers, corporate buyers

- Whole Foods
- Safeway
- AHOLD (Martins, Giant)
- Kroger
- Harris Teeter
- Food Lion
- Wegmans
- The Fresh Market
- Military Produce Group
- Farm Fresh (Super Valu)
- Costco
- Garden Centers
- Wholesalers
- Landscape Maintenance, Developers, Government, Designers, Home Depot

Current popularity of ‘locally grown’

Restaurants – more are promoting fresh local produce & foods

Produce Auctions – Southeast Farmers Market, Shenandoah Valley Harrisonburg

Organic or natural or conventional

Flower and plant sales are very competitive and seasonal – bedding plants, seasonal blooming, specialty plants (orchids), new varieties, branding programs.

Summary

Start at a reasonable size (affordable) and grow into your comfort level . . . . .

Contact several buyers ahead of time to work with you . . . . .

Locate outlets for your good and better as well as your best products . . . . .

Don’t hesitate to ask questions of other growers, VDACS, Extension and the colleges . . . . .

Have a passion for what grow – it will show in the final results . . . . . .