



# Virginia Cooperative Extension

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## Situation Analysis Report



## Isle of Wight

# 2018

### UNIT Extension Staff

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## Introduction

The Isle of Wight County Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) office conducted a situational analysis in 2018. The purpose of the analysis was to help identify key issues within Isle of Wight County that Extension may be able to address through programming efforts. Isle of Wight does not have an active Extension Leadership Council (ELC) so we collected data through an online survey and focus groups. We also utilized our community stakeholders/advisors and their input for the analysis.

Using data and guidance from the VCE Situational Analysis Resources a survey was developed to distribute to the residents of Isle of Wight County. The survey asked about several different issues and asked the participant to rank them for importance. It also provided a blank area for participants to write in comments or concerns. The survey was available to the public through our social media accounts, sent through the county list-serv, distributed to all volunteer groups and mailing lists, and advertised through newspapers. We had 46 total responses to the survey. The results were analyzed and the key issues for Isle of Wight County were identified.

## Unit Profile

Isle of Wight County is located in Southeastern Virginia, approximately 75 miles from Richmond. It is located in the Hampton Roads region as well as in the Virginia Beach Metropolitan Statistical Area. Isle of Wight County is 319 square miles in size and houses 36,552 individuals within the county.

Isle of Wight has a population of 36,552 (2017), which has increased since 2007. Several of Isle of Wight's demographics have increased since 2007. The Caucasian population has increased since 2007 by 2.09% and the African American population has also increased by 1%. Other races include Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian. The county houses 17,129 male citizens and 17,963 female citizens. It consists of 13,902 households with the median age being 44.5 years old. The education level is a high school graduate or higher with the median household income being \$66,835. There were 35,726 businesses reported in 2012 with 1,982 employees in Isle of Wight. Isle of Wight has several employment opportunities within the county and within a short driving distance. The top five employers in Isle of Wight are Smithfield Foods, Keurig Green Mountain, International Paper, Cost Plus World Market, and Food Lion.

The county has 59,681 acres of cropland with the average farm size being 355 acres. In 2017, 17,057 acres of soybeans, 13,297 acres of cotton, and 10,963 acres of corn were reported. Other crops reported were hay/pasture, peanuts, wheat, sorghum, millet, rye, oats, watermelon, and sunflowers. Isle of Wight also houses several head of livestock. Livestock production has increased with cattle numbers increasing to 3,181 in 2012 from 2,975 in 2007.

In 2013 Isle of Wight reported 31% of the population was obese with diabetic screening up from 2010 by 11%. The uninsured resident population decreased by 4% while the amount of children in poverty increased by 5%. Nearly 26% of youth are in single family homes. Health behaviors have changed since 2010 in Isle of Wight as well with 28% of residents are physically inactive and 14% have excessive drinking. Teen birth rate decreased from 38 in 2010 to 28 in 2013.

Youth population in the school system has increased for the most part. Kindergarten, Elementary, High School, and College or Grad School numbers have all increased since 2007. There are 576 students in nursery school or preschool, 521 in Kindergarten, 3,709 in Elementary, 2,046 in High School, and 1,976 in College or Grad School. Several of the population have reported some type of higher education. Approximately 2,204 residents reported having an Associate's degree while 4,181 have reported achieving a Bachelor's. Some 2,028 reported having a graduate degree or another professional degree. Isle of Wight boasts 86% of the population has a high school degree or higher while 25% of the population reports having a Bachelor's degree or higher.

## Community and Resident Perspectives

Data was collected through the use of an electronic survey created through the Qualtrics System. It was then distributed through various groups within Isle of Wight County, including employees, agriculture mailing lists, 4-H mailing lists, social media, and other civic organizations. The link for the survey was posted on social media as well as in local newspapers. There was a total of 46 responses from the survey. Upon completion of the survey, the Isle of Wight VCE analyzed the data. Priority issues were identified from both a set of ranked questions and through community comments. Based on the unit profile and the results of the survey, issues were prioritized as follows:

### Priority Issues

#### **Issue 1: Water Quality**

**Description:** Water Quality was the most important priority issue for Isle of Wight County. Approximately 34 residents marked water quality very important and somewhat important. Due to Isle of Wight's geographic location and being located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, water quality is important to residents. Other areas of concern were nutrient runoff from farmers and homeowners, ground water contamination, and drinking water concerns.

**Virginia Cooperative Extension's Role:** VCE partners with several local agencies including the Peanut Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources and Conservation Services to provide educational materials and programs to educate producers on best management practices (BMP). BMP's help minimize nutrients and pesticide run-off. VCE also

offers a Well Water Testing Clinic. Through a specialist at Virginia Tech, we offer a program bi-annually to residents to test their drinking water for a very minimal fee. Last year, we had around 20 residents participate. VCE also partners with local volunteer groups to help provide education in the schools and at public events. The Western Tidewater Master Gardeners and The Historic Southside Master Naturalist's help educate the public on the importance of water, runoff, and preserving our natural resources. VCE could expand its programs to offer urban nutrient management clinics, more drinking water clinics, and BMP education for homeowners in the future.

## **Issue 2: Youth Development/Youth Activities**

**Description:** The second priority issue from the survey in Isle of Wight was Youth Development. Under Youth Development, 24 residents rated youth development as very important and another 11 residents rated it as somewhat important. There are several programs currently available in the community such as; youth athletic programs, little league, summer camps through Parks & Recreation, YMCA programs, and after school programs in the school system. The school system also has a very active and growing career and technical program (CTE). The CTE department is expanding the agriculture classes and they secured funding to put a working farm (land lab) behind one of the elementary schools. Along with the land lab, other areas of the CTE program are expanding such as welding, culinary arts, cosmetology, and many more.

**Virginia Cooperative Extension's Role:** Currently, we are limited on the programs and events we can offer because we are without a 4-H Extension Agent and a 4-H Program Assistant. The extension agent position has been vacant for over a year and the program assistant has been vacant for over six months. We are thankful for the county agreeing to fund the program assistant, and we hope to fill both positions in the coming year. Right now, our 4-H youth development programming is falling to our ANR agent and volunteers. Our volunteers are very active in growing the youth programs and have done an excellent job at maintaining and growing the programs in the absence of an agent. Youth development programs offer the opportunity to learn leadership, life skills, decision making, financial responsibility, and much more. The Isle of Wight 4-H Community Club has around 40 active members ranging from cloverbud to 19 years old. The annual 4-H Junior Summer 4-H camp at Airfield had over 100 children from Isle of Wight participate. There were 25 teens that served as teen counselors and helped provide leadership. At the Isle of Wight County Fair, we had 25 youth participate in livestock shows, the country ham project, and fine arts projects.

## **Issue 3: Pesticides/Environment**

**Description:** Residents noted that pesticides and the environment were a key concern for them as well. From the survey and discussions, this is related to best management practices for both farmers and homeowners dealing with pesticides, insecticides, and fertilizer. Also, a lot of our residents are concerned about preserving the environment whether that is land, timber, or the natural environment.

**Virginia Cooperative Extension's Role:** VCE aids this area of concern by offering yearly pesticide re-certification and pesticide education to the public. We partner with VDACS to make sure everyone is compliant and in compliance with the state regulations and laws. VCE also offers soil sample kits for homeowners and farmers to help them in not over fertilizing their fields or lawns. The VCE office also has two volunteer groups that do projects in the community to help educate the public on the soil, water, and environment. The Historic Southside Master Naturalists have several projects that help promote the environment and helping to keep it clean. They have several pollinator gardens, blue bird monitoring, fishing line recycling, and many others around Isle of Wight County. The Western Tidewater Master Gardeners also have several projects throughout the county. They have a learning garden at the Carrollton Library, a plant sale, and have a booth at the Smithfield Farmers Market where they have a plant clinic. They help educate the public on soil sampling, pesticide applications, and other recommendations. Both groups also write articles for several local newspapers about the environment and what can be found in the county to help educate the public.

#### **Issue 4: Health and Nutrition**

**Description:** Isle of Wight residents noted that health and nutrition was their number four priority issue. Health and nutrition is important in both youth and adult demographics in Isle of Wight. From the Unit Profile, Isle of Wight has had an increase in obesity by 2% and a 5% increase of children in poverty. In 2013, 31% of adults were considered obese and 28% were physically inactive. These statistics can lead to serious health issues, including diabetes, which we saw an increase of 11% from 2010-2013. Along with the issue of health, there is a concern of food security in our community. In 2013, 16% of youth in Isle of Wight lived in poverty. According to the Virginia Department of Education, 35.24% of Isle of Wight students utilize the free and reduced breakfast and lunch program.

**Virginia Cooperative Extension's Role:** This year our 4-H club participated in the state 4-H Food Challenge. Food Challenge is an event where the youth showcase their cooking abilities as well as their nutrition knowledge. The 4-H and ANR agents could collaborate for programming and expand the food challenge team and possibly offer other programs like 4-H Yoga Class. We could also potentially partner with the school system to offer some education or workshops to help address health and nutrition concerns.

#### **Issue 5: Agriculture Production & Profitability**

**Description:** Agriculture production and profitability was identified as the fifth key issue for Isle of Wight. Isle of Wight boasts 59,681 acres of farmland according to the Farm Service Agency from 2017. The county has very diverse farmland with soybeans being the top crop grown followed by cotton, corn, peanuts, and other small grains. Niche market crops are also grown such as sunflowers, watermelon, pumpkins, and strawberries. Along with cropland, Isle of Wight also has several livestock operations, nurseries, and aquaculture. In order for these farms to be successful, farmers and managers need up to date information for their

commodities. They need information on up-to-date variety trials, pesticide recommendations, pest thresh holds, and other information to maximize their production. Producers also need assistance with diagnostic services that help optimize yield.

**Virginia Cooperative Extension's Role:** Currently, VCE is offering several programs to help address this issue. VCE partners with grower's associations to offer production yearly meetings for growers to update them on current research. This past year we offered a produce safety class and an agritourism workshop for the niche market growers as well as a cattle production meeting based off of suggestions from stakeholders. VCE also works with specialists at the agriculture research stations to assist with field days, pesticide re-certifications, plot research, and data collection. We will continue to address this issue and expand our workshops and education for the public.

## Appendices

### Isle of Wight Community Stakeholders/Advisors

Isle of Wight County Government  
Isle of Wight County Schools  
Isle of Wight County Economic Development  
Peanut Soil and Water Conservation District  
Isle of Wight Farm Service Agency  
Isle of Wight NRCS  
Isle of Wight County Fair Board  
Smithfield CHIP Program  
Historic Southside Master Naturalists  
Western Tidewater Master Gardeners  
Pete & Marilyn Edwards  
Billy Gwaltney  
Kevin & Amy Bland  
Johnny & Lynn Butler  
Billy Bell  
Kirk Jones  
JW & Donna Jones  
Mel Atkinson  
Phillip Carr  
Kevin Goerger