



College of Agriculture

Welcome House & Senate Agriculture, Chesapeake & Natural Resources Joint Committee!

Rooted in Purpose. Rising in Impact.





College Structure (Agency 212 & Agency 234)



Distinct Land-Grant Roles, Shared Commitment to Virginia

Complementary strengths • Coordinated research and education • One statewide Extension partnership



1890 Land-Grant University

College of Agriculture

- Applied research focused on emerging and community-relevant needs
- Strong emphasis on small, mid-sized and beginning producers
- Food systems, nutrition, workforce development and community transformation
- Randolph Farm: 416-acre research, demonstration and experiential-learning farm

WORKING TOGETHER

One statewide partnership



Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University



1862 Land-Grant University

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

- Large-scale research enterprise across agriculture and life sciences
- Statewide Agricultural Research & Extension Centers and specialized expertise
- Deep capacity in production agriculture, animal and plant sciences, natural resources and technology
- Extensive statewide faculty, specialists and Extension infrastructure

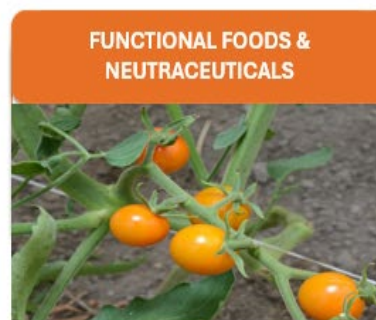


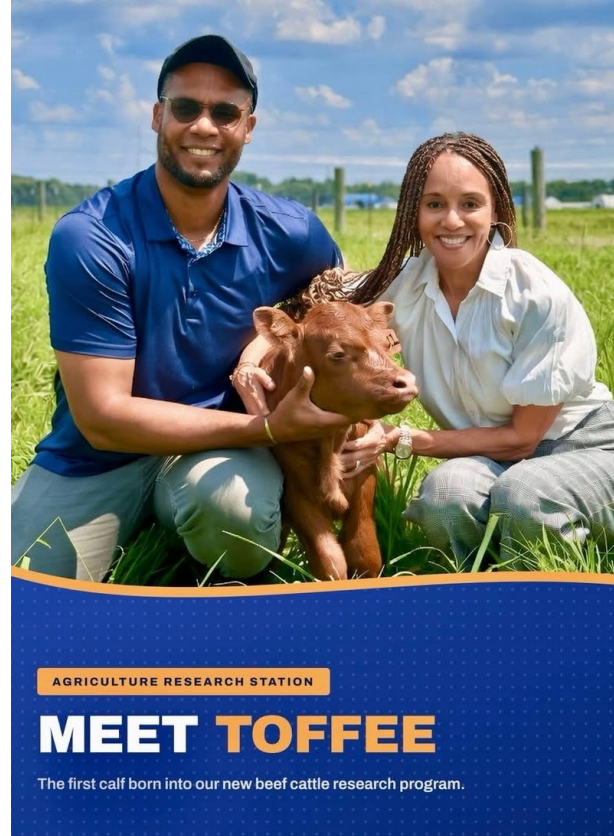
Integrated Teams



Where We Intend to Lead

Emerging priorities will shape programs, faculty expertise, research, Extension and partnerships





**Welcome *TOFFEE*,
our first South Poll
calf at Randolph
Farm.**

VSU-ARS Launches the First Registered South Poll Research Herd on a University Campus

Partnerships with VT:

- **Southern Piedmont AREC MOU**
- **Middleburg AREC to Support Mobile Processing Unit Demonstration and Processing MOU**



Solar Grazing Project - Diversified Livestock Production Systems

Establish an Autonomous Agriculture Test Bed for Small Farmers

Goal:

- Complete infrastructure efforts for technology upgrades
- New virtual fencing and animal monitoring systems
- Implement drone technologies
- New tech equipment for small farmers
- Expand Indoor production research





American
Biochar
Institute

Growing with Biochar

A Training Event for
Virginia and
Mid-Atlantic Agriculture

Learn all about biochar and its benefits for
improving soil health, increasing crop yields,
and promoting environmental sustainability

What You'll Learn

- The science behind biochar and its benefits
- Best practices for handling, storing, and applying biochar
- How to integrate biochar into current regenerative practices
- How to access federal & state cost-share programs
- And much more!



Registration



Location

VSU Multi-Purpose Center
20809 2nd Ave,
Petersburg, VA 23801

Tuesday, April 12
8am - 4pm

Questions?
Contact us at
tera@biochar-us.org



Healthy Soils

**Soil Health Program
(Scaling up Biochar
Research)**

**Carbon Readiness
Assessment Program**

**Build emphasis on
regenerative cropping
systems and functional
food (fruit and vegetable)
specialty crops**

Youth & Workforce Development


Virginia Tech • Virginia State University
 College of Agriculture

AI Prompt Cards for Rural & Urban Entrepreneurs

Program Use, Benefits, Extension Delivery, and Impact Tracking
Prepared for the Dean, College of Agriculture | Virginia State University

Developed by Dr. Arifah N. Goodwin, Community Resource Development Extension Specialist
College of Agriculture - Cooperative Extension, Virginia State University
Original 40-card educational prompt deck

Purpose of the AI Prompt Cards

The AI Prompt Cards for Rural & Urban Entrepreneurs are a practical Extension education tool designed to help small farmers, food entrepreneurs, and other community-based business owners use generative artificial intelligence more confidently and productively. The printed 40-card deck gives users ready-to-use questions that can be entered into an AI platform to support idea generation, planning, marketing, financial thinking, productivity, and business growth.

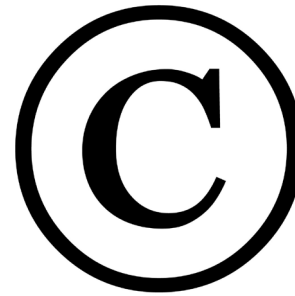
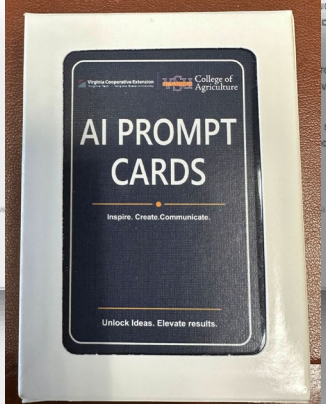
- The cards reduce the barrier of not knowing what to ask an AI tool.
- Each card turns a broad business challenge into a clear, action-oriented prompt.
- The deck can be used individually, in workshops, during one-on-one technical assistance, or as part of a structured entrepreneurship curriculum.
- The cards are designed as a starting point for decision-making, not a replacement for professional, legal, financial, food-safety, or production guidance.

How the 40-Card Deck Works

Card Area	What the User Does	Example Value
Business Idea Generation	Select a prompt that helps identify opportunities, validate an idea, or explore a side business.	Moves the user from "I want to start something" to specific concepts and questions to test.
Agriculture, Food & Local Markets		Users consider new revenue streams channels beyond raw commodity
Marketing & Branding		Longer customer communication visibility.
Business Planning & Strategy		Structured planning before major decisions.

Dr. Arifah N. Goodwin
Virginia State University

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Our passion for small & mid-sized producers



Students in the College of Agriculture

STUDENT SNAPSHOT

- 363 students enrolled

3 Degree Programs:

- B.S. – Agriculture
- B.S. – FACS
- B.S. – Hosp. Management

2 Certificate Programs:

- International Agriculture
- Nutrition & Dietetics

Scholarships:

- 59 (\$719,199)

Retention Rate:

- 73.6%

Academic Risk Decline:

- 21% - 12.8%

Enrollment Growth Strategy (450 students):

- **Create a High-Touch Recruitment Model**
 - *We Want YOU to GROW at VSU* campaign
 - COA AI-powered student recruitment & advising assistant

Retention Strategy:

- **Create a Sense of Belonging!**
- **No Student Left Behind Philosophy** - An early alert system that identifies students experiencing academic or personal challenges and provides timely intervention through a COA Student Success Center

Additional Priorities:

- Mental Health, Wellness & Resilience
- Student Innovation, Workforce & Entrepreneurship



2026 Fall Cook-Out



Fall 2026
Record
Enrollment
Growth!



AGRICULTURE

— ENROLLMENT GROWTH —



250
STUDENTS

↑ 15%
INCREASE



**FAMILY &
CONSUMER SCIENCES**

— ENROLLMENT GROWTH —



83
STUDENTS

↑ 12%
INCREASE



**HOSPITALITY
MANAGEMENT**

— ENROLLMENT GROWTH —



84
STUDENTS

↑ 14%
INCREASE



**COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURE**

— TOTAL ENROLLMENT GROWTH —



417
STUDENTS

↑ 15%
INCREASE



College of
Agriculture

PEOPLE | PURPOSE | OPPORTUNITY

A Greater Tomorrow Grows Here.

TEACHING | Student Success & Academic Momentum

Strengthening academic quality while preparing students for the future of agriculture, food and hospitality.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Full ACPHA Accreditation Reaffirmation

Hospitality Management achieved full accreditation reaffirmation, affirming program quality, rigor and continuous improvement.

“VSU’s HMGMT Program is one of the best programs we have reviewed in the country.”

FUTURE-READY LEARNING

AgTech + Cybersecurity in Agriculture

Expanding student exposure to emerging technologies and the digital skills increasingly shaping modern agriculture.

THE IMPACT

Career-ready graduates prepared at the intersection of agriculture, technology, food and hospitality.



Agri-Culinary Academy





2026 ARD Research Symposium

RESEARCH | Discovery, Innovation & Student Scholarship

Advancing research that strengthens food safety, crop productivity, student training and strategic partnerships.

RESEARCH VISIBILITY

28 Students | 26 Researchers

Presented scholarship at the 50th Biennial ARD Research Symposium, expanding VSU research visibility and student engagement.

FOOD SAFETY & PUBLIC HEALTH

Food Deserts | Tri-Cities

VSU Food Microbiology research found foodborne pathogens in foods from both small independent markets and large chains, reinforcing the need for retailer food-safety education.

PLANT GENETICS & BREEDING

Tomato QTL Research

Evans-Allen research is mapping traits for earlier flowering and maturity in cherry tomato to support productivity, sustainability and small-producer viability.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

6 FCS Students

Family & Consumer Sciences students participated in the Undergraduate Research Symposium, strengthening the undergraduate research pipeline.

GRANT MOMENTUM

16 New Proposals

6 Evans-Allen proposals plus 10 competitive proposals across AFRI, NSF, VDACS, S-SARE and USDA/NIFA.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Research Capacity Expanding

New collaborations support mobile meat processing innovative indoor-agriculture management tool



51 Students Reached

2023-2026

6+ Fields/ Program Areas



Cooperative Extension Experiential Learning Experience



- **Janiah Lee** graduated from Virginia State University in 2025 with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business & Economics. Following her undergraduate experience, she continued with Extension as a graduate intern and was subsequently **assigned an Extension position in 2025**. While working, she pursued and **completed a master's degree in Agricultural Education at North Carolina A&T State University in 2026**. Janiah directly describes the value of her Extension experience, noting that her internship helped prepare her for graduate school and that the experience was instrumental in building her skills "in every direction." She also recognized connections between the programs she worked with in Extension and the coursework she encountered in her master's program.



- **Tiquan Goode** participated in the program from 2023 through 2026 while pursuing a degree in Family and Consumer Science with a concentration in Family, Child, and Community Development. He graduated from Virginia State University in 2025 and has continued his education as a graduate student at the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro**, where he is pursuing a Human Development and Family Studies MS-to-PhD program with an expected graduation date of May 2030. His multi-year Extension experience provided sustained opportunities to engage in experiential learning and connect his academic interests with applied work.



- **Desmyn Owens**, who completed her Extension internship in 2023 while majoring in Agricultural Business & Economics, graduated from Virginia State University in December 2023. Her experience with Extension contributed to a pathway that has continued into her professional career. She recently served as the **Associate Extension Agent in 4-H Youth Development in the City of Virginia Beach**. Desmyn is also pursuing an **M.S. in Agricultural Leadership Studies at Virginia Tech**, demonstrating continued professional and academic development following her undergraduate experience.

EXTENSION | Community & Producer Impact

Scaling VSU Extension's reach through producer support, youth food literacy, applied learning, farm engagement, and climate resilience.

SMALL FARM OUTREACH

11,392 Participants

Reached through 1,026 SFOP activities supporting small, beginning, and underserved producers.

PRODUCER DEVELOPMENT

860+ Producers

Received training, mentorship, and technical assistance to strengthen farm viability and profitability.

RANDOLPH FARM ENGAGEMENT

529 Visitors

Engaged through 17 tours connecting stakeholders to applied research, demonstrations, and innovation.

FARMER VOICE

10 Focus Groups | 3 States

140 farmers contributed perspectives to inform producer-centered programming and outreach.

AGRICULTURAL ACADEMY

450 Youth

Participation grew from 60 to 450 youth in 2025 — a 7.5x increase in program reach.

SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS

390 Youth

Hands-on learning in cooking, nutrition, food safety, food systems, and farm-to-table concepts.

YOUTH AG EDUCATION

5,000+ Reached

Youth and adults engaged through the Mobile Agriculture Education Unit and experiential agriculture learning.

ADVERSE WEATHER PROJECT

175 Participated

Virginia farmers and community members participated in surveys on extreme-weather impacts on farms, communities, and daily life.

AGFest 2026 ECONOMIC & PUBLIC IMPACT

- 1,302 attendees engaged
- \$17,200 estimated economic impact (market sales, food trucks, donations)
- Strengthened agricultural education, vendor support, youth engagement & public visibility

VSU FARMERS MARKET

- 2,151 Visitors, 73 VSU students donated 1,095 volunteer hours
- 7 small farmers earned a total of \$28,000 in gross farm income
- Volunteer hours served reaches an estimated \$39K in economic value

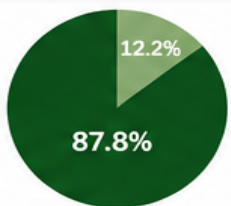
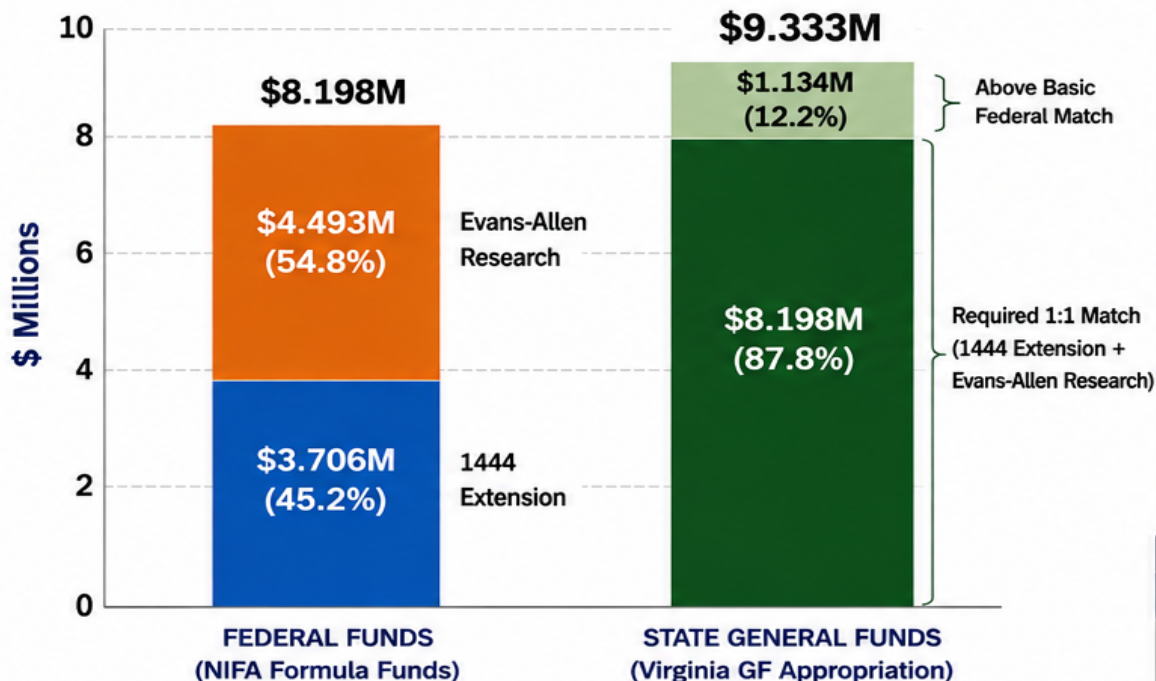


FY26 AGENCY 234

Federal and State Appropriation Comparison and Breakdown of State General Funds (FY26)

FY26 FEDERAL AND STATE APPROPRIATION COMPARISON

Side-by-Side Comparison (Dollars in Millions)



- So roughly **87.8%** of the FY26 GF appropriation is needed to cover the 1:1 formula-fund match.
- Leaving approximately **12.2%** above the basic match.

Note: Dollars may not add exactly due to rounding.

BREAKDOWN OF STATE GENERAL FUNDS (FY26)

Total Agency 234 GF Appropriation	\$9,332,567	87.8% of GF Appropriation
A. Required 1:1 Match for Federal Formula Funds	\$8,198,346	
• 1444 Extension Match	\$3,705,813	
• Evans-Allen Research Match	\$4,492,533	
B. GF Above Basic Federal Match	\$1,134,221	12.2% of GF Appropriation
Less Earmarked Designations		
• Hybrid Striped Bass (Research & Extension)	(\$392,107)	
• Small-Farmer Outreach Program (SFOP)	(\$394,000)	
Remaining Amount (Not yet unrestricted)	\$348,114	

ADDITIONAL FY26/FY27 RESOURCES BENEFITING AGENCY 234

Item	Amount	Where It Sits	Treatment / Purpose
Summerseat/Urban Agriculture Center	\$54,699 reappropriated FY27	Capital budget	Agency 234 capital resource
New FY27 Extension/Research/SFOP operating support	\$500,000 GF annually	Agency 234	New recurring base GF

Note: This \$348,114 should not yet be characterized as free or unrestricted GF because Institutional Support, O&M, personnel obligations, and other Agency 234 costs can also draw upon GF. Some or all of the \$786,107 designated amounts could be accounted for within the match depending on how VSU/NIFA reports eligible expenditures.

College of
Agriculture
Investment:
\$1.3M

Proposed
Virginia First
Program:

Goal:
To connect Virginia
demand with
Virginia
production,
processing,
distribution, and
sales in ways that
allow more
economic activity
to remain in the
Commonwealth.



Proposed Use of NEW Virginia First Funding

FY27 and FY28 (\$6.0 Million Each Year)

Investing in Virginia Farmers. Strengthening Virginia Communities. Keeping Food Dollars in Virginia.

	Investment Area	Description	FY27	FY28
	SFOP additional staffing & Virginia First operations	Expand SFOP capacity to implement Virginia First, including program staff, farmer outreach, procurement coordination, and overall program operations.	\$1.25M	\$1.50M
	Equipment Access Program	Establish and operate a shared agricultural equipment program to reduce mechanization and capital barriers for small farmers.	\$430K	\$200K
	Procurement/demand & producer-capacity data systems	Develop data systems to assess institutional demand, producer capacity, and procurement activity; support eVA integration and market matching.	\$500K	\$500K
	Food safety, certification & market readiness	Support GAP certification, food safety compliance, processing standards, and market readiness for institutional and commercial buyers.	\$400K	\$400K
	Aggregation/distribution/ cold-chain pilot	Develop aggregation, distribution, and cold-chain infrastructure to connect multiple Virginia producers with institutional and commercial markets.	\$1.50M	\$1.50M
	Value-added processing/ partnership capacity*	Support development of processing capacity, equipment, and partnerships to increase access to value-added markets for Virginia products.	\$1.25M	\$1.25M
	Farmer production/market development & technical assistance	Provide production planning, technical assistance, and market development support to help Virginia farmers expand and meet institutional demand.	\$420K	\$400K
	Evaluation/economic impact/ administration	Track performance, measure economic impact, and support program administration and reporting.	\$250K	\$250K
TOTAL (NEW VIRGINIA FIRST FUNDING)			\$6.0M	\$6.0M

LOCAL FOOD. STRONG FARMS. BRIGHTER FUTURES.

VIRGINIA FIRST FOOD PROCUREMENT INITIATIVE
VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY • SMALL FARM OUTREACH PROGRAM

VSU STUDENTS. *Real Work. Real Impact. Real Communities.*



We appreciate your support!!!