



RURAL LIVING YOUR WAY

# LEADER

Farm Credit of the Virginias  Spring 2015

**The Economic Impact of  
Farm Credit of the Virginias' Patronage Program**

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**Maple Syrup is Pouring  
Out of West Virginia**





# JOIN US!


## REMAINING CUSTOMER APPRECIATION EVENTS

Branch	Date	Time	Location
Roanoke	6/1/15	6-8	The Home Place Restaurant
Chatham	6/4/15	5-7	Olde Dominion Ag Complex
Oakland	6/9/15	5:30-8	Alpine Lake
Wytheville	6/11/15	4-6	Wytheville Meeting Center
Abingdon	6/12/15	6-8	Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
Culpeper	6/16/15	5-8	Culpeper Office
Clarksburg	6/18/15	5-8	Lambert's Winery
Leesburg	6/24/15	5-7	Loudoun Golf & Country Club
Verona	6/25/15	5-7:30	Frontier Culture Museum
Harrisonburg	6/26/15	11-2	Rockingham County Fairgrounds
Halifax	7/23/15	5-7	Edmunds Memorial Park
Warrenton	7/31/15	7-10	Great Meadow - Twilight Jumper
Charlottesville	8/31/15	5-6:30	Woodgrill
Bedford	9/10/15	5-8	The Old Mill Farm



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# LEADER

is published quarterly for stockholders, directors and friends of Farm Credit of the Virginias.

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Address changes, questions, comments or requests for copies of our financial reports should be directed to Farm Credit of the Virginias, ACA by writing P.O. Box 899, Staunton, VA 24402 or calling 800-559-1016. Our quarterly financial report can also be obtained on our website: [www.farmcreditofvirginias.com](http://www.farmcreditofvirginias.com), or by email: [chite@fcvirginias.com](mailto:chite@fcvirginias.com).

Farm Credit of the Virginias furnishes data to credit reporting agencies. The association's reporting efforts are important for aiding consumers in obtaining credit, assisting businesses in credit approval, providing consumers with timely and accurate personal credit information, reducing fraud and abuse, helping prevent identity theft and minimizing errors in credit reporting. If you have questions regarding this process, please contact our Credit Desk at 540-886-3435 ext. 5038.






## Holiday Schedule

**July 3**—Independence Day, Friday  
**September 7**—Labor Day, Monday  
**October 12**—Columbus Day, Monday  
**November 26 and 27**—Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)  
**December 24 and 25**—Christmas (Thursday and Friday)

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# Off To a Strong Start



**Dave Lawrence**

The association is off to a strong start for 2015. The lending team reports the loan inquiry pipeline for all segments is busier than it has been for the past several years.

Earnings are on target to meet budget, capital position remains strong and credit quality is on an increasing trend.

The first of two patronage checks was mailed to customers in April. Yes, the Board of Directors approved paying \$21 million in patronage dividends to you, our customer-owners for a second year in a row. Once again the patronage paid is approximately twice the amount we would have normally paid. The special patronage paid to our member-borrowers is primarily due to a patronage payment the association received from the AgFirst Farm Credit Bank. This is the second year AgFirst has paid the association a "special" patronage. Member-borrowers with loan balances during 2014 will receive two patronage checks. The second patronage check is scheduled to be mailed around June 1, 2015. The total patronage paid to our customer-owners equals approximately 24 percent of the interest paid during 2014. It truly pays to be a member-borrower of Farm Credit of the Virginias!

Your association remains in a strong position and stands ready to meet the lending needs of our farmers and producers in the Farm Credit of the Virginias (FCV) footprint.

## Customer Appreciation Days

Once again your lending team is hosting customer appreciation events in all of the

lending locations over the next few months. We always look forward to customer appreciation days because it is a time for us to say THANKS to our VIPs/customer-owners and THANKS for doing business with Farm Credit. The directors and I try to attend as many of the events as possible because it's a time when we can visit with you and hear how we are doing and how we can do a better job taking care of your financial lending needs.

## The Board Honors Loan Officers At The Circle Of Excellence April 2015

The Circle of Excellence is a time to recognize "the best of the best" from our lending team. Top producing loan officers are the rainmakers for Farm Credit. A rainmaker is a loan officer who is responsible for getting new customers, getting new business and keeping customers coming back due to their exceptional customer service.

### The 2014 Overall Top & Key Producers for FCV are:

- Association Top Producer is Relationship Manager Mark Haddix located in Elkins, W.Va., who primarily works with our forestry customers.
- Association Key Producer is Patti Craun, a Regional Sales and Lending Manager in the Shenandoah Valley who primarily works with our dairy customers.

### Most Valued Producers are:

- Carroll Laycock, the green industry specialist for the association.
- Marilyn Adams, Team Leader in the Leesburg lending location.

- David Cuddy, a loan officer in the Abingdon area working primarily with beef industry customers.
- Keith Diem, a Team Leader in the Lewisburg lending location.
- Rodney Dellis, a Team Leader in the Bedford lending location.
- Greg Mitchell, a Team Leader in the Petersburg and Moorefield lending locations.
- Nancy Biscoe, a Loan Officer in the Orange lending area.
- FJ Grady, a Team Leader in the Oakland lending location.

We recognized another category this year: the "Innovation Leadership" winners. This group of five individuals led the charge that moved the FCV Team to a unified processing system. This represents a complete consolidation of processing center operations throughout the association into one approach for the first time in the life of FCV and is tied directly to our 2014 Business Plan initiatives.

Innovative Leadership Winners are Teresa Lyons, Debbie Croson, Vanessa Brown, Katrina Davis and Terri Painter.

Please join me in saying THANKS to the Circle of Excellence winners. They not only set the bar high for results but also deliver exceptional customer service.

The Farm Credit Virginias Team is proud to work with all farmers and producers to meet your lending needs. Please tell your friends and neighbors about Farm Credit or give us their names, and one of our loan officers will gladly reach out to them. Thank you for your support and business! ∞

# Top Team Members Recognized for their Success!

**F**arm Credit of the Virginias has experienced another exceptional year, financially speaking and overall. The association was able to deliver TWO patronage checks to customer-borrowers last year and fortunately this year is no different.

The success of Farm Credit of Virginias is a result of both a loyal customer base and the team effort put forth by each and every employee. The association has always taken pride in the efforts made by its lending team and has always encouraged them to strive for excellence. To be able to offer creditable financial advice, staying in tune to what is happening in the industry as well as offering customer service that surpasses all other lending institutions takes the best of

the best. The Farm Credit Circle of Excellence winners are exactly those types of employees.

In an effort to recognize the top employees for their production, leadership and customer service, the association recently held a Circle of Excellence celebration where they were recognized by board members and management at Early Katering Company in Harrisonburg, VA. New income production during the 2014 fiscal year was the primary selection criteria for being awarded as one of the Circle of Excellence's "Production" winners. Additionally, the loan officers selected had a satisfactory rated loan servicing and credit administration history by both outside auditors and management. These individuals generated new customers

and business in 2014, while still fulfilling the needs of returning customers.

Board members and management of the Farm Credit of the Virginias truly appreciate their employees and find that the Circle of Excellence celebration is a way for them to recognize those who push themselves the hardest. Without individuals like those recognized, Farm Credit of the Virginias would not be what it is today. These individuals put countless hours into making everything happen for not only the team they work for but for each and every one of their customers. Their efforts do not go without much appreciation. ∞



Dave Lawrence, CEO of Farm Credit of the Virginias, addresses the Circle of Excellence winners and management who attended the award ceremony.



Innovative Leadership Winners pictured left to right: Terri Painter, Teresa Lyons, Katrina Davis and Vanessa Brown. Not pictured is Debbie Croson.



All Circle of Excellence winners pictured above from left to right: Greg Mitchell, Marilyn Adams, Patti Craun, Keith Diem, Terri Painter, FJ Grady, Teresa Lyons, Rodney Dellis, Katrina Davis, Charles Leech (Chairman of Board of Directors), Vanessa Brown, Carroll Laycock, Nancy Biscoe, and David Cuddy. Not pictured: Mark Haddix and Debbie Croson.

# The Economic Impact of Farm Credit of the Virginia's Patronage Program

## *How many times does a dollar turn over once it reaches your community?*

That's the question posed to Dr. David M. Kohl, Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Finance and Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship at Virginia Tech.

According to Dr. Kohl, "Patronage is an example of dollars put to work in our agricultural industry and rural communities as a result of strategic vision and focus on efficiency, with a team of people who care about the customers and communities they serve in a globally competitive environment. If one uses a multiplier effect of five to ten dollars for every dollar of patronage as a result of possible investment, spending, and employment, then one can quickly ascertain how \$21 million in patronage dividends [the amount of cash Farm Credit of the Virginias paid to its members this year from 2014 year-end profits] could equate to \$50 million to over \$100 million of activity. This is not a 'one and done' activity, as it has been replicated by Farm Credit of the Virginias for more than 13 years and is truly an economic engine for agriculture and rural America."

Using Dr. Kohl's estimate of a multiplier of 5, economics indicate that that money will bounce to at least five merchants in some

manner, benefitting the region by an estimated \$105 million. And remember that this is the effect of our patronage program at the very LEAST, according to Dr. Kohl!

When you look at the patronage history of Farm Credit of the Virginias, the economic impact over the past 20 years has been SIGNIFICANT! The cash portion of the patronage and allocated surplus revolvments over those 20 years totals more than \$246 million.

We are proud to be here to lend money to agribusiness, farmers, and those who want to live out in the country. And, we are equally proud of the continued commitment to the cooperative principle of sharing our profits with you. This is how a cooperative should operate!

What can you do to ensure that you continue to receive a patronage refund?

- Continue to borrow from Farm Credit of the Virginias for all your farm, agribusiness, large real estate tract, and equipment needs.
- Refinance loans you may have with other lenders through the cooperative you own and govern.
- Tell your friends and neighbors about Farm Credit of the Virginias.

Fiscal Year Ending	Total Patronage Distribution
<b>1995-2000</b>	<b>\$62,851,000</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>\$8,036,000</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>\$8,449,000</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>\$7,456,000</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>\$10,425,000</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>\$15,146,000</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>\$18,050,000</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>\$18,500,000</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>\$12,800,000</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>\$11,000,000</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>\$10,700,000</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>\$10,600,000</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>\$21,000,000</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>\$21,000,000</b>
<b>20-Year Total</b>	<b>\$246,013,000</b>

- Use Farm Credit's Country Mortgages products for your new home purchases or refinances. We offer competitive rates and a variety of loan programs to fit your particular needs.
- Use Farm Credit of the Virginias for all of your leasing and crop insurance services. The more profits we make, the more we share with our customers! ∞



*David Kohl received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural economics from Cornell University. For 25 years, Kohl was Professor of Agricultural Finance and Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. He was on special leave with the Royal Bank of Canada working on advanced initiatives for two years, and also assisted in the launch of the successful entrepreneurship program at Cornell University. Kohl is Professor Emeritus in the AAEC Department at Virginia Tech.*



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can be found on the following websites:**

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[www.farmvetco.org](http://www.farmvetco.org)**

**Homegrown  
By Heroes  
[www.hgbh.org](http://www.hgbh.org)**



# Patronage

**W**hen you become a member of Farm Credit of the Virginias, our success becomes your success. To prove it, we've returned more than \$183 million in cash refunds since 2001. We experienced another record year in 2014, so our Directors declared that an additional check be distributed to our customers for a

SECOND year in a row! What does that mean? The regular patronage dividend, which typically represents 12 percent of the amount of interest paid on a loan in a given year, would be doubled resulting in a second check, totaling another 12 percent. This brings the 2014 patronage dividend to just over \$21 million for a second year in a row!

Farm Credit is the **ONLY** lender in the area that returns profits to its borrowers proving that 'We Put Our Profits In Your Pockets!®' ∞

*For more information on how the Farm Credit patronage refund program works, visit [FarmCreditofVirginias.com/about/patronage-program.aspx](http://FarmCreditofVirginias.com/about/patronage-program.aspx)*



Teresa Karst, Branch Manager out of the Ripley office proudly presents Dwight Anderson's patronage refund to him.



Sam Baker, customer out of the Ripley office pictured above receiving his patronage refund with Loan officer, David Wise.



Charles Leech, Chairman of the Virginias Board of Directors, receives his patronage refund check along with his wife Linda which was presented by Harrisonburg Loan Officer and dairy specialist Patti Craun.



At  
Farm Credit,  
"We Put  
Our Profits  
In Your  
Pockets!"

Farm Credit of the Virginias  
has distributed more than  
**\$183 Million**  
in cash refunds since 2001.

Year	% of Interest Accrued	Cash Amount
2001	12%	\$8,036,000
2002	13%	\$8,449,000
2003	12%	\$7,456,000
2004	16%	\$10,425,000
2005	20%	\$15,146,000
2006	20%	\$18,050,000
2007	18%	\$18,500,000
2008	12%	\$12,800,000
2009	10%	\$10,000,000
2010	12%	\$11,000,000
2011	12%	\$10,700,000
2012	12%	\$10,600,000
2013	12%	\$10,500,000
2013	Special Distribution	\$10,500,000
2014	12%	\$10,500,000
2014	Special Distribution	\$10,500,000

Farm Credit is the only lender in  
the area that returns profits to its  
borrowers. Our unique cooperative  
structure puts money in your pockets.

As profits are returned to you, your cost of borrowing is  
reduced. You get a competitive rate from Farm Credit  
and we reduce your effective interest rate  
with our profit sharing refunds.

# Farm Credit Knowledge Center is Proud to Provide Information to a Broad Audience



FARM CREDIT

## Knowledge Center



**T**he Farm Credit Knowledge Center, which was officially launched a little over a year ago, spent much of 2014 focused on providing as much information as possible to a variety of producers involved in agricultural production. In addition to assisting farmers, they also assisted those youth interested and involved in agriculture plus those who wanted to learn more about our industry. The website, [www.farmcreditknowledgecenter.com](http://www.farmcreditknowledgecenter.com), which serves as a hub where numerous articles, resources, events and other pieces of information is stored, is focused largely towards providing all of those who are interested in agriculture with a variety of information from weekly blogs posts on pertinent topics, upcoming events where they can increase their knowledge, educational resources to help share about agriculture, scholarship opportunities for youth, and much more! The Knowledge Center team also organized, or assisted with the organization

of, many different types of workshops – from Beef and Dairy Risk Management sessions to the Farm Management Institute workshops (formerly known as Young Farmer Institute), to One Page Business Plan Workshops, Dairy Management Institutes, Ag Biz Planner, and several others.

However that is not the only focus for the Knowledge Center! Our loan officers and other employees are Farm Credit's most valuable asset, and the Knowledge Center is excited to be able to help provide educational opportunities for them as well. The team was excited to work with some of our internal experts to organize a workshop about winery and vineyard businesses for approximately 20 employees earlier this year. The goal of the workshop was to provide basic information to our employees about the structure of this industry and help them to understand some of the hurdles, struggles and considerations those who are interested in

starting a winery or vineyard business may encounter. This half day workshop was held in Culpeper, which is central to several areas where wineries and vineyards tend to be more concentrated.

Many of our loan officers have a background in some type of agriculture, but the winery and vineyard industry is relatively new and one of the fastest growing sectors in Virginia. The goal of this workshop was to provide information to our employees so that as they visit with potential customers, they are prepared to discuss a variety of different options and considerations that can help the customer make an informed decision – as well as understand at least some of the risks associated with this industry.

The Knowledge Center is proud to be able to assist with this venture and we look forward to bringing more educational opportunities to both our customers and employees throughout the rest of 2015 and beyond. As always, our main focus is helping to support and promote agriculture in all of its different forms in every possible way.

Don't forget to visit our website at [www.farmcreditknowledgecenter.com](http://www.farmcreditknowledgecenter.com) to check out the weekly blog and view our calendar for upcoming agriculture events in our area, and be on the lookout for some exciting changes coming to the website later in 2015! ❧



# Farm Management Institute



**T**wo Farm Management Institutes, formerly known as the Young Farmer Institutes, were held this past March in Dayton, Va., and Lewisburg, W.Va. Dr. Dave Kohl and Dr. Alex White addressed a variety of producers, industry experts, youth and agriculture advocates as they shared extensive knowledge of the ag industry. Global and domestic economies, news and trends impacting the industry, and business and transition planning were among the main topics discussed with the participants. The day was filled with learning and networking opportunities for all involved.

The Farm Management Institute program is a prerequisite for producers to enroll in a more advanced training opportunity called Ag Biz Planner. That program is a six month course where farmers are able to enhance their financial and business management skills as well as develop a business plan for their operation. The Farm Management

Institute gives a basic overview of the current topics needed to succeed in today's changing agricultural industry. Farm Credit, along with the Farm Credit Knowledge Center, fully support educational programs like these that provide an opportunity to enhance one's financial and business skills.

There is still an opportunity to take part and participate in a Farm Management Institute in 2015. The Chatham, VA event,

which was postponed due to weather, has been rescheduled for November 5th from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Olde Dominion Ag Complex. If you would like to reserve a seat please feel free to contact your local branch at 1-800-919-FARM or email [knowledgecenter@FCVirginias.com](mailto:knowledgecenter@FCVirginias.com). We encourage you to bring a family member or friend. All are welcome and the event is FREE. We hope to see you in Chatham! ☞



Dr. Dave Kohl is shown above speaking to Farm Management Institute (FMI) participants at the Dayton, Va. event.



Pictured above are all the FMI participants who attended the Lewisburg FMI event.



## Maple Syrup is Pouring Out of West Virginia

By Jennifer Showalter

There is something about the taste of warm maple syrup drizzled over a stack of buttermilk pancakes that is near about irresistible for most folks. Maple syrup production is a process that was adopted by the European settlers from the Native Americans. It quickly became a tradition for many families, and later turned into a business for some since there is such a large demand and production is so site specific. Maple syrup is often associated with Canada and Vermont. Here in the United States, West Virginia has the potential of being one of the largest producers of pure maple syrup with more tappable trees than the state of Vermont. In West Virginia, maple trees are usually opened for the season in the middle of January and if the weather cooperates, harvest can continue until the middle of March and sometimes all the way into April.

Nestled deep in the mountains of Petersburg, W.Va.,

are some of the state's most productive maple syrup farms. Bowers Maple Farm and Little Creek Sugar Camp are two individual farms in the area that are run by cousins, Nathan and Mark Bowers. Back in the spring of 1998 when Mark's father and Nathan's uncle, Carl Bowers, came home with tapping material to give maple syrup collection a try, little did they know that this was not only the start of a family hobby but later two successful businesses. After getting started, Carl quickly realized he had too many trees tapped for boiling in a single

cast iron kettle, so he bought an evaporator and built a sugarhouse. His production went from 48 gallons in a kettle to 151 gallons with the evaporator.

### Transitioning a hobby into a business

With his new purchase and the sugar house, it only made sense to expand his lines and tap into other trees he had on his property. He saw great potential in the business and encouraged both Mark and Nathan to get involved. Carl

topped his production in the spring of 2001 when the season lasted to the last day of March and he harvested a total of 248 gallons of maple syrup. Before Carl passed way in 2002, he had set the groundwork for Mark to take over Bowers Maple Farm and make a go with it.

Mark has been working at RR Donnelly and Sons in Harrisonburg, Va., since 1980. The rotating shift schedule he is on allows him just enough time





on the farm to get done what he has to do to continue on what his father started. Mark and his wife, Deborah, currently have around 50 acres with 1,100 taps in primarily sugar, red, and black maple trees. After seven maple seasons on his own, Mark finally broke his dad's record of 248 gallons and produced 271.5 gallons during the spring of 2010. The new farm record was set in 2013 when Mark produced 383 gallons of syrup. In addition to family, Mark has one assistant who mainly helps with boiling the sap down to syrup. Mark bottles the syrup in various size jugs and sells it along with maple candy packages at local stores and festivals.

## Making a business out of what the Lord gifted

Being a close-knit family, Mark was a driving force behind the start of Little Creek Sugar Camp. Nathan is an entrepreneur himself and was not afraid to give it a shot, but just wanted to make sure it made sense to incorporate the new adventure in with everything else he had going. "Henry Brenneman (owner of Brenneman's Maple Syrup and Equipment out of Salisbury, Penn.) came and looked over our trees just to see if we could have a syrup production farm. He said, 'They just don't know what they have—so many maple trees!' God is good and he has been good to us. We are very thankful," says Debra Harper Bowers, Nathan's wife.

The farm that has some of Nathan and Debra's sugar lines has been in her family for

well over 100 years making it mean that much more to each of them. Nathan and Debra no longer have off-farm jobs but stay busy raising pullets, cows, sheep, and harvesting maple syrup. With two sons, two daughters, and 11 grandchildren, who all pitch in and help in one way or another, Little Creek Sugar Camp is truly a family run and operated business. "Our goal is to get established in this venture in the hopes that our children and grandchildren will continue in what has been started and make some of the best maple syrup in the state of West Virginia," says Debra.

Nathan and Debra currently are using 80 acres of their farm for syrup production. With 20 miles of tubing and approximately 5,200 taps over an area with a 40% grade, they produce hundreds of gallons of syrup each year that they typically sell in 50 gallon barrels, but do bottle some for family members and a small group of customers. Production fluctuates depending on the weather and wildlife damage to the trees, tubing and pipeline. "This year we have a lot of damage from bear and squirrel. Coping with the wildlife is one of our biggest challenges," says Debra.

To help ease the workload, Nathan and Debra have a crew come in from Red House, Md., to tap the trees, fix the lines, and take the taps out at the end of the season. Typically the trees are only tapped once per season. Trees are self-healing and the holes should be healed up by the next season so that the tree can be

tapped again. If a tree is tapped too many times in one season because of improper placement, the livelihood of the tree is jeopardized because of the increased risk of disease invasion. By leaving this task up to a crew that specializes in tapping, Nathan and Debra have more time to do other things around their farm and feel the trees are in better hands. With maple trees not reaching peak syrup production until they are over 40 years old, it is too long of an investment to risk any damage.

## Finding comfort in a reliable lending source

Nathan and Debra first started with Farm Credit when they built their poultry houses back in 1996. The Bowers cherish the working relationship that Farm Credit has built with them and appreciate the support and backing they have received. "Farm Credit has been there for us over the years. They have always been there to help out financially and the staff is always helpful and friendly," says Nathan's wife, Debra.

Bowers Maple Farm and Little Creek Sugar Camp are obviously two separate operations that market their products in completely different ways, but they are still both run by a large family that works together and looks out for each other. ∞

*For more information on Bowers Maple Farm, visit [www.bowersmaplefarm.com](http://www.bowersmaplefarm.com). Tours are by appointment only.*

# CAP News

(Communications Advocacy Program)

**T**he Farm Credit team and the Board of Directors understand the importance of building strong, lasting relationships with members of Congress who were responsible for the establishment of the Farm Credit cooperative in 1916. Since then, our team strives to maintain those relationships in order to keep Congress aware of the needs of those in the agriculture industry and to share the Farm Credit story and how we have been the rural lending experts for nearly 100 years. Farm Credit remains successful in maintaining those relationships by attending the events listed below.

## January

**January 15:** Virginia Agribusiness Banquet, Richmond, Va., —Directors and employees participated in the Virginia Agribusiness Banquet that was held in Richmond, Va. The event hosted more than 1,000 people from the agricultural industry, members of the Governor's cabinet, the Virginia General Assembly and Congress.

**January 28-29:** Bette Brand, Chief Sales Officer, participated in the Virginia Horse Council's Legislative event in the Virginia General Assembly. An equine-themed gift was given to each senator and delegate and members of the Governor's cabinet along with the equine industry policy booklet. Bette also participated in the VHC Legislative reception, which Farm Credit of the Virginias sponsored.

## February

**February 2-3:** The Welcome Back and Taste of West Virginia luncheon for West Virginia Legislators took place in Charleston. FCV directors and employees teamed up with West Virginia Farm Bureau to deliver boxed lunches for all of the legislators and then met with several key members to share issues important to agriculture and rural communities. On day two, our team worked the booth that was held in the rotunda and then participated in the Taste of West Virginia reception later that evening.

**February 26:** Bette Brand participated in a luncheon with Colonial Farm Credit in Washington, D.C., for Congressman Rob Wittman. She also visited Congressman Dave Brat's office and met with his Ag L.A. She then met with Congressman Bob Goodlatte's new Ag L.A. Each visit was an opportunity to explain Farm Credit and how it operates and serves our farmer members and rural communities. Bette was able to share some specific ways that Farm Credit is helping constituents.

**February 26:** Bette Brand attended a reception for Congressman Morgan Griffith in Washington, D.C., and had an opportunity to share stories of farmers and how Farm Credit is helping them through the Knowledge Center.



Shown left is the 'goody bag' of custom made gingerbread cookies presented to the VA General Assembly that were provided by Farm Credit and the Virginia Horse Council.



FCV directors and employees teamed up with West Virginia Farm Bureau to deliver boxed lunches for all of the legislators

## March

**March 3:** Bette Brand participated in a dinner with Congressman Bob Goodlatte in Washington, D.C., to share news of the Knowledge Center activities and the role Farm Credit is playing to help farmers be more successful.

**March 12:** We donated several cases of wine from some of our customers for a charitable event in Washington, D.C., that is organized by the southern Congressional Delegation. Funds raised during the event will come back to Congressman Goodlatte's district to help a specific charity each year.

**March 17:** Bette Brand and Mike Diehl, Regional Sales and Lending Manager, participated in the Virginia Agribusiness Council National Policy.

## April

**April 11-13:** Senator Joe Manchin's Country Roads Leadership PAC at the Greenbrier was attended by Farm Credit's Regional Lending Manager, Joe Casto who works out of the Ripley, W.Va., branch office.

**April 14-16:** Recent Ag Biz Planner participants took a trip to visit their congressional representatives as well as their state senators. Some of the participants were even interviewed by RFD-TV. ∞



Joe Casto, Regional Lending Manager for Farm Credit of the Virginias, is pictured with Senator Joe Manchin and his wife, Gayle at the Country Roads PAC weekend at The Greenbrier.



Ben Smith, Farm Credit member and owner of the Moo Thru and Cool Lawn Farm in Remington, VA, sits down with Congressman Robert Hurt during the AgBiz trip to D.C.



Pictured above is the group who attended the AgBiz Planner Trip to D.C. including employees and members.

## Comments about the AgBiz Planner trip:

*"I was kind of nervous at first, I had never spoken with legislators or been in the Capitol. It didn't take very long to realize legislators are regular people, just like us, they just have jobs that put them out of touch with agriculture. I think everyone benefits from seeing and hearing how other people make a living."* —Keith Bohrer

*"Farm Credit really outdid themselves in providing the Ag Biz participants the opportunity to speak with their Congressmen and Senators on the D.C. trip."* —Valerie Moore

*"The D.C. trip was an amazing experience allowing us to interact with our representatives reassuring them how important agriculture is to Virginia and the U.S.! I would like to greatly thank Farm Credit for hosting this event!"* —Matthew Heldreth



Keith Bohrer, Farm Credit member and recent Ag Biz Planner graduate took advantage of the opportunity to share his story and the importance of agriculture with W.Va. Senator Shelley Moore Capito's staff members.



The Ag Biz trip included a lot of walking, but Farm Credit member, owner of Harmony Harvest and expectant mother of twins, Jessica Hall made it through!

# Ag Biz Planner

The 2014-2015 Ag Biz Planner Program participants were able to celebrate the results of their hard work and dedication as they tossed up their graduation caps on March 23rd and 24th at the graduation ceremony in Raleigh, N.C. The program is a six-month course that includes online modules featuring business and financial management, economic trends in agriculture and business plan development and ultimately developing a business plan that will live, breathe and work for the individuals and their families.

This was the fourth Farm Credit of the Virginia's Ag Biz Planner class and participants included a mix of couples, brothers and sisters or business partners. Their operations were just as diverse, consisting of beef, dairy,

poultry, produce operations and much more. This diversity was key for the program to be a success for the participants, giving them the opportunity to network and learn from each other. The graduation ceremony was no exception, providing opportunities to enhance knowledge and experience. In Raleigh, N.C. Farm Credit of the Virginias' participants had the chance to meet and interact with fellow program students from various Farm Credit Associations and organizations in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Kentucky.

The two-day ceremony was kicked off by a fellow alumni participant from Farm Credit of the Virginias, Jessica Hall with Harmony Harvest Farm. Jessica discussed

how she began her operation with the development and assistance she received on her business plan through the program and where her operation is now. She provided great motivation and encouragement to the graduates as she emphasized the course does not end at graduation, but sets the stage for participants to continue to grow and improve on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis. No time was wasted as Dr. Dave Kohl, professor of the Ag Biz Planner Program with Farm Credit University, then dove into megatrends in agriculture, business management, financial management, and agriculture advocacy. Dr. Alex White, with Virginia Tech, complimented Dr. Kohl's presentation as he touched on the keys to financial management and transitioning the farm and/or business to the next generation. Little did the participants know that they would later have the opportunity to put Dr. Kohl, Dr. White and the CEO's of the various Farm Credit Associations in the hot seat. Graduates had the opportunity to pose various questions to the panel to receive feedback and insight to specific questions. To wrap up the program Matt Lohr, Knowledge Center Director with Farm Credit of the Virginias, gave a motivational talk to the crowd and encouraged them to serve their community as well as tell "their story".

One of the program mentors after the graduation said, "This is a rewarding experience for any farmer or producer to be able to take part of. It is exciting to see the growth and development over the past several months of the students as the networking and interaction that takes place at the graduation program is priceless. The program graduates will be friends and resources for a lifetime."

*Farm Credit of the Virginias is looking forward to the upcoming class that will begin in August of 2015. If you have any questions or would like more information on the program, please do not hesitate to contact Kyley Clevenger at [KClevenger@FCVirginias.com](mailto:KClevenger@FCVirginias.com) or (703)777-3311 Ext. 5616.*





## Will Roberts—Cascade, Virginia

By Jenna Roeder

**M**y name is Will Roberts and my wife, Becky, and I live in Cascade, Va. I am a first generation farmer in southwestern Pittsylvania County. I grew up in Caswell County, North Carolina, where my grandparents ran a small cattle operation, planted timber and raised some tobacco. That time spent on their farm helped me to realize I wanted to continue serving and being part of the livestock industry. I currently farm approximately 500 acres and have a small cow/calf operation. I am also the owner of an off-farm base business, Rawhide Fencing Services, L.L.C., which is a custom fencing operation. My crew and I have built fence for customers in 10 counties across two states over the last few years. We build a consistent amount of fence annually where we are either customizing

or upgrading existing fence. We also work with many customers focusing on soil and water conservation projects. In addition to farming and fencing, I am starting a livestock equipment manufacturing facility, where we will build gates, panels, hay trailers, hay feeders, and much more. I enjoy being able to serve the livestock industry and the people in the industry to make things flow better on their operations. Becky is an Agriculture Teacher and is just as involved in the farming operation and community activities as I am. To put it simply, Agriculture runs in our blood.

### Biggest Obstacles

The greatest obstacle I face daily is balancing the farm work with the fencing work which can be very demanding. I love what I do! But time management is an ongoing challenge.

However, I am thankful to have so much fence work and the drive to work with my crew daily. My desire is to continue to grow both pieces of the operation yet, there simply aren't enough hours in the day. Secondly, good, honest, skilled labor is "few and far between" therefore, hiring and maintaining a few good workers is going to be key for me moving forward with all aspects of the on farm/off farm based work. In order to better manage my time and dedicate enough hours to both the fencing operation and the cattle, I will need to acquire additional trustworthy, dedicated and honest employees for both elements to be successful.

### Some of the Greatest Accomplishments

Becoming a first generation young farmer in a county that is extremely strong in agriculture

and finding a way to work with those in my county and area to find my place has been a big step for me. As many young farmers know, finding your place in today's agriculture world isn't always easy but I am extremely thankful for "seasoned farmers" that have had faith in me and that have been willing to guide and assist me in all stages of my farming operation. Additionally, starting my own fencing business in order to assist other livestock producers and provide a beneficial service to those producers has been a huge accomplishment in my life. I thoroughly enjoy being able to assist

farmers and help make their operations more productive and successful through the service I provide. This business has allowed me to be successful enough to purchase my own farm and cattle, and I am extremely thankful for that opportunity. Purchasing a farm at the age of 28 was both intimidating and exhilarating at the same time.

An accomplishment that I did not see coming my way, nor see as a possibility for me, yet has become one of my greatest accomplishments, has been the opportunity to lead my own Farm Bureau Young Farmer

Committee here in Pittsylvania County. Currently there are 32-34 active members in the committee that meet 6-8 times per year to learn about emerging agriculture technologies, new challenges facing the agriculture industry and various other topics that benefit young farmers today. This group has attended local, state and national conferences where we were able to network with other young farmers and grow deeper in our knowledge of agriculture.

## Ultimate Goal

My ultimate goal is quite simple: To do the best I can every day and provide livestock producers with the best quality service and product that I possibly can. By doing my very best every day I believe I can build a farming operation that I can possibly one day transition to the second generation.

## Keys to Success

Defining my keys to success could take up this entire page but to try to keep it simple I will elaborate on four: determination, honesty, drive, and the willingness to learn. Being determined to do the right thing even when an easier or different way presents itself, is one of the most vital keys to success. All too often people try to take the easy road or aren't willing to go the extra mile for someone else. Determination is crucial to the success of a young farmer. Second, being honest with producers and communicating with them no matter what the question or task at hand is also important. My drive to be better today than I was yesterday no matter what I encounter has always kept my mind going. I am confident that this drive to be better daily has been a key to my success. Finally, we must always be willing to learn. We must learn from our successes and our mistakes. We must learn who our community is made up of and learn what other's strengths and weaknesses are as well. When you connect with others around you and learn more about them, you position yourself to make the most of your abilities.





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- Lazy Acres Angels
- Star O'Callahan Company
- Invincible Steadier Farms
- Virginia Farage and Graveland Council
- many more farms in North Carolina and Virginia

## How Do I Give Back to a Community That Has Given Me So Much?

I firmly believe in giving back to my community. Without a supportive network within my area, I know I would not be successful today. The organization that I enjoy working with the most is the Pittsylvania/Caswell Youth Livestock Association. Becky and I have been actively volunteering time and resources to the youth of this area for over six years. Showing livestock was one of Becky's greatest memories growing up. We both want other young agriculturalists to have that same opportunity.

Additionally, I am not only leading my county Farm Bureau Young Farmer Committee but I am also fortunate to be selected to represent my area on the Virginia State Young Farmer Committee. This allows me to coordinate events across the state that can benefit young farmers.

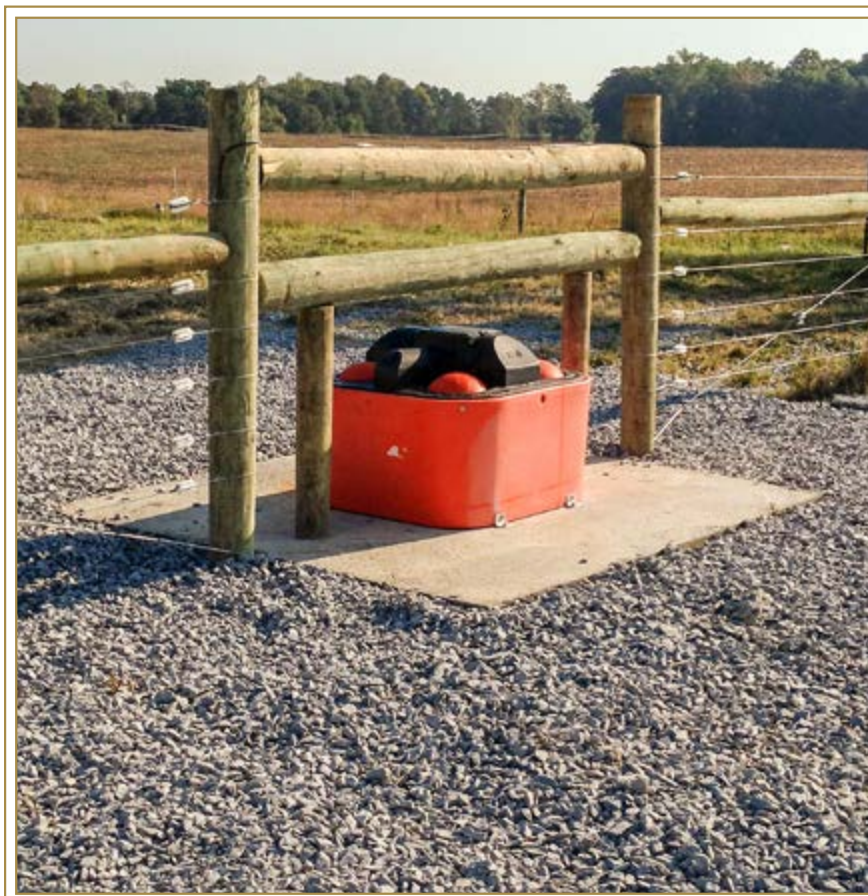
The Olde Dominion Agriculture Complex is a facility that I take a lot of pride in. This facility was started by a grassroots group of local farmers that saw the need for such a facility. Since the ground breaking I have spent countless hours building the infrastructure and assisting in the maintenance of the facility. This facility has drawn in agriculture events from

across the East Coast and this is also home to our Pittsylvania/Caswell Youth Livestock Show.

## Farm Credit Relationships

My relationship with Farm Credit is great! I work locally with Brian Wilkerson and Lisa Phipps in the Chatham Branch. They are both

amazing to work with and assist me in all my financing needs. My first dealing with Farm Credit was six years ago when I was looking to purchase my first farm. Since then I have maintained an excellent working relationship with them and now have an operating line of credit for the fencing business. Most recently I completed the AgBiz Planner online course through Farm Credit. I chose to go through this program in regards to starting the new livestock equipment manufacturing business. I wanted to learn what to do and what not to do when beginning a business from a Farm Credit perspective and numerous aspects of daily involvement within a business. I am very thankful for knowing Farm Credit has provided me with the extra knowledge and tools to be even more successful in my operation and future endeavors. No other financial lending company will assist livestock producers in as many ways as Farm Credit will. ☞



## Rockingham 4-H Livestock Contest Winners Virginia 4-H Livestock Judging Team Earns National Title

Earlier this year, the Rockingham County 4-H Livestock Judging Team emerged victorious at the Western National Roundup competition held in Denver, earning the overall team title in this annual event.

Four members of the 12-plus member team traveled to the Mile High City in January to compete: Bailey Carpenter, 16; Hannah Craun, 16; Caley Ellington, 17; and MaKalyn Nesselrodt, 17. Together, they judged ten classes of animals, including beef cattle, hogs, sheep and meat goats, with their individual scores tallied to arrive at the team total that earned them the win. The Rockingham County team competed against 25 teams, representing 24 states and Canada.

Judging livestock requires extensive knowledge of different breeds and classes within each species, as well as keen observation skills to determine the best animals in a group. Articulate oral presentation of the rationale for their assessments of the animals they judge is also a critical component of the judging process. Learning how to judge takes years of practice: each of these four youngsters comes from a farming family, giving them a strong foundation of knowledge, and each has actively trained in livestock judging for between five and ten years.

"The best training comes from going to farms and practicing with various classes of animals," says Farm Credit of the Virginias



senior commercial credit analyst Dave Walker, who shares coaching duties with co-coach Tammy Craun. "To prepare for the Denver contest, we had practice once a week from late August until the contest in early January." The team also competes in regional and state contests to gain experience, and in fact earned their place in the national competition by first winning the Virginia State Contest in June 2014.

By winning the national contest, the Rockingham team has earned the opportunity to travel to Scotland and tour agricultural and historic sites of interest. They also have the option to compete in the Royal Highland Livestock Judging Contest as a team or individually; however, participating in this competition precludes competing in certain other U.S. contests, so only MaKalyn plans to join the international contest. Individual winners at the Western National Roundup can also earn money toward college expenses: both Caley and MaKalyn have \$250 waiting for them if they pursue an animal science degree

at Colorado State University, which hosted the Denver event.

Livestock judging competitions are about more than winning prizes, though: these young 4-H members are learning valuable life skills that will help them succeed in their future college endeavors and professional careers, including observation skills, decision making, public speaking, and teamwork.

"I think the skills gained from competitive livestock judging help develop leaders in whatever career path participants choose to follow," says Walker, who himself competed in livestock judging in his younger days with then-teammate Craun. "Just as an example, MaKalyn has already started classes to become a nurse and the observation, decision making and teamwork skills she's developed through judging will certainly be useful in her nursing career."

Walker cites another benefit of competing in livestock judging. "Travelling to distant contests forces these young people to learn how to manage their time and be focused on school responsibilities before and/or after they're away for a competition," he says. "Travel to other states, and if successful at national contests as the Rockingham team has been, to other countries, also provides life experiences that can enrich and broaden their viewpoints." ❧

# Toys for Tots- National Charity Impacting our Local Communities

Toys for Tots started in Los Angeles in 1947 by a gentleman by the name of Major Bill Hendricks, USMCR. When he and his wife tried to donate a homemade doll to a needy child, there was no organization to accept the donation. Toys for Tots was then launched to be that missing link.

The first year was so successful, with donations of over 5,000 items, a national campaign was launched and the rest is history.

Although Toys for Tots is a widely recognized charitable organization, it hits



home for a lot of our local communities. It isn't often that you find a charity that impacts just about every community, but Toys for Tots is an exception.

We at Farm Credit of the Virginias strive to touch our local communities in a positive way and committing to support local organizations that positively impact those

around us is another way we can do just that!

We are proud of our employees for reaching out and helping to provide for those less fortunate during the holidays when some of our neighbors can feel the

stress the most. ∞

*For more information, contact via mail:*

*Marine Toys for Tots Foundation*

*The Cooper Center*

*18251 Quantico Gateway Drive*

*Triangle, VA 22172-1776*

*or via email: [mtftf@toysfortots.org](mailto:mtftf@toysfortots.org)*



The Lewisburg, W.Va., office collected over 50 toys for Toys for Tots during the past Christmas.



The branch office in Romney, W.Va., collected a variety of toys and gifts for a local family for Christmas.

Not pictured: The Harrisonburg, VA, Wytheville, VA and Clarksburg, WV offices contributed over 300 additional toys for the Toys for Tots Toy Drive.



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Go to [floralambiance.com](http://floralambiance.com) or call 800.672.4137. Use discount code **fccsflowers** to save \$10 off orders valued at \$30 or more. Note: The owner of this business is a Farm Credit loan customer!

### DELL COMPUTERS

Save up to 30% depending on configuration. Go to [dell.com/farmcredit](http://dell.com/farmcredit) or call 800.695.8133 and use Member ID **CS25031329**.

### NATIONAL & ALAMO CAR RENTALS

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Have questions? Contact Pat McFarland at [pat.mcfarland@fccservices.com](mailto:pat.mcfarland@fccservices.com) or call 888.275.3227 x3236.

## Consolidated Balance Sheets

(dollars in thousands)	March 31, 2015	December 31, 2014
	(unaudited)	(audited)
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 4,081	\$ 6,038
Loans	1,605,541	1,583,241
Allowance for loan losses	(12,454)	(12,465)
Net loans	1,593,087	1,570,776
Loans held for sale	1,300	1,077
Accrued interest receivable	10,917	7,854
Investments in other Farm Credit institutions	24,313	24,613
Premises and equipment, net	8,044	8,092
Other property owned	2,439	2,786
Accounts receivable	3,455	28,685
Other assets	3,941	4,592
Total assets	\$ 1,651,577	\$ 1,654,513
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Notes payable to AgFirst Farm Credit Bank	\$ 1,267,310	\$ 1,275,765
Accrued interest payable	2,735	2,809
Patronage refunds payable	1,153	21,209
Accounts payable	960	2,074
Other liabilities	34,458	16,429
Total liabilities	1,306,616	1,318,286
Commitments and contingencies		
<b>Members' Equity</b>		
Capital stock and participation certificates	13,193	13,159
Retained earnings		
Allocated	92,568	92,568
Unallocated	239,227	230,527
Accumulated other comprehensive income (loss)	(27)	(27)
Total members' equity	344,961	336,227
Total liabilities and members' equity	\$ 1,651,577	\$ 1,654,513

## Consolidated Statements of Comprehensive Income

(dollars in thousands)	For the three months ended March 31,	
	2015	2014
	(unaudited)	
<b>Interest Income</b>		
Loans	20,765	\$ 20,765
Investments	—	5
Total interest income	20,765	19,567
<b>Interest Expense</b>		
Notes payable to AgFirst Farm Credit Bank	8,345	8,345
Net interest income	12,420	11,893
Provision for loan losses	—	—
Net interest income after provision for loan losses	12,420	11,893
<b>Noninterest Income</b>		
Loan fees	122	122
Fees for financially related services	5	5
Patronage refunds from other Farm Credit institutions	3,107	3,092
Gains (losses) on sales of rural home loans, net	222	82
Gains (losses) on sales of premises and equipment, net	—	20
Gains (losses) on other transactions	15	1
Other noninterest income	131	126
Total noninterest income	3,602	3,494
<b>Noninterest Expense</b>		
Salaries and employee benefits	4,665	4,665
Occupancy and equipment	304	291
Insurance Fund premiums	402	346
(Gains) losses on other property owned, net	166	17
Other operating expenses	1,771	1,737
Total noninterest expense	7,308	6,820
Income before income taxes	8,714	8,567
Provision for income taxes	14	27
Net income	8,700	8,540
Other comprehensive income	—	—
Comprehensive income	8,700	\$ 8,540

The shareholders' investment in the Association is materially affected by the financial condition and results of operations of AgFirst Farm Credit Bank. Copies of AgFirst's quarterly and annual financial reports to shareholders are available free of charge at [www.agfirst.com](http://www.agfirst.com), or by writing to AgFirst Farm Credit Bank, Financial Reporting Department, P.O. Box 1499, Columbia, SC 29202. Farm Credit of the Virginias complete quarterly and annual financial reports are available online at [www.farmcreditofvirginias.com](http://www.farmcreditofvirginias.com)



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