

Service Area Plan

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Market Virginia Agricultural and Forestry Products Nationally and Internationally (53206)

Service Area Background Information

Service Area Description

This service area locates, develops, maintains and expands local, regional and global markets for Virginia food, agricultural and forest products. Functions within the service area are separated between domestic, international and livestock marketing.

Service Area Alignment to Mission

This service area directly aligns with VDACS' mission to promote economic growth and development of Virginia agriculture by enhancing the profitability of Virginia food, agricultural and forest products enterprises.

Service Area Statutory Authority

The following citations are from the Code of Virginia:

§§ 3.1-685 through 3.1-691 mandates the marketing services of the Division of Marketing, which include all components of this activity.

§§ 3.1-741.2 mandates the Equine Breeder Incentive Program.

§§3.1-73.1 through 3.1-73.5 mandates the Farmers' Market System

Service Area Customer Base

Customer(s)	Served	Potential
Commodity Boards	16	16
Direct Marketers	300	300
Nurseries	350	700
Processed Food Companies	200	600
Retail Markets	150	130
Vineyards	8	90
Virginia farmers	24,000	47,500

Anticipated Changes In Service Area Customer Base

According to the 2003 Census of Agriculture, the total number of farms in Virginia and the United States continues to decline. However, the number of small farms and the number of large farms have increased in Virginia and this trend is projected to continue. This will result in growing demand to tailor programs and services for both large and small producer, high volume and high value producer, and direct and international marketers.

Consumer preferences change continually but major trends include:

- Low-cost food providers have carved out a substantial portion of the marketplace which create large, but extremely competitive/low margin markets for producers
- Greater identification with locally produced products which creates new marketing niches for innovative producers, however, niche markets fill fast
- Organic products consumption is rising dramatically
- Consumers are more health conscious and increasingly concerned over how foods are produced, not just if they are available
- Increased consumer preference for value added products
- Increased product source identity throughout the food chain

