

Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University

 **VirginiaTech**
College of Agriculture
and Life Sciences



School of Agriculture
Virginia State University

Community Viability

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SYMPOSIUM TO ADDRESS LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

Should city and county governments and agencies support the growth of local food production and sales? If so, what are the economic impacts to the community, the benefits to the residents, the best practices for developing a community-based strategy, and the available services from Virginia agencies to enhance the local community's effort?

The National Association of Counties Center for Sustainable Communities report on local food systems encouraged communities to develop effective and sustainable plans to promote local, healthy, and affordable food. With a growing demand, Virginia cities and counties are asking the right questions, defining creative implementation plans, and becoming the catalyst for increasing local food production. Whether a community is hosting a farmers' market, a Farm-to-School program, restaurants offering locally produced food, a low-income food program, roadside stands, or community food stores, both cities and counties realize that plans must be defined to create a supportive infrastructure for local foods to thrive.

The **2010 Local Food Systems Symposium** offered by Virginia Cooperation Extension in partnership with the Commonwealth Regional Council will provide local governments and agency representatives, agricultural producers, and other local food advocates an opportunity to explore ideas and resources for developing robust local food systems. The symposium will be held on Tuesday, March 2, at the Commonwealth Regional Council located at One Mill Street in Farmville, Virginia.

Beginning at 9:30 a.m. and ending at 4 p.m., the program will define local foods; its economic impact; regulations, policies, and oversight; land use tools for maintaining productive agricultural land; and the community-based support practices and services available from Virginia agencies. Program speakers include representatives from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Farm Bureau, Virginia Main Street Program, AgrAbility Virginia, and Virginia Small Business Development Center. Participants will also hear the Local Food Hub story presented by Marisa Vrooman.

The symposium is free but you must register by calling Pat Eldridge, at 434-766-6761 or e-mailing her at pat1@vt.edu before Thursday, February 25, 2010. If you have questions or to obtain more information, contact Dr. Martha A. Walker, 434-766-6761 or e-mail walker53@vt.edu

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Martha A. Walker at 434-766-6761 during business hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.
www.ext.vt.edu

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