Workshops set for November 16 & November 23 at Airlie Conference Center to Strengthen Virginia's Agriculture & Food-based Businesses

Immediate Release: October 7, 2009

Contact: Matt Benson- (540) 341-7961, mcbenson@vt.edu; Ray Pickering- (540) 349-5314, ray.pickering@fauquiercounty.gov

---

Warrenton, VA- According to the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, the total impact of agriculture in Virginia is over a $55 billion dollars, creating over 357,000 total jobs. Just since 2005, the number of Virginia farmers markets has increased from 88 to over 170, an approximate 95% increase. Today, consumers are demanding more and more local food and many local food entrepreneurs and local farmers are trying to keep up with this growing demand.

The Virginia Agriculture and Food Entrepreneurship Program- a two-day workshop series focused on food safety regulations, product development, business planning and marketing opportunities invites people interested in starting an agriculture or food-based business to a series of two workshops that will address many common questions about starting or strengthening your food or agriculture-based business venture. This workshop series will give participants practical information on starting and operating a food-based business in Virginia and explain many of the common regulatory, business planning, and marketing issues and concerns that involve such a business.

These workshops are scheduled for Monday, November 16, 2009 and Monday November 23, 2009, at the Airlie Conference Center from 9am to 4pm. The address for Airlie is 6809 Airlie Road, Warrenton, VA 20187. The cost to attend one of these workshops is just $40 while the cost to attend both is $80. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged and space is limited to the first 50 individuals who register. Walk-in registrations will be considered if capacity allows. Scholarships are available to attend and will be awarded dependent on need. If you would like more information about these scholarships, please contact Matt Benson at (540) 341-7961.

This workshop series is sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension, Fauquier County Agriculture Development Department, Virginia Tech, Piedmont Environmental Council, Flavor Magazine, Fauquier County Farm Bureau, the Local Food Project at Airlie, Airlie Foundation and the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture Innovation and Rural Sustainability.

For more information or to pre-register, please contact Makrissa Winston at (540) 341-7961 ext. 11. Additional information about these workshops can be found online at http://vagaf.blogspot.com/. The agenda for each workshop is described below. We look forward to seeing you!

Monday, November 16, 2009

7:45am to 8:45am- *Sign-in & Registration*

8:45am to 9am- *Welcome*
Pablo Elliot, The Local Food Project at Airlie
Holder Trumbo, Chairman, Fauquier County Board of Supervisors

9am to 9:30am- *Keynote: 2009 Food Safety Legislation- Understanding the Current Status*
Kate Fitzgerald, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

9:30am to 10:30am- *Health Department Regulations & Certification Training Opportunities for a Food-based Business*
Virginia Valentine, Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District
Beverly Samuel, Virginia Cooperative Extension

10:30am to 10:50am- *Break*

10:50am to 12:15pm- *Short Presentations & Roundtables: Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (VDACS) Regulations that Govern a Food-based Business*
Donna Bonner (Office of Dairy and Foods), Catherine Cash (Direct Marketing-Organic Certification), Shayne Clinton (Food Safety Specialist) & Barry Jones (Office of Meat & Poultry Services), VDACS

12:15pm to 1:15pm- *Lunch*

1:15pm to 1:45pm- *Fauquier County Sample Zoning Regulations*
Deborah Dotson & Kim Johnson, Fauquier County Department of Community Development- Zoning Division

1:45pm to 2:45pm- *Food Entrepreneurship & Product Testing Opportunities*
Joell Eifert, Virginia Tech, Department of Food Science & Technology

2:45pm to 3pm- *Break*
3:00pm to 4:00pm- *Food Safety Regulations that Pertain to GAPs Certification*
Rob Williams, Virginia Tech, Department of Food Science & Technology
Tom Smith, VDACS

4:00pm to 4:15pm- *Wrap-up & Adjourn*

Monday, November 23, 2009

7:45am to 8:45am- *Sign-in & Registration*

8:45am to 9am- *Welcome*
Pablo Elliot, The Local Food Project at Airlie

9am to 10am- *Keynote: Results from Alternative Agriculture & Local Food Distribution Research*
Adam Diamond, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

10am to 10:40am- *Introduction to the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture Innovation & Rural Sustainability Virtual Business Center- Part I*
Chris Cook, Virginia FAIRS / Virginia Farm Bureau

10:40am to 11am- *Break*

11am to 11:30am- *Introduction to the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture Innovation & Rural Sustainability Virtual Business Center Part II*
Chris Cook, Virginia FAIRS / Virginia Farm Bureau

11:30am to 12:15pm- *Risk Management– Business / Product Liability & Insurance*
Leon Geyer, Virginia Tech, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics

12:15pm to 1:15pm- *Lunch*

1:15pm to 2:15pm-

Strengthening Virginia's Farmers Markets through Grassroots Statewide Collaboration
Stacy Miller, Farmers Market Coalition

Marketing Your Food Creation: Myths, Reality and Resources
Theresa Nartea, Virginia State University

2:15pm to 3:30pm- *Panel Discussion: Learning from the Field– Marketing Local Meats, Fruits & Vegetables*
Deb Williamson, Farmer Girls LLC
Pablo Elliott, The Local Food Project at Airlie
Michael Clune, The Farm at Sunnyside
Doug Linton, Quarter- Mor Farm

3:30pm to 3:45pm- *Break*

3:45pm to 4:45pm- *Panel Discussion: How to Cultivate Food Retail & Value-Added Opportunities*

Hue-Chan Karels, Open Kitchen, Falls Church
Derek Luhowiak, Local Sixfortyseven
Jamie Nicoll, Madison Region Cannery Project
Ken Smith, Cool Lawn Holsteins
Bernadine (Bernie) Prince, FRESHFARM Markets

4:45pm to 5pm- *Wrap-up & Adjourn*

###