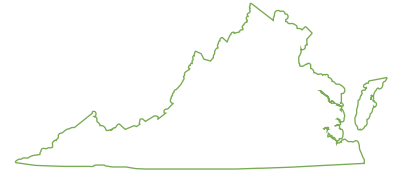


Local Resource Sheets for Farmers



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When it comes to getting support from their community, farmers have many places to turn. Soil and Water Conservation District offices and Cooperative Extension agents can offer advice on conservation strategies. USDA Local Service Centers can help farmers access the many services provided by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Rural Development agencies. Agricultural and Economic Development offices may be able to offer marketing or promotion strategies.

Pretty quickly, a farmer can become overwhelmed by all the options for help and have trouble knowing where to turn. A locally tailored resource sheet can help them navigate a sometimes-complex process. Resource sheets outline the many opportunities, funding sources, and technical assistance opportunities available to farmers in a specific area.

Purpose

A local resource sheet can communicate all the different avenues for support available to farmers in a given county. The main goal is to limit confusion and facilitate action. These sheets—which can be developed by any

local leader within a county or community—can be distributed to farmers at events, in local offices, or via the mail.

How it Works

A community leader or individual office can take the lead on developing a resource sheet for local farmers. They can begin by brainstorming all the different departments and services that may engage with the farming community. They might continue that brainstorming by considering the sorts of questions that farmers most frequently ask. Then, they should “ground truth” these questions and needs by engaging with other leaders in the community, as well as farmers themselves. Has anything or anyone been left out? Have we anticipated the needs of most farmers as best we can?

Then, the creator of the resource sheet can call or meet with leaders of all the different offices that touch agriculture in their community. They can ask these leaders to share the best ways to get in contact with their team, and they can request a brief 3–5 sentence description of the services the team offers. Soon, a community can have a detailed resource sheet with appropriate contact

information to distribute to farmers, helping them know where to look for help.

Ideally, these resource sheets are brief—no more than 1–2 pages. At this length, the sheets can easily be printed and distributed. It's worth investing time and energy, and perhaps even limited financial resources, into designing the resource sheet so that it is visually appealing. After all, farmers should hang on to these sheets and reference them regularly. Making them visually appealing increases the likelihood that farmers will keep these flyers and perhaps post them in an easy-to-see area, like on a refrigerator door or an office wall.

Some communities may opt to create their resource sheet as an online resource, either by posting it on multiple county office websites (including Cooperative Extension's) as a static PDF document or by creating a more interactive website. Grayson County in Southwest Virginia, for example, has created a website called "Farm Grayson" as part of their agricultural development efforts. On their website, they have pages devoted

fully to sharing relevant resources—from the contact information of local agricultural service providers to a mapping service that displays soil types to economic viability strategies. Fauquier County has done similar things to elevate helpful resources.

Considerations

Whatever path is pursued—whether a simple 1-page document or a more detailed interactive website—a resource sheet can be a valuable tool for farmers in your community, helping them access all the support they need to be more successful and sustainable.

To Learn More

- › [Grayson County: "Farm Grayson"](#)
- › [Fauquier County: "Relevant County Links"](#)