

# Land Use Session

- Bruce Lowe Roanoke County
- Dean Columbia, Dept. of Forestry
- Jason Hughes, Dept. of Taxation
- Kevin Schmidt, VA Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- Gordon Groover and Lex Bruce, VA Tech
- General Discussion – all

# Ag Census

Year	Number of Farms	Acres of Farm Land
2012	46,030	8,302,444
2007	47,383	8,103,925
2002	47,606	8,624,829
1997	49,366	8,753,625

# 2012 Ag Census Crop Changes

	Counties		
Crop	Added Crop	No Change	Dropped Crop
Alfalfa	10	52	13
Barley	9	23	2
Corn	4	89	2
Cotton	1	10	
Hay		101	
Pasture		99	2
Peanuts		8	1
Potatoes		2	
Pumpkins	1	1	1
Snap Beans			2
Soybeans	4	65	
Sweet Corn	1		5
Tomatoes	1		
Watermelons		1	1
Wheat	7	59	3

# Virginia Land Capability Class Index (Agricultural Land)

## Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) land capability classifications

<b>Class I</b>	Few limitations	1.50
<b>Class II</b>	Some limitations	1.35
<b>Class III</b>	Severe limitations	1.00
<b>Class IV</b>	Very severe limitations	0.80
<b>Class V</b>	Limited to pasture, range, woodland, or wildlife food and cover	0.60
<b>Class VI</b>	Sever limitations unsuited to cultivation	0.50
<b>Class VII</b>	Very severe limitations unsuited to cultivation	0.30
<b>Class VIII</b>	Unsuited for commercial plant production and Limited for recreation, wildlife, ...	0.10

# Soil Index - Prince Edward County

Class	Cropland Acreage (No Pasture)	Productivity Index	Weighted Acreage
I	418	1.50	627
II	21,273	1.35	28,719
III	10,617	1.00	10,617
IV	8,196	0.80	6,557
Total:	40,504		46,519
Soil Index Factor:		1.149	

# Soil Index – Accomack County

Class	Cropland Acreage (No Pasture)	Productivity Index	Weighted Acreage
I	22,210	1.50	33,315
II	43,189	1.35	58,305
III	18,702	1.00	18,702
IV	430	0.80	344
<b>Total:</b>	<b>84,531</b>		<b>110,666</b>
<b>Soil Index Factor:</b>		<b>1.3092</b>	

# So what?

- The Soil Index factor is then used to adjust the calculated net returns to a standard of 1.0
- Center the average net returns around Class III soils, that is 1.0
  - \$100 Net Returns /1.1490 = \$87
    - Class 1 = \$130....
  - \$100 Net Returns /1.3092 = \$76
    - Class 1 = \$114....
- Counties that use GIS overlays of soil productivity/soil type can apply have values for each soil class

# Q - 1

- Land owner signs a contract with and receives payment from a state/federal agency to establish improved habitat for wildlife and pollinators
- County qualifies it for use value assessment
- Contract expires and the owner continues to maintain the habitat improvements based on recommendations from the contracting agency
- Does this parcel still qualify for use value assessment? What about under Agricultural and Forestal Districts?



## Q - 2

- Farm and Forest Management Plans
  - What is a farm plan
  - What qualifies as a farm/forest plan
  - Who is qualified to develop a plan
  - Is the plan validated each year(s)

# Farm Plans

## (Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

- Some farms are required to have a Nutrient Management Plan written by a Certified Planner see:  
[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil\\_and\\_water/nutmgt.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/nutmgt.shtml)
- Farms not required, by law, to have a Nutrient Management Plan can obtain a Resource Management Plan see:  
[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil\\_and\\_water/rmp.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/rmp.shtml)

## Q - 3

- Bio-solids and the storage facilities for them are a land use issue
- How are they to be treated in the general land use picture?

## Q - 4

- “Contiguous properties” presents issues to some assessors. When explained most understand but here are some points:
- Assessors need to know that a road or thoroughfare, if the only divisor, do not prohibit the properties being “contiguous”
- There are still questions where ownership is not consistent OR where a parcel is sold or removed from land use and what happens to the others - particularly when they do not individually meet minimum acreage requirements.

## Q - 5

- A continual question seems to be why land use values are only changed during a reassessment. Since there is no specific Virginia Code section relating to land use values so it is confusing for some when they have to apply the general code regarding value changes only during reassessments.

## Q - 6

- How long is a current land use application good for when the person who filed it sells the property?
- If use continues does the new owner need to issue an application immediately upon purchase or at the normal filing period later in the year?
- What about a change in use or the delay in performance by the new owner?

# Q - 7

- What qualifies a vineyard and/or winery for land use?
- Example: 10 of the 50 acres is in vines - how much of the land qualifies - some have wanted the whole parcel/acreage to qualify(!)?
- What about the land used by the facilities where the wine is made? What about the land under the public serving rooms? What about the land where other things occur such as sales, parties, wine tasting - address each....

## Q - 8

- What issues are arising regarding TDR's (Transfer of Development Rights)?
- How are localities tracking the land rights traded?
- We are noting the number of home site equivalents lost to each farm - but not certain all are or even know about TDR's.



## Q - 9

- Address when someone wants land use for outside of mainstream Ag
- Animal production or crops, e.g., ginseng, ramps, fish hatchery, alpaca, ostriches, hydroponics, butterflies, bees, and so on
- Does it qualify?

## Q - 10

- When property is put into a “living trust” does it require a new land use application and must all the adjoining property be in the trust to be considered “contiguous”?

Q - 11

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