

# Advocacy: N District Style

October 5, 2021



**Virginia  
Cooperative  
Extension**

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# Who we are?

- Small group of Northern District Agents started working intentionally over two years ago
  - Concerned with Understaffing, Lack of Funding and Support
  - We recognized COVID as a focusing/crisis/trigger event
- We have sought support of VCE Admin and kept Dr. Jones informed as we reach out to educate our Stakeholders
- We have recruited Agents in other districts but need to potentially increase involvement from other districts and Specialists

# What we did?

- Reached out to a few key Senators and Delegates in our respective Counties
- Arranged meetings with
  - Delegates Bulova- Ag and Natural Resources, and Appropriations Committees
  - Delegate Webert-Ag and Natural Resources Committee
  - Senator Hanger-Ag and Natural Resources, Finance and Appropriations Committees
- Important to learn who is making decisions in the GA
- Met over lunch or coffee shop talk or zoom



# What we did?

- What have we realized?
  - Not everyone knows ‘What is our message?’
  - Not everyone knows ‘How our funding works?’
  - VT Funding vs VCE Funding
  - What are the focus issues that VCE delivers across the Commonwealth?

# Thought Provoking Questions from Del David Bulova:

- Provided strategies for funding that other agencies follow and are generally accepted by the GA
- Other agencies have clear and concise missions; VCE's mission is without clarity and thus makes it difficult to understand exactly what you do
- If you (VCE) were underfunded, what would the county or state lose?
- What are your goals?
- What is stopping VCE from meeting its mission and goals?
- How much money do you need to achieve structural stability to do your job and to do the research necessary to support your work?
- The message must be succinct and easy to work through.



# Focus: Big Issues---Health (see handout)

- Health and wellbeing (behavioral health, nutrition, water quality, food safety)
- Children and youth
- Safe and stable food supply
- Resilient communities
- Environmental Health



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# Where are we going next?

- Top 5 focus issues
- Unified message

Examples (connect the dots from activity/program name to issue addressed and community need solved)

- EMG Plant Clinics & Help Desks
- Pesticide Safety and Recertification
- 4-H Clubs
- Servsafe/Cooking for Crowds/Food Preservation



# What we ask of you?

- Focus on ISSUES and Community Needs:  
    Currently 'Health issues' are a big one
- Engage with your local General Assembly members
  - Send updates regarding local programs
  - We can help you reach out

