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Virginia
Association of

Agricultural Extension Agents



VAAEA Newsletter

March 2004 Edition

From the Desk of Brad Jarvis

On behalf of the Virginia Association of Agricultural Extension Agents, I hope this newsletter finds you and your family doing well. This past year has been one to remember or perhaps to forget depending on how you look at it. My conversations with fellow agents and retirees across the state have been dominated by the state budget situation, early retirement, extension administrative changes and last by not least the weather.

But in spite of the challenges of change, the VAAEA Board of Directors maintained their focus on achieving some goals during this past year. The early retirement programs claimed a sizeable number of our membership and committee chairs. But Cynthia Gregg and Andy Overbay have worked hard to fill all our committee assignments and push our membership over 110 to maintain our 2 DSA and 2 AA Awards at the national level. With the large number of ANR Agents taking retirement, the Association focused on improving communications with our retirees. Our Association depends on the generous contributions and support of retirees to achieve our annual goals, conduct programs and fundraisers. Some the efforts to keep retirees informed was to increase the number of direct mailings to announce Association activities, reinstate the VAAEA newsletter and improve the Association's website. The retirees responded positively to these efforts, as we had 15 new life members by the end of the year.

Another major project for the Association was the unveiling to the newly constructed "Wall of Fame" located on the first floor of Hutcheson Hall at Virginia Tech. The "Wall of Fame" is an annual award that recognizes one active and one retired Extension Agent for outstanding contributions to Virginia agriculture and the Association. In the Fall, all the "Wall of Fame" inductees were invited to participate in the unveiling of this solid wood display that features the photographs of all the recipients. I encourage you to take the time on your next visit to Blacksburg to look at this outstanding display. This year's inductees were Tom Covey and Jim Smith. Many of you are familiar with their involvement with the Association on a national and state level. Tom has been a national committee chair and Jim is the only Virginia Extension Agent to serve as national president. Please join me in congratulating & thanking them for their dedicated service.

The Association wrapped up the 2003 year with a membership meeting in December at Holiday Lake 4-H Center. As usual, the highlight of the meeting was visiting with old friends and recognizing co-workers for outstanding service. Our special guest speaker for the meeting was the new Dean of CALS, Dr. Sharron Quisenberry, who reaffirmed the importance of Extension to achieving the Universities' mission. Other special guests for our meeting were Chip Blalock and Jim Riddell. Chip represents the Sunbelt Agricultural Expo that provides a donation to the Association to sponsor our awards luncheon and Jim Riddell gave the NACAA report as our Southern Regional Director. The next membership meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 6th at the Holiday Inn Select Koger South in Richmond. The minutes for the Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon can be obtained from the VAAEA website at www.vaaea.org.

Finally, I just wanted to provide membership with an update on the VCE Director's search. The search committee has had two conference calls over the past couple months. The field of applicants has been narrowed down to 3 candidates that will be invited to Virginia for an interview and to present a seminar. The seminar topic will be "Leading and Implementing a Value Added Extension Program." As of today, the interview dates have not been set. But I will keep you informed about the interview and seminar dates and locations. Once the dates are finalized, all staff members are welcome to participate in the candidate seminars to be held in Blacksburg and the Richmond area.

In closing, I wanted to thank you for your service and commitment of VAAEA. Although we operated in an environment of uncertainty this past year, your Officers and District Directors remained positive and maintained their focus on accomplishing the goals of the Association. Please take time to review the calendar of Association events in this newsletter and I look forward to seeing you in Richmond, Harrisonburg or perhaps Orlando!

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Congratulations to the 2004 Virginia WOF, DSA and AA winners!

During the 2003 VAAEA Annual Meeting, the Association presented the Wall of Fame Award to Jim Smith and Tom Covey. These two gentlemen are dedicated and loyal members of the Association on the state and national level.

The Distinguished Service Awards were received by Brad Jarvis of Madison County and Kelly Liddington of Richmond County. The DSA award goes to Agriculture Professionals with over 10 years of service. The Achievement Awards were received by Scott Greiner, Extension Specialist, Virginia Tech and Mike Roberts of Prince George County. The AA is awarded to Agriculture Professionals with less than 10 years of service.

The DSA and AA winners will receive their awards at the National Association of County Agriculture Agents Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference in Orlando, Florida. These awards are presented to the top 1% of County Agents in the US. Again, Congratulations.

Corey Childs—Awards Committee Chair

VAAEA Foundation

"An endowment fund to strengthen the leadership and educational skills of Agricultural Extension Agents"

In December 1999, the Virginia Association of Agricultural Extension Agents established the Agricultural Extension Agent Leadership Development Fund, an endowed account of the Virginia Tech Foundation.

All gifts are tax-deductible. Checks should be made payable to the Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc., and designated for the Agricultural Extension Agent Leadership Development Fund. The Foundation accepts cash, checks, or publicly traded stocks. For More Information Contact:

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Southern Region JCEP

The Southern Regional Joint Council of Extension Professionals Leadership meeting in Atlanta was a productive and useful program. It was not only an opportunity to represent Virginia with our other Association colleagues but to meet agents from across the Southeast. We attended excellent workshops and had lively discussions at our Agriculture Agents Meetings. We were fortunate to have members from the National Board in attendance with us at our meeting: President Frank Fitzsimmons of South Carolina, Vice-President Mickey Cummings of Georgia, and Secretary Fred Miller of North Carolina. Elmo Collum, Southern Director from Mississippi kept the meeting moving along with the Vice-Directors. Doug Wilson, the other Southern Director from Kentucky was unable to attend due to recent surgery. Doug plans to be at VESA/VAAEA Meeting in Richmond on April 6th. So please make plans to attend the VESA meeting.

A special thank you goes to Jim Riddell, Southern Region Vice-Director. He is representing us well.

JCEP Participants—Brad Jarvis, Cynthia Gregg & Jim Riddell

Fundraiser Volunteers Needed For Beef Expo

VAAEA will serve meals at the Virginia Beef Expo on Friday, April 16 and Saturday April 17. We will also do the dinner this year on Friday the 16th. We will need at least 35 agents to help on Friday and at least 20 on Saturday. We will need help on Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., and Saturday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. If you can only help at certain times, that is okay. We will need the full work force on both days between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and on Friday evening 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. If you are an active agents or a retired/lifetime agent and would like to help, please contact Steve Hopkins by email at hobby@vt.edu letting him know which days you would be willing to help. After he has the list of people who can help he will send out a schedule so everyone has a chance to see the Beef Expo.

Thank you for your help to make VAAEA stronger. This is not only a fund raiser, but a time to get to know your fellow agents and retirees better. It is also good PR with the beef industry.

Steve Hopkins—Finance Committee

NACAA National Meeting – Orlando, Florida

The National Association of County Agriculture Agents Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference is in Orlando, Florida this year. The meeting will be held July 11-15 at the Wyndham Palace Disney. The NACAA website <http://www.nacaa.com> has a link to the National Meeting website. You can get some details on the meeting; they are continually working to update the site. Soon the schedule and other information will be on the site. The next issue of the *County Agent* will have the information on the NACAA AM/PIC.



State's Night Out will be on Tuesday, July 13th, 5:00 pm. Plans are underway for the Agents, Life Members, and families to get together in Orlando. All the details are worked out by the April 6th membership meeting in Richmond. Cynthia will let everyone know the place, time and cost.

VAAEA Website Update: WWW.VAAEA.ORG Now Active!

The newly redesigned website for the Virginia Association of Agricultural Extension Agents, www.vaaea.org, is now active. The website will serve as an information source for active and life members of the association about current activities, upcoming events, and the various awards and other recognition programs available through the association. Prospective members can use the site to learn more about the benefits of being an association member, and see examples of association activities.

The site currently contains sections on committees, awards & recognition programs, calendar of events, links to other sites of interest, a photo gallery of recent association events and contact information for the association board of directors and officers. Planned additions to the site include a section for meeting minutes, association bylaws, a "virtual" Wall of Fame", and information on the VAAEA Foundation and scholarship programs. Please provide suggestions for the site to Keith Dickinson, keithd@vt.edu. Keith also requests your digitized photos of recent and not so recent association events to use in building the online photo gallery.



VAAEA

Virginia Association of Agricultural Extension Agents

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VAAEA Calendar:

VESA/VAAEA Meeting
April 6th, 9:00 am
Holiday Inn Koger Center
Richmond, VA

Virginia Beef Expo
April 16—17
Rockingham Fairgrounds

Virginia Pork Festival
June 9th, Emporia

NACAA AM/PIC
July 11—15
Orlando, Florida

VAAEA Board Meeting
September 21st
Louisa & Blacksburg (vtel)

VAAEA Annual Meeting &
Awards Luncheon
December 10, 2004
Holiday Lake 4-H Center

VAAEA Membership and Life Member Recruiting

Congratulations and job well done! As of February 20th, the VAAEA membership numbered 111! This important because it allows us to retain the number of DSA and AA Awards we may recognized via the National Association and most importantly, it allows us to retain our current level of representation at the National Convention. Last year, as a first time delegate, I was involved in an important vote to maintain our current National Convention's stand-alone status. This issue is especially key to our Life Members and I personally feel we owe them a great deal.

A quick reminder, members may contribute to the Scholarship Fund and then apply for support to attend training and professional development opportunities throughout the nation. I will close by quoting Mr. Tom Covey. "This organization provides its members with many opportunities, but it is up to the members to seek out these opportunities," Tom stated. Tom followed up this statement by mentioning his participation in the scholarship program. "I have gotten back much more than I ever put in." Membership brochures from the NACAA are available, contact Brad, Cynthia or Jim.

Also, we would like to encourage all retirees to consider becoming a Life Member of NACAA and VAAEA. The life membership dues are a one time payment of \$50.00. If you would like to become a life member, simply send a \$50.00 check payable to VAAEA to Andy Overbay, 275 South 4th Street Suite 201, Wytheville, VA 24383. Andy will submit the proper paperwork to NACAA to get your life membership