



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Situation Analysis Report



Augusta County

2018

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Introduction

A strong, local Extension program is tightly crafted to fit the needs of its clientele and the residents of the community of which it serves. To make informed decisions on programming, Extension personnel must have an understanding of overarching community needs and issues. Identification of these needs as well as methods of addressing them are best discovered through a periodic review of the county situation analysis. This review includes researching and categorizing trends in demographic, economic, agricultural, health care and education data and prioritization of trends and issues by key stakeholders.

Faculty and Staff of the Augusta Extension Unit conducted a comprehensive situation analysis of Augusta County during the fall of 2018. The purpose of the analysis was several fold. First, the analysis was conducted to discover major shifts to the county demographics from previous analyses in 2004, 2009 and 2013. Secondly, to categorize common issues and problems faced by stakeholders and cooperatively determine programmatic solutions to said problems. Thirdly, to determine public perception of current Extension programming efforts and investigate ways to strengthen Extension relevance. Finally, the last goal of the analysis is to develop and deliver education programs that address high priority needs within the realms of community viability, agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and youth development.

Unit Profile

Demographics

Augusta County is the second largest county in the state of Virginia by land base. It is second only to Pittsylvania County by a nominal 1.94 square miles. Augusta is ranked 17th in the state by population with 75,144 people. This puts average population density per square mile at 77.7 people per square mile, with the county size being 967 people. The greater Augusta metropolitan statistical area, including the independent cities of Staunton (24,528) and Waynesboro (22,327), located wholly within the county's borders brings the population to 121,999.

Geographically, Augusta is located within the central part of the Shenandoah Valley between the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah mountain ranges. Major landmarks and tourism attractions include Natural Chimney's, Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive. Augusta is a major center of transportation and commerce, containing the junction of Interstates 81 and 64, making it a competitive market for business investment. According to the 2017 report Augusta County Economic Development & Tourism Annual Report, 6 businesses have put forth \$79.8 million in capital investment for expansion or establishment projects in that year alone.

Demographically, Augusta County has remained fairly static in recent years. The county experienced rapid population growth from 1990 through 2011 in which the population grew by over 20,000 people. Since 2011, the net population growth is estimated at only 247 people. 93.3% of the population is white while 4.4% are African American with the Hispanic population slightly growing to 2.7%, up from 1.78%. As one may expect, with the slow of population growth, the number of people aged 65 or older is up 4.12% from 2011 to 20.4% in 2017.

Median income for Augusta County has increased from 2007 and 2012 in which it was reported to have been \$49,373 and \$47,326 respectively to \$55,322. Un-employment is also at a new 10 year low in 2017 at 4.4%. A chart describing the change in employment rate is included in this profile.

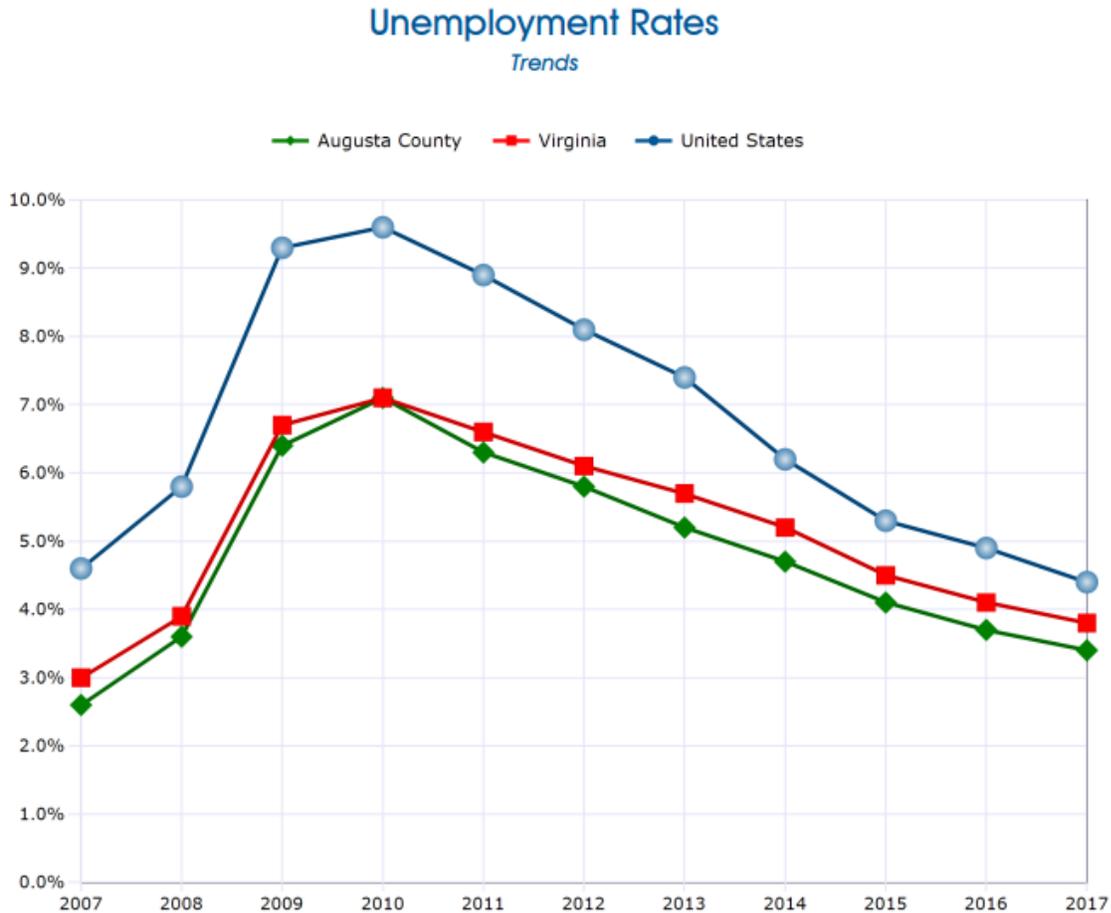


Figure 1 – Augusta County Unemployment Rates. *Courtesy of Virginia Employment Commission*

Education

Augusta is home to Blue Ridge Community College, with Staunton home to Mary Baldwin University. Furthermore, Mary Baldwin has expanded its educational mission, opening a sizable satellite campus in Augusta County which is home to the Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences. These institutions provide post-secondary education for 1,137 (Mary Baldwin) and 4,437 (Blue Ridge) students.

As is the case in all communities, education and the value of learning is of paramount importance. Augusta County Public Schools is the largest employer in the county with the public school district encompassing 18 schools. These schools are Guy K. Stump Elementary, Edward G. Clymore Elementary, Riverheads Elementary, Wilson Elementary, Stuarts Draft

Elementary, Craigsville Elementary, Churchville Elementary, Churchville Elementary, North River Elementary, Hugh K. Cassell Elementary, Stuarts Draft Middle, S. Gordon Stewart Middle, Beverly Manor Middle, Wilson Middle, Buffalo Gap High, Fort Defiance High, Riverheads High, Wilson Memorial High, Stuarts Draft High, offering enrollment for youth from kindergarten through the 12th grade.

Despite these strong educational opportunities Augusta County is one-half percent off the national average for residents having a High School education or greater (87% United States, 86.5% Augusta) while being seven percentage points behind in residents with a bachelor’s degree (30.3 vs. 23.3). This may reflect a still strong manufacturing sector present in the Augusta economy, providing employment without the need for a post-secondary education. This is further typified by the fact that that the Augusta percentage of persons in poverty is lower than the national average 9.2% vs 12.3%.

Employment

Employers within the county show similar characteristics to other Virginia localities with education and healthcare being leading providers of employment. Healthcare as illustrated by Augusta Medical Center (#2) and Augusta Medical Group (#17) and Manufacturing; Hershey Chocolate of Virginia (#3), McKee Foods (#4), Hollister, Inc (#6), AAF McQuay, Inc., NIBCO of VA (#10) comprise the largest industry in the private sector. The service industry also represents a sizable fraction of Augusta county employment.

Top 10 Employers in Augusta County

1. Augusta County School Board	6. Hollister, Inc.
2. Augusta Medical Center	7. AAF McQuay, Inc.
3. Hershey Chocolate of Virginia	8. J.B. Hunt Transport
4. McKee Foods Corporation	9. County of Augusta
5. Target Corp	10. NIBCO of Virginia

It is important to note that there are significant employment opportunities outside of the county with major employment centers being Harrisonburg and Rockingham County and Charlottesville in Albemarle County. The archetype example of this “out-commuting” is Augusta residents traveling to the University of Virginia for work, the #40 (UVA Health Services Foundation) and #44 (UVA Medical Center). Out-commuting also represents county residents commuting to the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro. A graphic representing the relationship of in-commuting vs out-commuting is included in this report. Total workforce for the county (employed citizens) is estimated at 46,961 according to the Virginia Employment Commission.

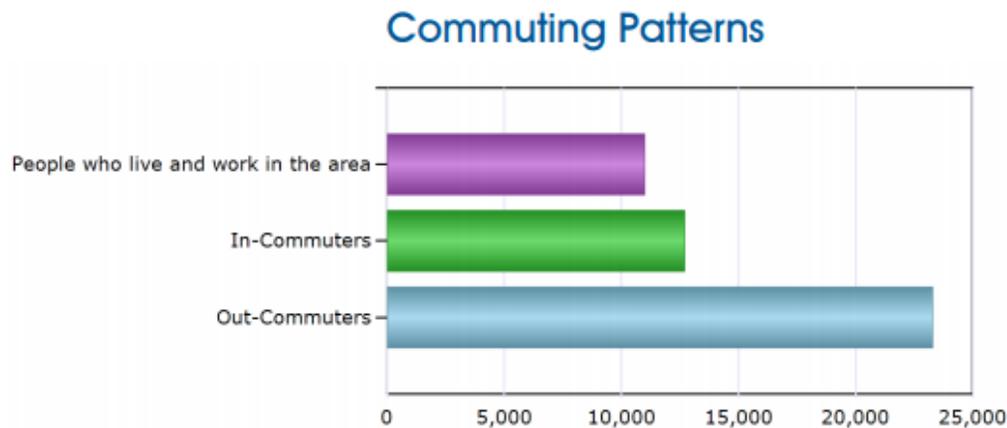


Figure 2 – Commuting Patterns for Augusta County Residents. *Courtesy of Virginia Employment Commission.*

Community and Resident Perspectives

Augusta County Extension Office staff worked to identify key areas and issues within the unit profile that are of interest to local stakeholders, families, youth and agricultural producers. This was accomplished through several methods. Agricultural topics were determined through a combination of a producer survey, issues forum and key informant interviews. 4-H youth development issues and family health and wellness issues were determined by a community survey shared with the general public, 4-H clubs and volunteers and county agency personnel. The community survey also asked respondents to prioritize issues relating to Nutrition, Health and Wellness. Additionally, the community survey also collected demographic data from respondents. A snapshot of the survey and summary data is included in this report.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

First, an agribusiness dinner and agriculture issues forum was held on June 28, 2018. The dinner and issues forum was part of an Augusta County farm tour planned by the Augusta Agriculture and Natural Resources Agents for faculty and staff members of the USDA Economic Research Service. Guests at the dinner included farmers on the tour (two dairy producers, two beef cattle producers, and one cash grain producer) and representatives from agribusinesses, veterinary practices, Virginia Tech, Extension, the Farm Service Agency. The purpose of the forum was to have an investigative discussion on what is the current state of agriculture in the Shenandoah Valley and what challenges and opportunities the industry or segments of the industry face.

Agricultural Issues identified from this effort were:

- Dairy profitability, milk price and reliable labor challenges.
- Marketing opportunities and access for beef cattle producers

- Parasite pressure and lack of anthelmintics and resistant animals on viability of small ruminants
- Farm transition and business continuance

Secondly, a 2013 survey of agricultural producers was revisited and analysis purposes. This survey asked producers to select their top 3 issues they would be interested in learning about at an extension program from a list of 14 items, plus a write in option. The survey was mass mailed to approximately 400 beef cattle and sheep producers within Augusta, Rockingham and Rockbridge counties. 155 responses were received in 2013, a response rate of 38.75%. The issues producers were asked to prioritize are as follows:

Weed control (row crops)	Marketing
Weed control (pasture/hay)	Grazing/pasture management
Forage Quality	Forage stand establishment
Nutrient Management Plans	Fencing/watering systems
Crop nutrition/soil fertility	Animal nutrition/feeding
Herd health	Reproduction (sheep)
Flock health	Reproduction (cattle)

When results were compiled the top 3 items were:

1. Herd health (20% of respondents listed it as a top 3 issue)
2. Weed control in pasture/hay (13% of respondents listed it as a top 3 issue)
3. Grazing/pasture management (11% of respondents listed as a top 3 issue)

As funds and resources to repeat this effort do not exist, and the ranking and importance of these issues for our farmers likely has changed in the last 5 years the ag agents decided to conduct key informant interviews with a number of stakeholders as well as set out survey cards at educational meetings to determine what agricultural issues may be important now. The questions of the interview stated the 14 issues outlined in the 2013 survey and highlighted the top three issues at that time. The agents then asked:

“Are these issues still the most important today?”

“What other issues may now be important?”

“Are there any other issues not included in this summary that are of significance and should be included?”

A total of 21 responses were collected and summarized. Cattle herd health remained the top issue, selected as a top three issue by over 57% of the respondents. Marketing was found to be the second most selected top three issue, chosen by 33% of the respondents. Animal Nutrition/Feeding was selected as #3. Grazing and pasture management, which was a top three issue in 2013, checked in at #4 this year, selected by 29% of survey takers. Producers also responded that land rental challenges and farm transition planning are also paramount.

Snapshot of Community Survey

A snapshot of some of the questions from the Community Survey are represented below.

Positive Youth Development

Of the topics below, please prioritize and rate issues as they relate to Positive Youth Development. Please select only one rating per topic.

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither Unimportant nor Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	No Opinion
Teen Leadership opportunities/decision making skills for youth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workforce prep and job skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science, Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive Youth Activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Health and Wellness (mental health, substance abuse prevention, nutrition)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education and bullying prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teen community involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Agriculture and Natural Resources:

Of the topics below, please prioritize and rate issues as they relate to Agriculture and Natural Resources.

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither Unimportant nor Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	No Opinion
Farm transition/aging farmers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing markets for locally grown products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conserving farmland and open space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agriculture safety education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agriculture and natural resource production/profitability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management of invasive species (weeds, insects, plant pathogens)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agricultural and food production literacy for general public	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Nutrition, Health and Wellness:

Of the topics below, please prioritize and rate issues as they relate to Nutrition Health and Wellness.

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither Unimportant nor Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	No Opinion
Affordable health and dental services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obesity prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to recreational/exercise facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chronic disease (heart, diabetes, cancer) prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance abuse prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthy food access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food security/anti-hunger efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food safety/preservation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The survey also included several open ended questions. The first asked survey takers to name, of all the issues listed, their top 3 overall issues. The second asked them to provide any additional information on what direction you believe Extension programs should take in Augusta County.

Community Survey Results

The Augusta County Community Survey was developed in November on Qualtrics and published via the Augusta County Extension Office website, Augusta County 4-H Facebook Page, and via email link from the Augusta County agricultural producer email listing. The survey was opened on November 8 and closed on December 17. A total of 123 responses were recorded. It is estimated that the survey reached approximately 800 people, putting the response rate at 15.7%. In addition to the ranking questions shown above the survey also included demographic data. Approximately 83% of respondents were Caucasian, while 14% preferred not to answer and 3% stated other. The majority of respondents (75%) were female with the largest percentage (57%) stating their age to be 30-49. 93% of survey takers indicated having a high school education or further post-secondary education. 38% had bachelor's degrees, 26% had Master's degrees and 4% had a doctoral degree. 53% stated they were unfamiliar or not familiar at all with Virginia Cooperative Extension. Survey results were compiled for each program area question. Percentages of responses for the category "Very Important" are displayed in the following tables. Issues were also researched from the open ended survey questions. Top issues were selected from each program area and added to the list of "Priority Issues".

Table 1 – Positive Youth Development. Topics Ranked as “Very Important”

Summary	Teen Leadership Opportunities Decision making skills for youth	Workforce prep & job skills	Positive youth activities	Science Technology Energy Math(STEM)	Youth health and wellness	Character education and bullying	Teen community involvement
% of Responses	63%	67%	67%	58%	59%	50%	54%

Workforce Prep and Job Skills, Positive Youth Activities and Teen Leadership Opportunities/Decision Making Skills for Youth all registered with a strong majority (>63%) of respondents indicating these topics as “Very Important”.

Table 2 – Agriculture and Natural Resources. Topics Ranked as “Very Important”

Summary	Farm transition/ aging farmers	Develop Markets for Local Grown Products	Conserving farmland & open space	Ag safety education	Ag & NR prod./ profit	Manage of Inv. species	Ag & food prod literacy
% of Responses	51%	45%	62%	47%	54%	43%	53%

Farm Transition, Conserving Farmland and Open Space, Agricultural Production and Profit, and Agricultural and Food Production Literacy were the top ranking issues. Opened ended questions also brought in the importance of farm transition and agricultural production literacy.

Table 3 – Nutrition Health and Wellness. Topics Ranked as “Very Important”

Summary	Affordable health and dental services	Obesity prevention	Rec/exercise facilities	Chronic disease prevention	Substance abuse prevention	Healthy food access	Food Security/anti-hunger efforts	Food safety/preservation
% of Responses	56%	47%	48%	49%	60%	48%	49%	41%

Survey respondents indicated several issues within Nutrition, Health and Wellness as of great significance. Substance Abuse Prevention ranked highest as a “Very Important” issue. Access to Affordable Health and Dental Services, Chronic Disease Prevention and Food Security and Anti-Hunger efforts also registered as high priority issues. Healthy food access was mentioned several times in the open ended portion of the survey as several respondents indicated it was a top issue. Substance Abuse Prevention was also brought up numerous times in the opened ended response questions.

Through the combined efforts of the agricultural producer postcard survey, key ag stakeholder interviews, producer focus group with USDA, and the County Community Survey, a series of issues were identified for Extension programs to focus on and address.

Priority Issues

Issue 1:

Farm Transition and Business Continuance

Farming is a capital intensive operation, with large investments often needed in land and machinery. These investments can be prohibitive for many considering farming, or taking over the family farm. A process must be in place for a good orderly transition of a farm business to the next generation. Each type of operation, dairy, beef, poultry has its unique challenges as well as commonalities. As the average age of a farmer is 57, transition of the family farming business to a younger generation will continue to be an area of great consideration.

Farm transition programs were developed and delivered in 2014 and 2016. A Succession: Pass it on workshop was offered by the Rockingham Extension office in Oct. 2014 at the Holiday Inn Staunton and followed by a Keep Your Farmland Farming workshop held in Edinburg and Verona in 2016. Both of these programs were very successful with approximately 70 producers attending the Staunton workshop and 40 attending the Edinburg and Verona workshops. Future business plan workshops and succession workshops will be developed and offered for Shenandoah Valley producers in the future.

Issue 2:

Parasite Management for Small Ruminant Producers

Internal parasite pressure continues to be the most significant issue affecting small ruminant production. The challenge for small ruminant producers is significant as forage is the cheapest source of feed, but is often contaminated by heavy parasite loads as many producers have pastures that have had continuous exposure to grazing, and parasite eggs excreted in feces. Producers must continuously evaluate internal parasite control strategies and adopt changes where necessary.

VCE programs have addressed this issue directly and will continue to do so. Two FAMACHA®/internal parasite management meetings have been conducted in the last five years in 2015 and 2017 and one is currently being considered. Additionally, parasite control lecture have been delivered at the VCE VA Shepard's Symposium held in January in 2015 and 2018. Future programs on small ruminant management will include topics on parasite control as well as other aspects of production. Parasite tolerance is a continuing focus of evaluation for the VA Performance Tested Ram Sale. Finally, a parasite management program may be developed for producers to submit fecal egg samples to determine flock parasite loads and evaluate mitigation strategies.

Issue 3:

Marketing Opportunities for Livestock Producers

The Shenandoah Valley is home to three livestock markets and several buying stations. Furthermore many large cattle backgrounders and order buyers are interested in buying cattle. However, buyer interests do not always overlap with those of producers. Additionally, the long term presence of these markets is not assured. Producers must be forward thinking in marketing their cattle in the future. Many medium sized and even larger producers stand to

gain from cooperative marketing efforts facilitated by Extension. Sheep and goat marketing is largely centered on catering to ethnic markets. Producers can stand to benefit from educational programs on marketing strategies to arrive at maximum net return. Current educational efforts have focused on cattle management practices such as weaning calves to further expand producer marketing options. Efforts are also under way to establish a beef cattle producer association and sheep and goat association that can organize marketing efforts, determine educational needs and work with Extension faculty to develop programs to address those needs. Cattle marketing efforts will focus on assisting producers with weaning practices, herd health schedules and genetic selection to enable them to produce high quality cattle. Marketing efforts will be cooperative among producers to command a greater premium for higher quality cattle produced. Extension will work with any new producer association and existing producer association and Virginia Cattlemen's Association to market cattle through a Virginia Quality Assured Feeder Cattle marketing program.

Issue 4:

Offering Positive Youth Activities Through STEM Education.

Augusta County is a strong agricultural county with a rich agricultural heritage. However, 4-H programs must not be limited to only an animal science sphere. 4-H has many additional Science Technology Education and Math (STEM) programs to offer for area youth. One such program is Robotics. Additionally, elements of STEM curriculum are included in many different 4-H activities but have not been emphasized. This includes calculations for animal science and stockman's projects, calculating appropriate dosage for wormer treatments in the cattleworking contest and many others activities and calculations. These program areas of STEM will be and continue to be a greater area of emphasis in future 4-H programs.

Issue 5:

Healthy Food Access

The Food Desert Task Force at Virginia State University released a publication in 2014 that reveals 13% of Augusta County residents do not have adequate access to fresh food. The study found that low access to healthy food correlates to poverty and individual localities within the county, indicating a 6:1 ratio of fast food restaurants and convenience stores to grocery stores. The study also states that over 700 residents live more than 15 miles from a grocery store or farmer's market location. The VCE Family Nutrition Program promotes the farmer's markets located in Augusta, Staunton, and Waynesboro since all locations accept SNAP/EBT benefits. The markets in Augusta and Waynesboro match SNAP dollars up to \$25 each week, which provides additional food resources for residents in a low income, low access area. The Family Nutrition Program is piloting a two-phase healthy retail program across the state called Shop Smart Eat Smart. Phase one of the program uses in-store marketing and nutrition education to encourage healthy food purchases, therefore increasing the demand for healthy food at the retail location. Phase two will support inventory changes that add healthy food options to the stores. This is an emerging program and not currently offered in Augusta County, but likely in the future dependent upon qualifying store locations.

Issue 6:

Chronic Disease Prevention

Data from Augusta Health's 2016 Community Needs Assessment identifies the leading causes of death for Augusta, Staunton, and Waynesboro residents as cancer, heart disease, and chronic lower respiratory disease. There is a need for educational programming on preventative care relating to chronic diseases. All of the programs used by the VCE Family Nutrition Program focus on healthy lifestyles and use recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines encourage individuals to choose foods and beverages that achieve and maintain a healthy weight, promote health, and prevent disease. The guidelines also include recommendations on physical activity for youth and adults. The following adult and youth curricula used by the Family Nutrition Program teach these concepts: Adult- Eating Smart Being Active; Youth- Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Preschoolers (LEAP), OrganWise Guys, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness. Completed evaluations indicate that families are choosing more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and increasing their physical activity as a direct result of offered programs.

Issue 7:

Herd Health Protocols and Management for Cattle Producers

A strong and robust herd health management plan for cattle producers greatly reduces treatment cost variability, improves quality of calves marketed, percentage of calf crop weaned, cow herd longevity and productivity, and producer bottom lines. The Virginia Beef Quality Assurance program outlines steps for a high quality herd health program and provides producers an independent certification that verifies adherence to best management practices (BMPs) for beef cattle production. Producers can also take advantage of being BQA certified to gain access to marketing channels through the Virginia Quality Assured feeder cattle marketing program. Cattle marketed through this program routinely achieve premiums not seen over traditional marketing avenues. To date 188 producers have been BQA certified in Augusta County. However, no current VQA marketing program is operational. This leaves an opportunity for Extension to take the lead in coordinating producer marketing efforts through this value added program.

Issue 8:

Agricultural Production and Profitability

Data from the USDA-ERS and others has indicated that general farm profitability decreased from 2007 to 2012. Ag census data from the same time period estimates increases of farm production expenses while net income has remained stagnant. Data from 2002, 2007 and 2012 all show a continual decrease in farm numbers within Augusta County, even with the growth of smaller farms. Given the ever increasing rising costs of inputs, commodity price swings and instability, it is critical as ever for agricultural Extension programs to keep a focus on net income and net profitability. These efforts must positively affect all areas of agricultural production, from operations focusing on local markets, direct marketing and agritourism to conventional operations. They may include programs on extending grazing and reducing feed

expense to farm business management short courses, futures and options seminars, and cattle and crop management workshops that all connect production to the bottom line.

Issue 9:

Encouraging Positive Youth Development Through In-School Programming

In school programming is an important part of delivering 4-H programs. As many youth and families are increasingly busy in the evenings with a myriad of activities, many students may not have the opportunity to experience 4-H on a traditional level. Thus, bringing 4-H programs to students in school provides exposure to 4-H as a whole and increases the prevalence of 4-H within the community. Augusta County Schools continue to benefit from 4-H curriculum for STEM, Animal Sciences, Equine Sciences as well as many other additional topics. These programs build youth development and awareness above and beyond normal school curriculum.

Issue 10:

Food Security/Anti-hunger Efforts

According to 2016 data from Map the Meal Gap, approximately 5,640 individuals are food insecure in Augusta County. The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank website lists 20 food pantries located within Augusta County and a Food Bank Family Backpack Program at Craigsville Elementary School. Programming facilitated by the VCE Family Nutrition Program bridges the hunger gap by providing food experiences, including meal preparation and tasting samples, for qualifying SNAP-eligible families. Additionally, these programs involve hands-on opportunities for participants to learn about thrifty food shopping, budgeting, and basic cooking skills. The following adult and youth curricula teach these concepts: Adult- Eating Smart Being Active; Youth- Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness and Teen Cuisine. These programs help to address the issue of food insecurity by empowering families with the skills they need to prepare healthy, affordable meals and encourage them to seek food assistance when needed.

Appendices

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