



Virginia Cooperative Extension

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Virginia Market Maker – Your FREE Online Marketplace How to Register your Agribusiness(es)

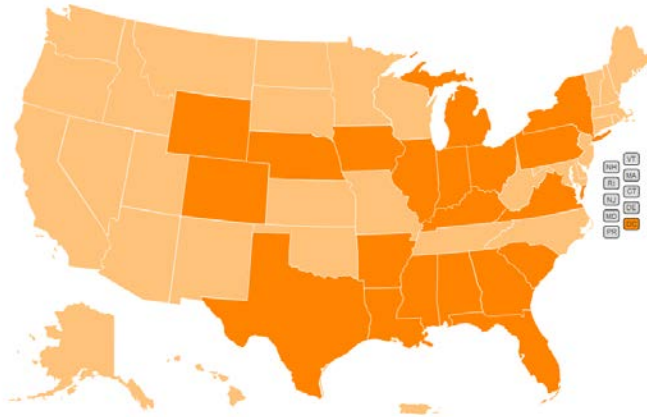
By Kimberly L. Morgan, Associate Professor and Kohl Junior Faculty Fellow, Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech; and E. French Price, Value-Chain Coordinator, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

There are many factors to consider when marketing and advertising your farm and farm products directly to end users, such as individuals, restaurant owners and chefs, public institutions, retailers, and wholesalers. An online marketing presence is an important component in accessing markets for new and beginning producers interested in direct sales. The purpose of this series of publications is to inform Virginia producers about the [Virginia MarketMaker portal](#) and supporting resources, and, to introduce the use of databases and other information technologies to increase direct sales of agricultural products and tourism venues that may increase grower profitability.

History of Virginia MarketMaker

The National Food MarketMaker portal was developed at University of Illinois in 2004 by Extension specialists in response to agribusinesses' needs to establish an online presence to reach direct market customers searching for food products and tourism venues. Provided at no cost to users, the portal is currently hosted by partnerships in 20 states and D.C. In 2015,

[Virginia MarketMaker](#) was launched with educational and financial support from Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services, and Farm Credit of the Virginias. In 2018, the Piedmont Environmental Council connected with Virginia MarketMaker team, allowing agribusinesses to indicate their affiliation with Buy Fresh Buy Local chapters across eight counties. This allows Buy Fresh Buy Local members to simultaneously update their Buy Fresh Buy Local listing and their MarketMaker profile. MarketMaker will continue to integrate with other Buy Fresh Buy Local chapters and various branding programs across the state. Through these affiliate linkages, agribusinesses with Virginia MarketMaker listings may utilize a one-stop, one-step process to keep their information current across multiple databases.



What tools are offered on Virginia MarketMaker?

Registration is completely FREE for Virginia agribusinesses and, FREELY available for the public to use in their search for fresh farm products and agritourism venues. Agribusinesses may sign up for multiple business types in one step, update using a single sign-on and password, and trust their listing is secure and Simple search features help to facilitate connections along the food supply chain, from farm input suppliers to wholesalers, from pumpkin patches to public institutions, and allow agribusinesses to indicate affiliations such as Virginia Grown, Virginia's Finest, and Buy Fresh Buy Local, to name a few. The market research feature aids in developing marketing plans, local food system mapping capabilities, and buyer sourcing of seasonal product offerings.

How do I register by Virginia agribusiness(es)?

Follow these easy step-by-step instructions to register your Virginia agribusiness(es):

STEP ONE: Go to <https://va.foodmarketmaker.com/signup/>

Do you have more than one business or multiple locations?
Now you can add multiple businesses under your user account.

UPDATE YOUR PROFILE
Log In To Manage Your Account

Register

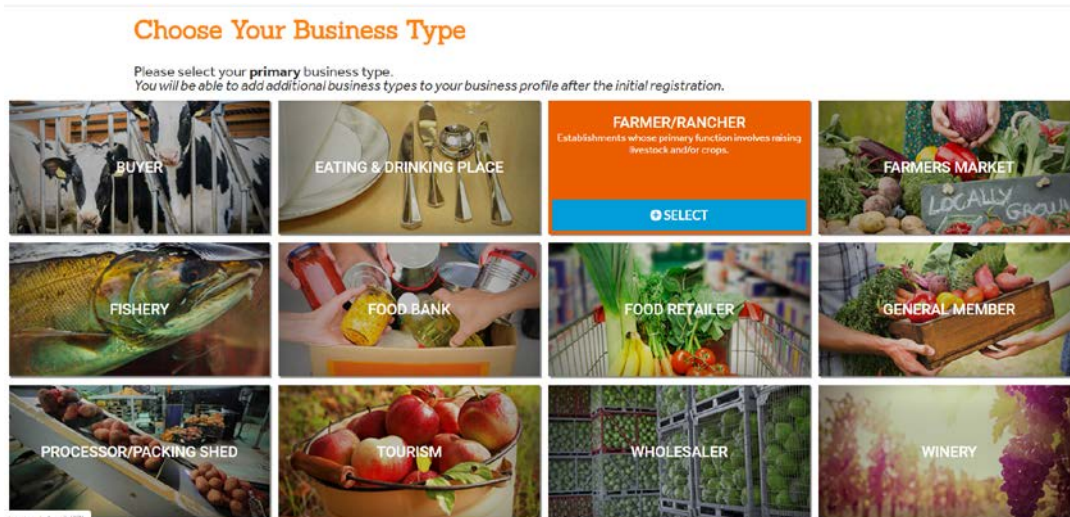
*Email Address (This will be your user name)
Enter a valid email address

*Password (8 or more Characters, at least 1 number)
Enter a password

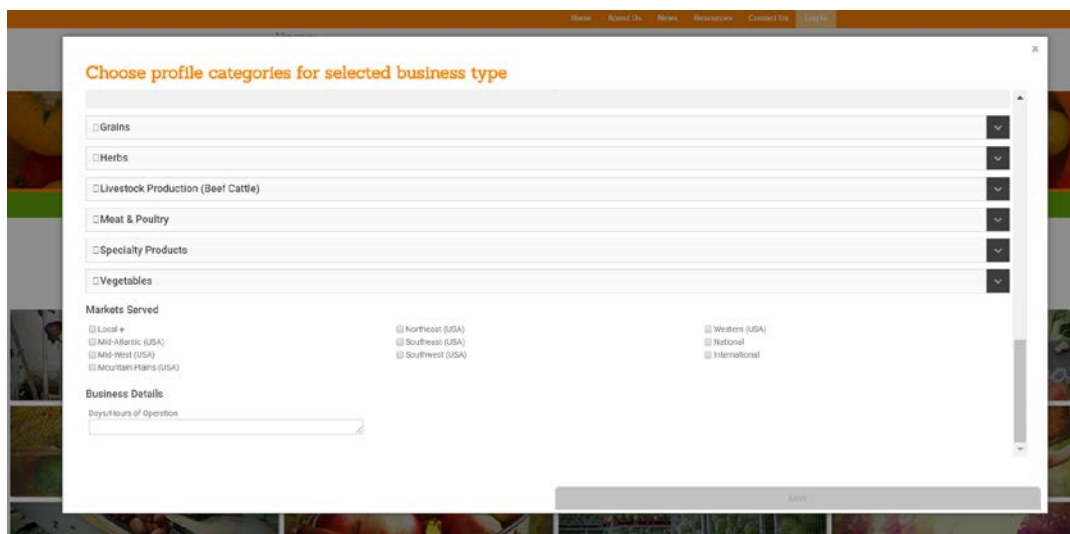
*Confirm Password
Verify your password

JOIN MARKETMAKER

STEP TWO: Choose your Business Type by clicking on each image. Hover over each image for a brief description of Business Type (see Farmer/Rancher example below). You may choose as many that apply to your agribusiness. You may add additional business types after you complete your initial registration.



STEP THREE: After you select your Business Type, select any and all Profile Categories for Selected Business Type applicable to your business. Each category has a dropdown box, which opens a curtain of check boxes available under each category, or, you may add your own product type under “Other”. Under the Markets Served heading, add your days and hours of operation. Under Business Details. Click SAVE when you have completed your Profile Categories for Selected Business Type.



STEP FOUR: Scroll down to Enter Your Business Information and complete each box. Under Account Preferences, you may select how often you receive communications from Virginia Market Maker. These communications include Buy & Sell Forum Alerts, Trade Alerts, and a Market Newsletter. Click CONTINUE when you are finished with this page.

Enter Your Business Information

Please enter your business details. [Required](#)

<p>+Business Name <input type="text" value="Enter business, farm, market, organization or personal name"/></p> <p>+Address <input type="text" value="Enter the street address of your business"/> <small>(The address is optional)</small></p> <p>+State <input type="text" value="Virginia"/></p> <p>+City <input type="text" value="Enter a city"/></p> <p>+Phone Number <input type="text" value="Enter the phone number for your business"/> <small>(The phone number is optional)</small></p> <p>Website (http:// or https://) <input type="text" value="Enter the website address for your business"/></p> <p>Online Shop (http:// or https://) <input type="text" value="Enter the website address for your online shop"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't have an online shop? MarketMaker offers a free online store! Please complete registration in order to open your online store.</p>	<p>Business Description <input type="text" value="Enter a brief summary of your business"/></p> <p>Address 2 <input type="text" value="Enter any additional address information"/></p> <p>+County <input type="text" value="Select a county"/></p> <p>+Zip/Postal Code <input type="text" value="Enter a valid zip code"/></p>
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Account Preferences


Please select your additional account settings.

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buy & Sell Forum Alerts <small>Relevant, real-time notifications for publicly posted Buy/Sell Forum advertisements.</small></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trade Alerts <small>Member-only product availability and on-demand notifications, food industry alerts, and related services.</small></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <small>Email newsletter containing information regarding MarketMaker progress, website enhancements and new features.</small></p>
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CONTINUE

STEP FIVE: As noted, Virginia Market Maker is partnered with multiple organizations to provide this one-stop online portal for our registrants. During your registration process, this page offers you the opportunity to indicate any relevant affiliations. Affiliate descriptions and external web links are provided for each partner. Click any and all that might apply to your agribusiness, then click the SUBMIT button.


- Virginia's Finest**
By adding this affiliation, I verify that I am an approved member of the selected group. I give you permission to verify my status and/or affiliation with the referenced organization. Inaccurate information could result in my business profile being removed from the database.



Virginia's Finest
(Virginia Specialty Foods)

Website: <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vafinest.com/index.shtml>


The Virginia's FinestA Trademark Program is proud to celebrate 25 years of excellence, promoting the development of Virginia agriculture and specialty food products. Virginia's FinestA highlights top quality Virginia-produced and processed products, including meats, cheeses, soups, seafood, pasta, baked goods, snacks, chocolates, confections, condiments, dressings, sauces, beverages and more. Virginia's FinestA strives to enhance the economic opportunities and success of Virginia specialty food companies, processors and agricultural producers through increased sales and enhanced awareness of top quality Virginia products. Only Virginia products that meet or exceed quality standards are part of the Virginia's FinestA Program. All authorized Virginia's FinestA products must be approved by the Virginia's FinestA Review Committee, which consists of food safety officials and product-marketing specialists. The Committee reviews product packaging and labels to ensure products meet state and federal regulations. In the case of most products, the producer must provide proof of its current and valid food safety inspection certificate. Buyers and consumers will recognize the familiar Virginia's FinestA "checkmark" and trust that Virginia's FinestA products have been deemed the best of the best.
- Virginia Grown**
By adding this affiliation, I verify that I am an approved member of the selected group. I give you permission to verify my status and/or affiliation with the referenced organization. Inaccurate information could result in my business profile being removed from the database.



VIRGINIA GROWN

Website: <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/>

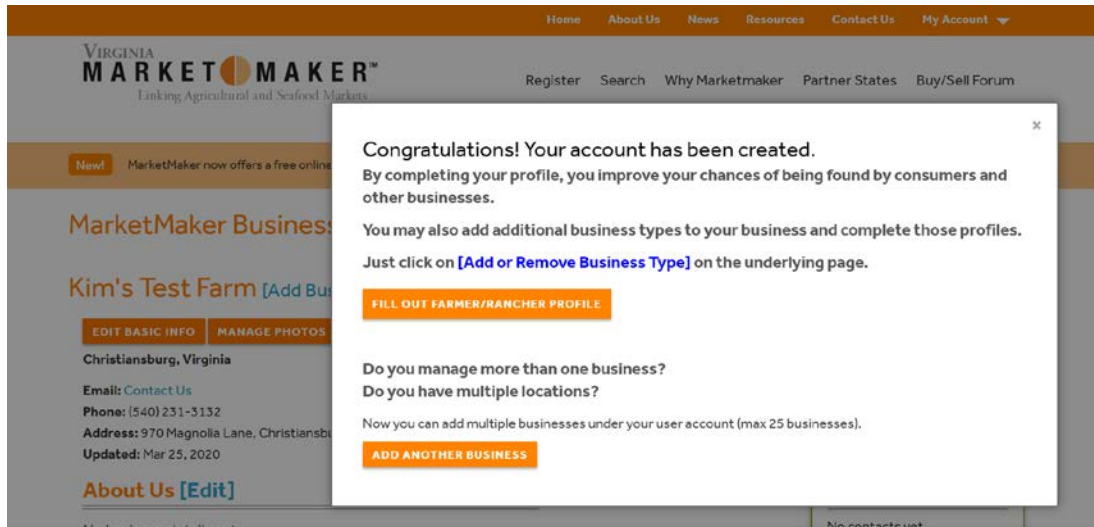
The Virginia Grown program is a marketing tool promoting fresh, local products to consumers and has a proven track record for increasing visibility, developing additional media attention and enhancing marketing opportunities for Virginia Grown products.
- Buy Fresh Buy Local Virginia**
By checking this box, I verify that I am an approved member of the selected group. I give you permission to verify my status and/or affiliation with the referenced organization. Inaccurate information could result in my business profile being removed from the database.



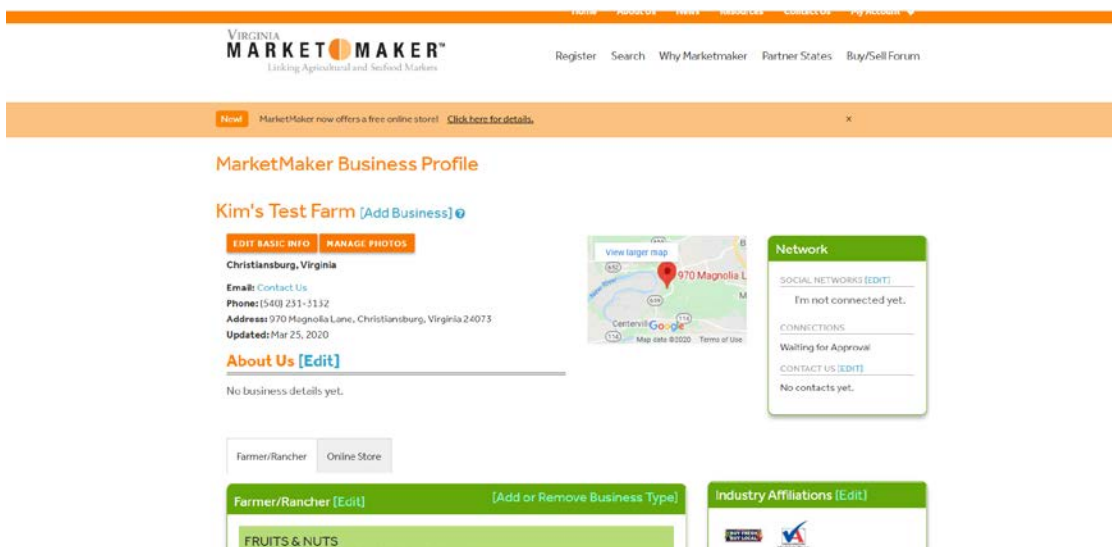
BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL

Website: <https://marketmaker.virginiamarketmaker.com/>

STEP SIX: Your new Virginia Market Maker profile is now complete! The pop-up screen will offer you an opportunity to Fill Out Farmer/Rancher Profile and/or, Add Another Business. You may also do this at a later time, as you learn more about your new profile.



CONGRATULATIONS! Your new Virginia Market Maker online profile is now complete! Please add any of your social media networks, edit your current information, or, continue to build your profile by adding additional business profiles, products, payment options, days/hours of operation, and customer communication options.



Join the 1,200+ Virginia agribusinesses on [Virginia Market Maker](#) today, go to <https://va.foodmarketmaker.com>. For more information about direct marketing of your farm products in Virginia, please contact Kim Morgan at KLMorgan@vt.edu or 540-231-3132, or, visit the [Virginia Cooperative Extension's Market Maker portal](#) to find news, publications, videos, webinars, and related resources (<https://ext.vt.edu/agriculture/market-maker.html>).

Acknowledgements

The Food MarketMaker portal is the largest and most in-depth national database for the agricultural industry. The portal provides a FREE, searchable, online marketing tool to connect buyers, farmers/ranchers, fisheries, farmers markets, processors/packers, wineries, restaurants and more. With the generous support of our partners and stakeholders, Virginia Market Maker is available at NO COST to Virginia producers, processors and consumers. The program is housed in Virginia Tech's Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and is supported by Virginia Cooperative Extension.