

# Botetourt County Agriculture Strategic Plan

November 24, 2015



**Weldon Cooper  
Center for Public Service**

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*University of Virginia*

# Outline

- \* Botetourt Agricultural Planning
- \* Botetourt Farming Characteristics and Trends
- \* Focus Groups and Survey
- \* Strategic Priority Identification
- \* Questions and Comments

## BOTETOURT COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



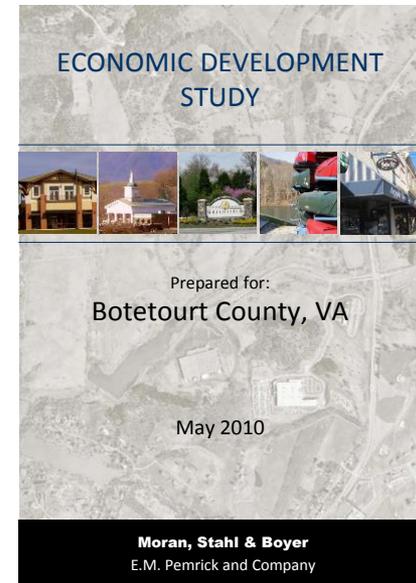
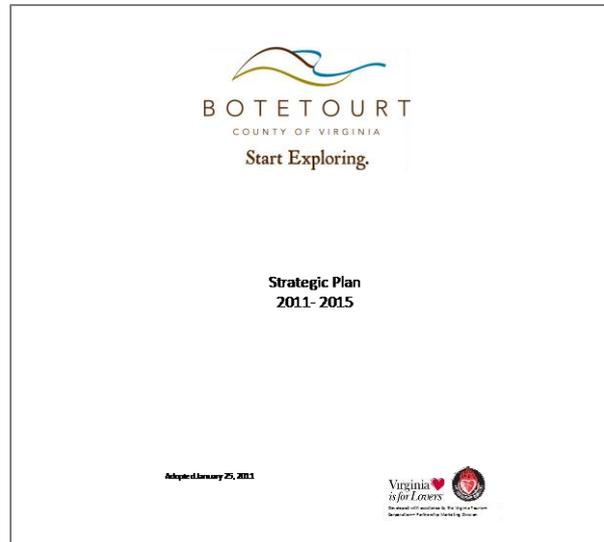
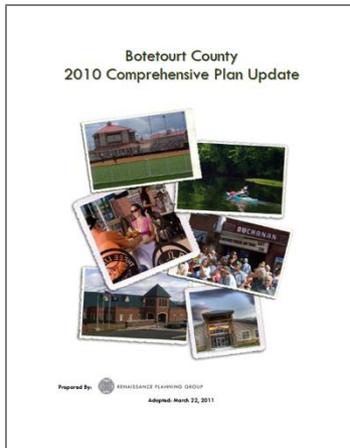
Terance J. Rephann  
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and  
James Ellis and Deborah Rexrode  
Center for Survey Research  
August 2015

# Agricultural Planning in Botetourt

# Botetourt 2040 Vision

- \* Northern Botetourt is characterized by *innovative* agricultural and recreational enterprises. . .
- \* Historically an agricultural community, that heritage has evolved into *high-tech* traditional farming and *innovative* and *sustainable* uses of our natural resources.
- \* We showcase a cluster of successful niche and traditional agri-businesses that serve markets near and far.
- \* Through thoughtful and intentional planning and policy-making, Botetourt County has experienced significant growth and development while maintaining the rolling farmlands, wooded mountain an scenic creeks and rivers that define its beauty.
- \* Technology, *innovation* and impact-sensitive standards allow *diverse* agriculture, nature and resource related enterprises to thrive in Northern Botetourt.

# Agricultural Planning in Botetourt



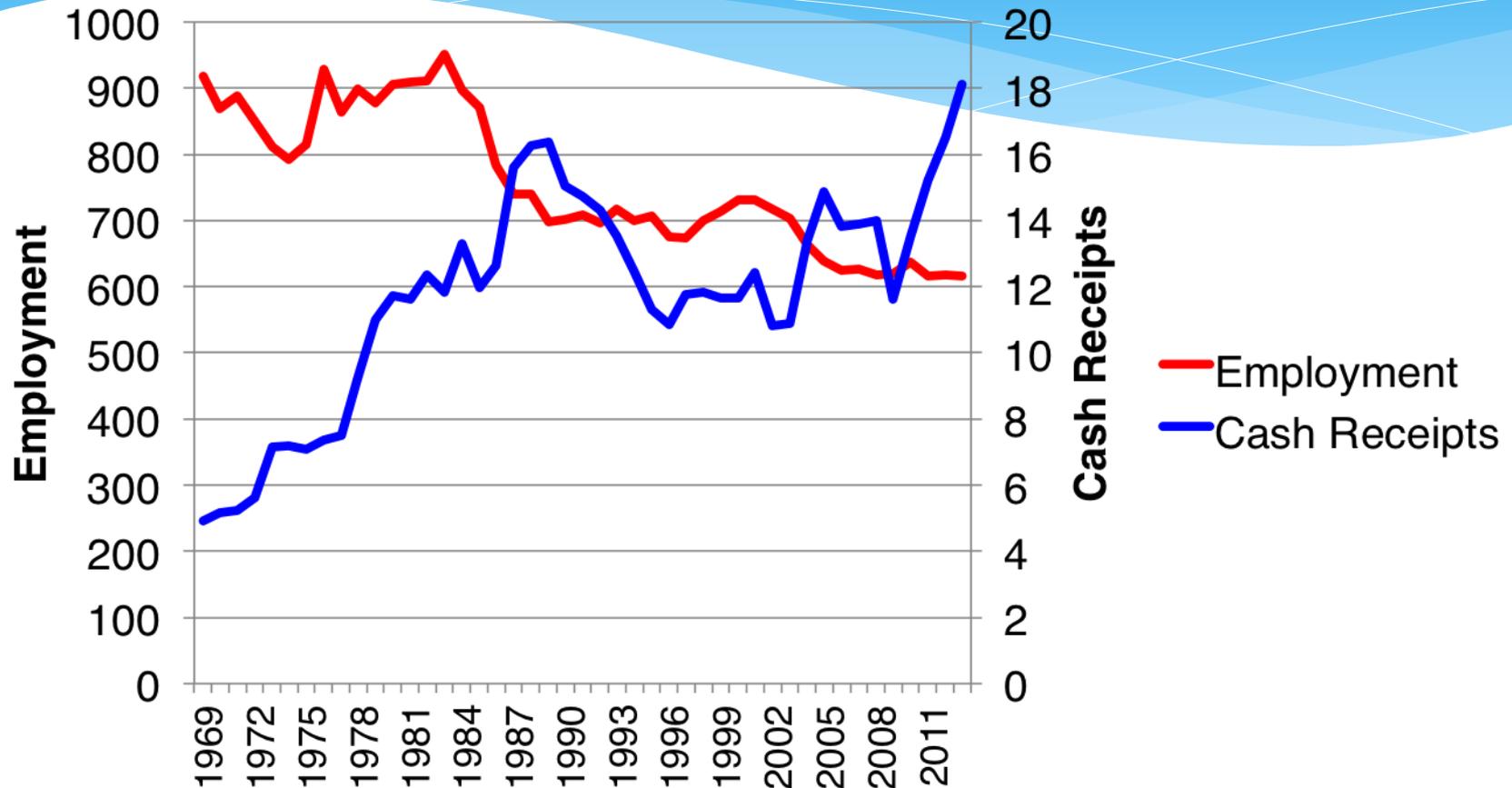
# Agricultural Planning in Botetourt

**Table 2.1 Agricultural Objectives in County Planning Documents**

| Document                            | Objective                                | Activities  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Comprehensive Plan                  | Rural and agricultural land preservation | <p>Define and identify priority areas for forested, agricultural and open space conservation</p> <p>Develop farmland and forestry retention programs, such as agricultural and forestal districts</p> <p>Encourage use of conservation easement programs</p> <p>Continue implementation and promotion of County Conservation Easement Program</p> |
|                                     | Farming viability                        | <p>Provide support to working farms</p> <p>Support farmers markets</p>  |
| Tourism Strategic Plan              | Tourism                                  | <p>Develop an agricultural tourism product</p> <p>Encourage development of a county fair site</p>   |
| Economic Development Strategic Plan | Agriculture marketing                    | <p>Establish Shenandoah Valley brand of local agricultural products</p> <p>Organize agricultural farm and winery tours as an annual event</p>   |
|                                     | Agriculture-related entrepreneurship     | <p>Provide technical assistance to farmers interested in agritourism such as farm stays</p> <p>Establish restaurant featuring locally-produced food and beverages</p>   |

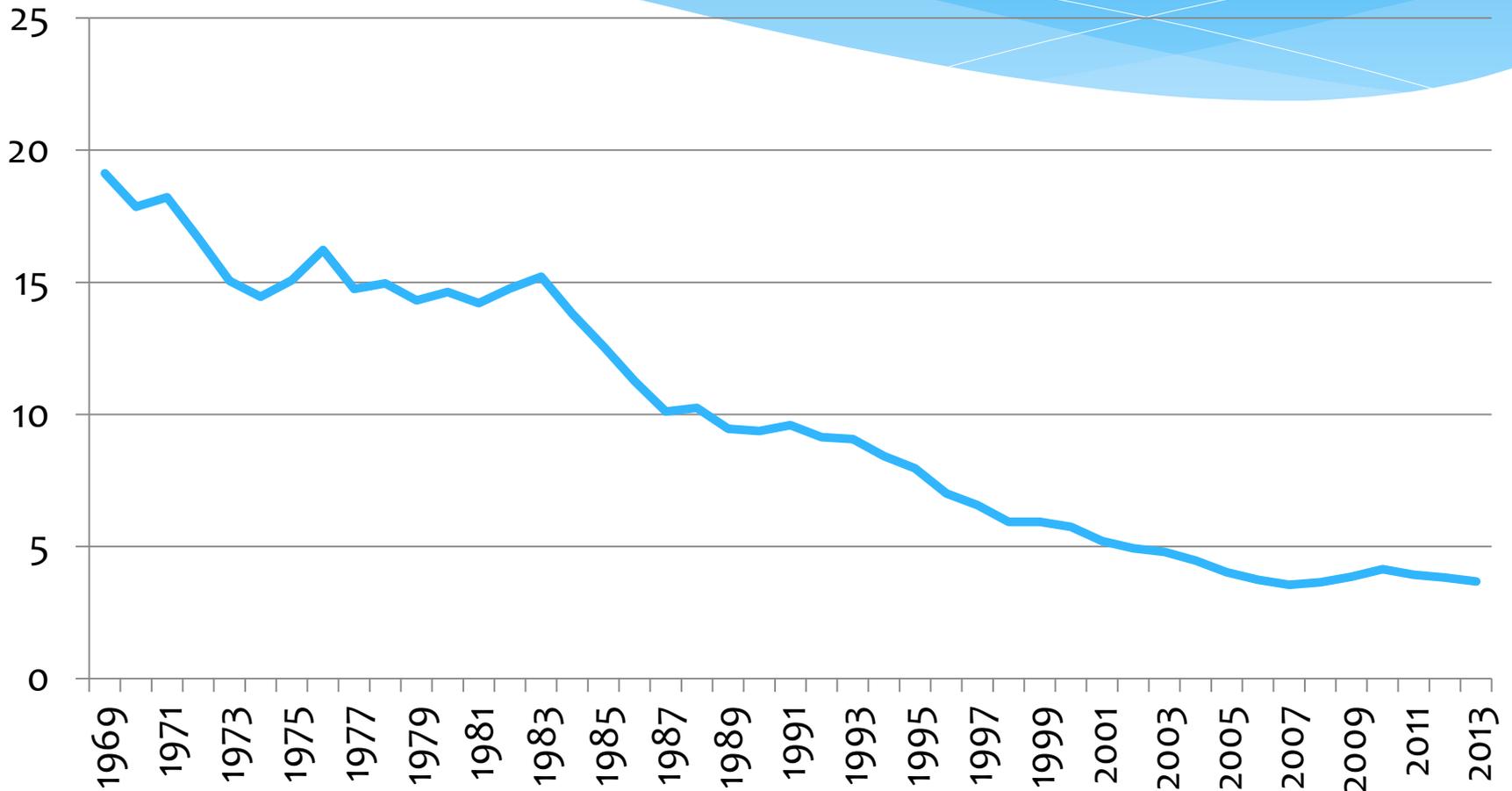
# Botetourt Farming Characteristics and Trends

# Farm Employment and Commodity Cash Receipts



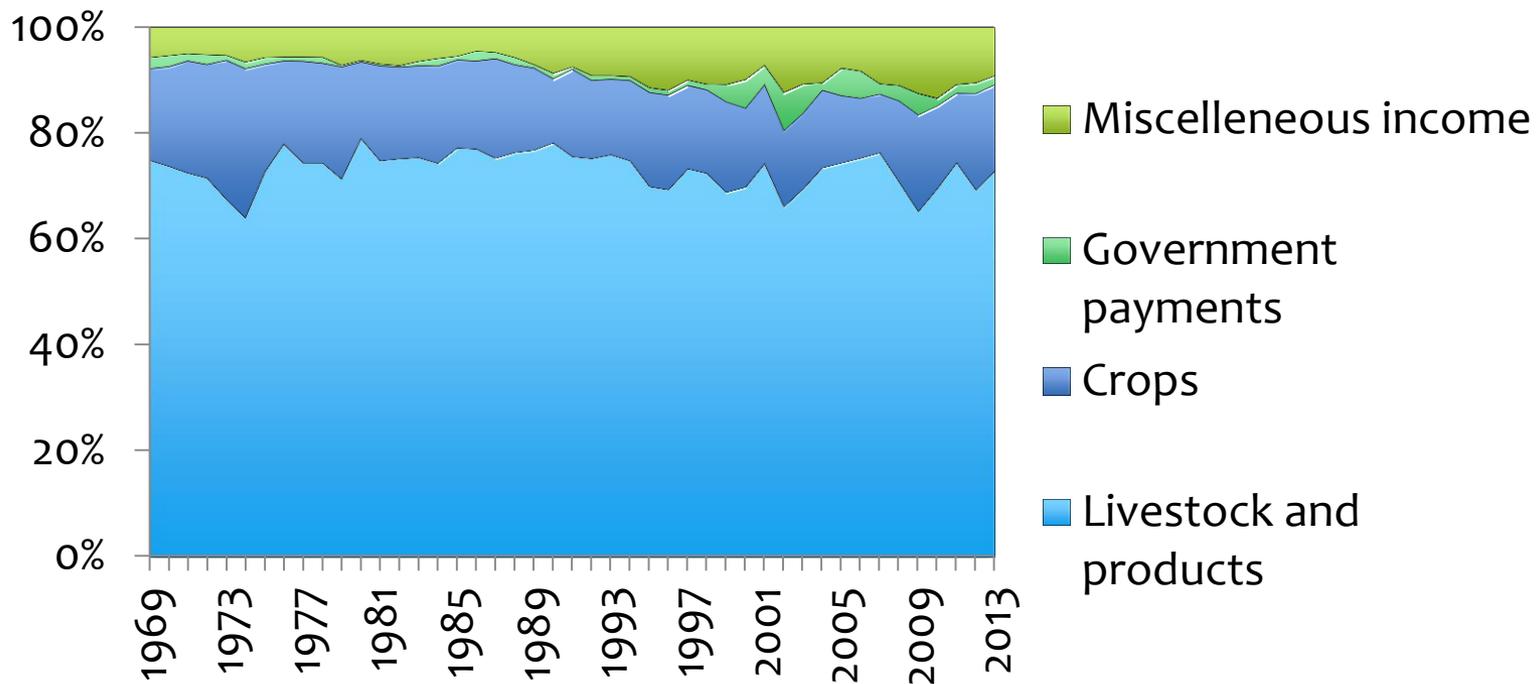
Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service and Bureau of Economic Analysis

# Farm Employment as Percentage of Total Employment



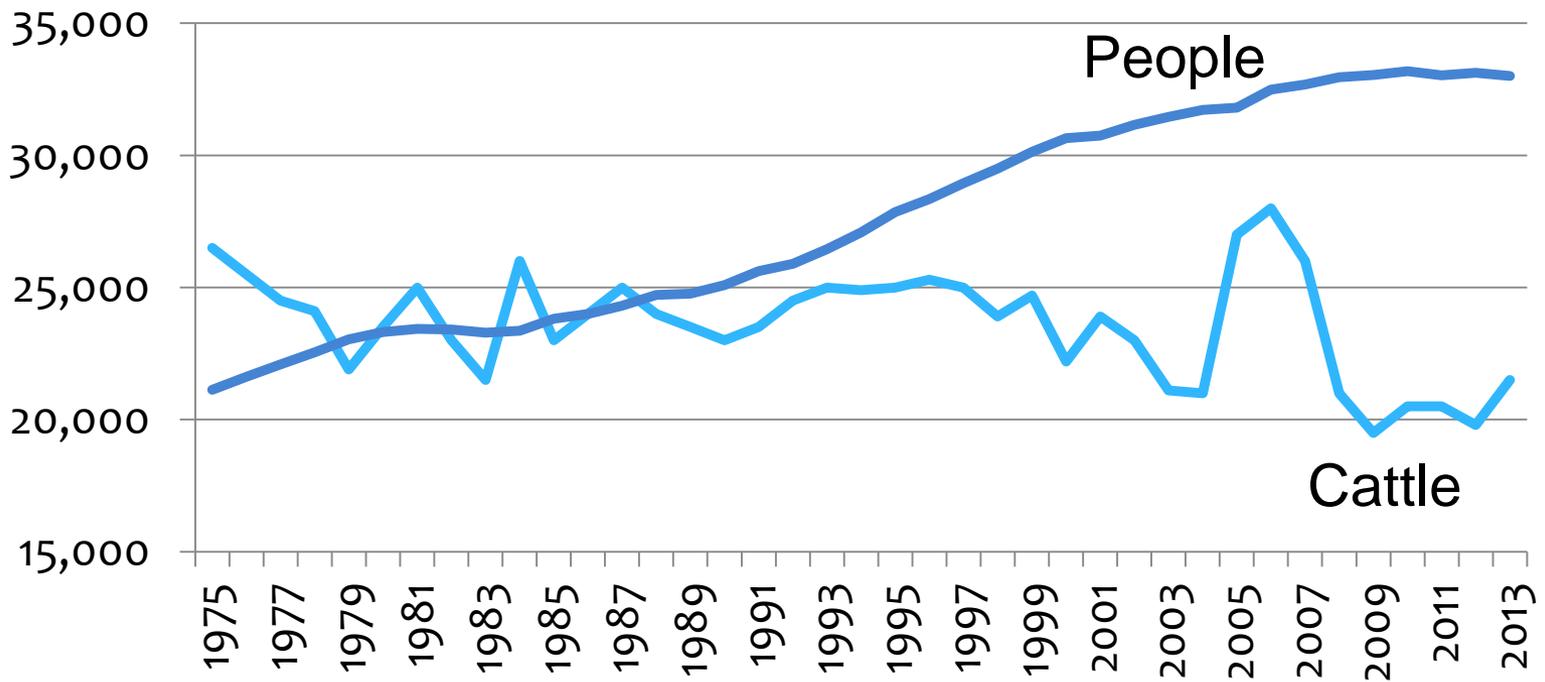
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

# Farm, Cash Receipts by Source, 1969-2013



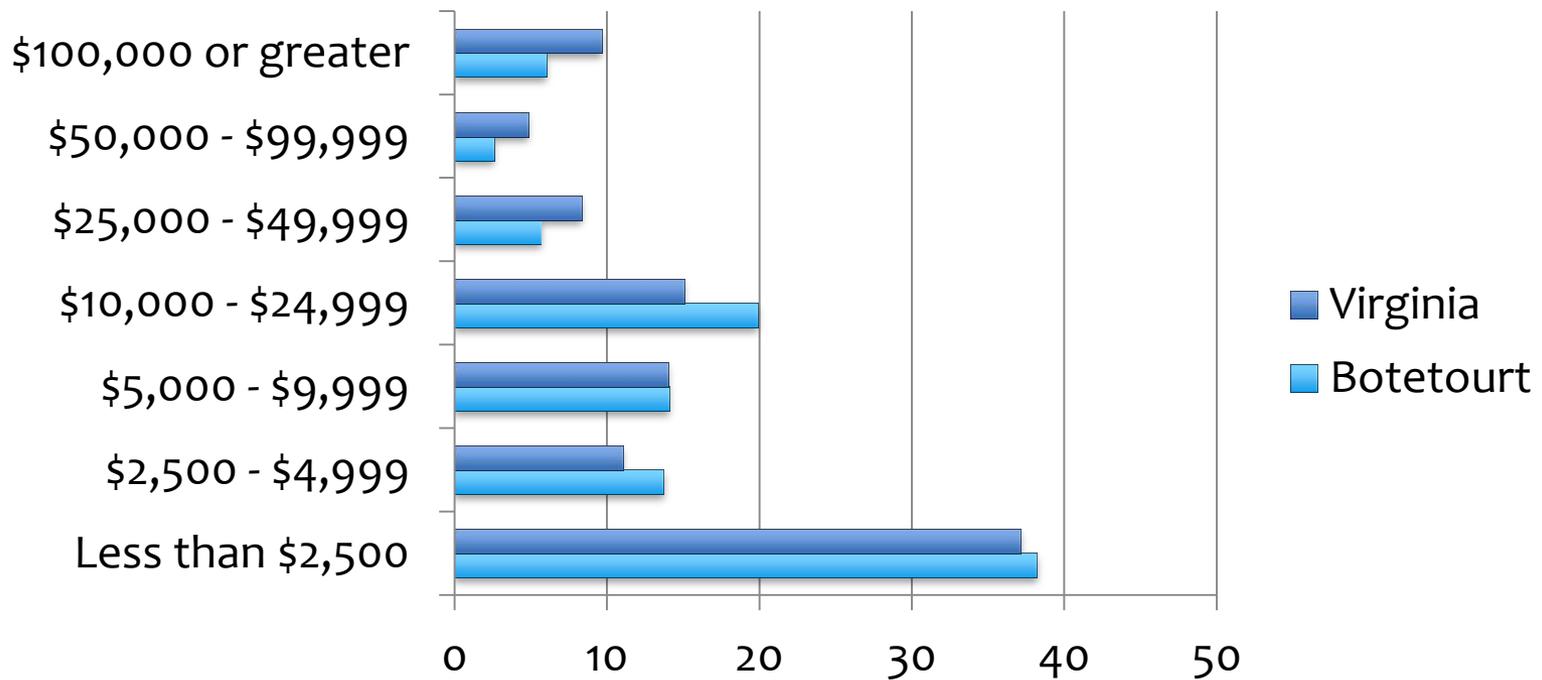
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

# Cattle and Calf inventory



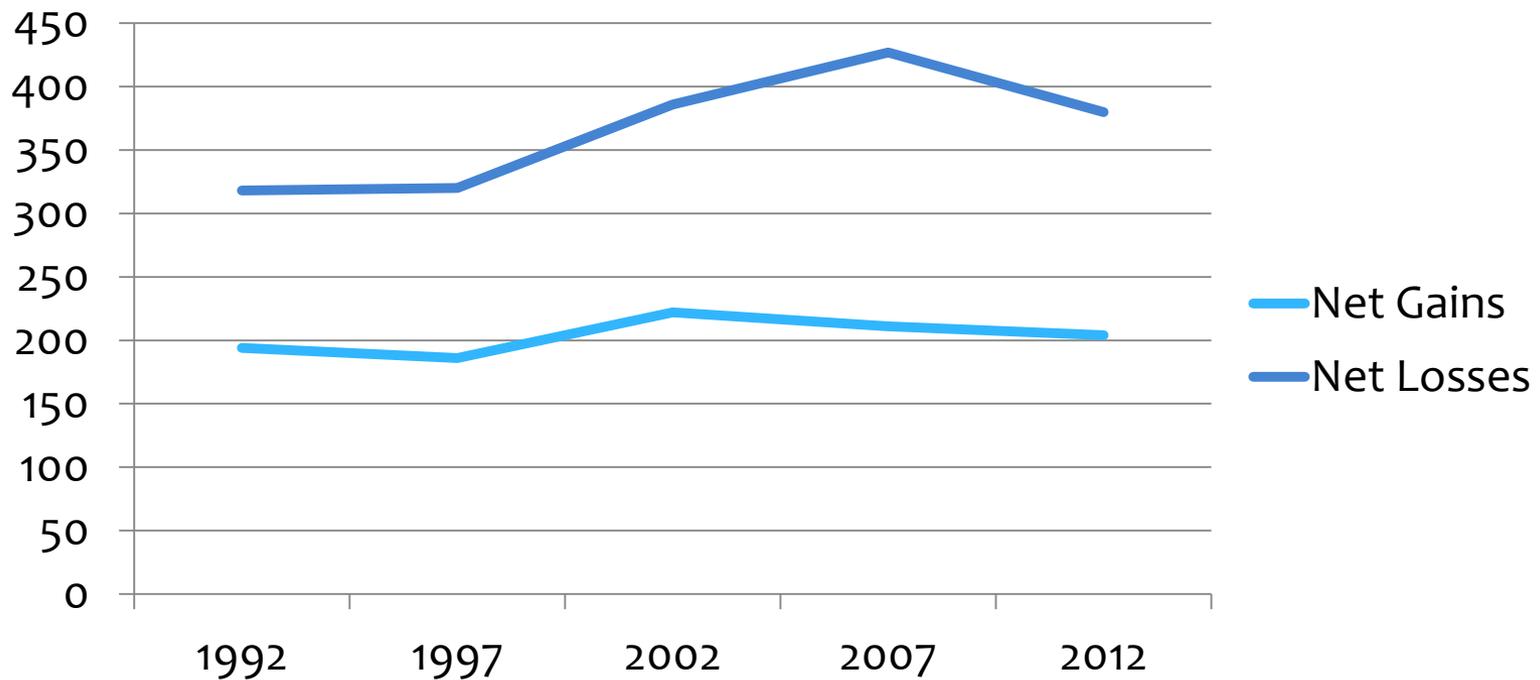
Source: USDA, NASS

# Percentage of Farms by Value of Sales, 2012



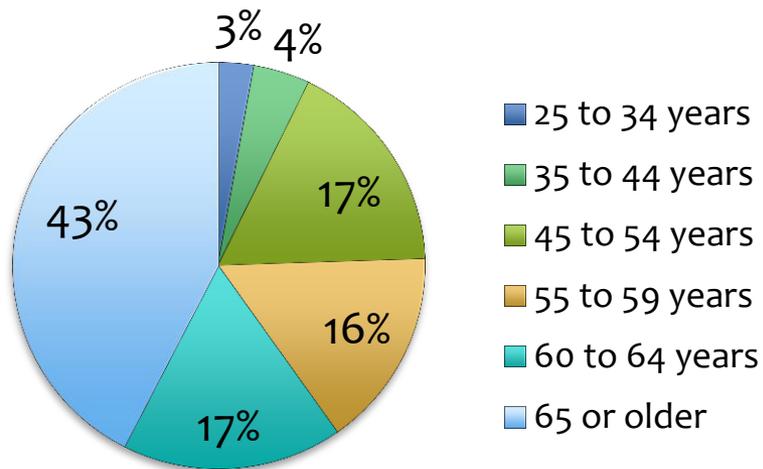
Source: USDA, NASS

# Number of Farmers with Net Gains/Net Losses

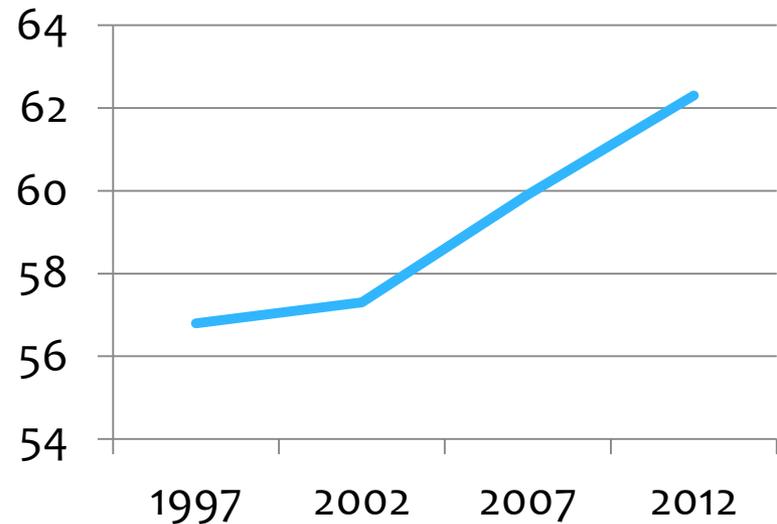


Source: USDA, NASS

# Average Age of Principal Operator

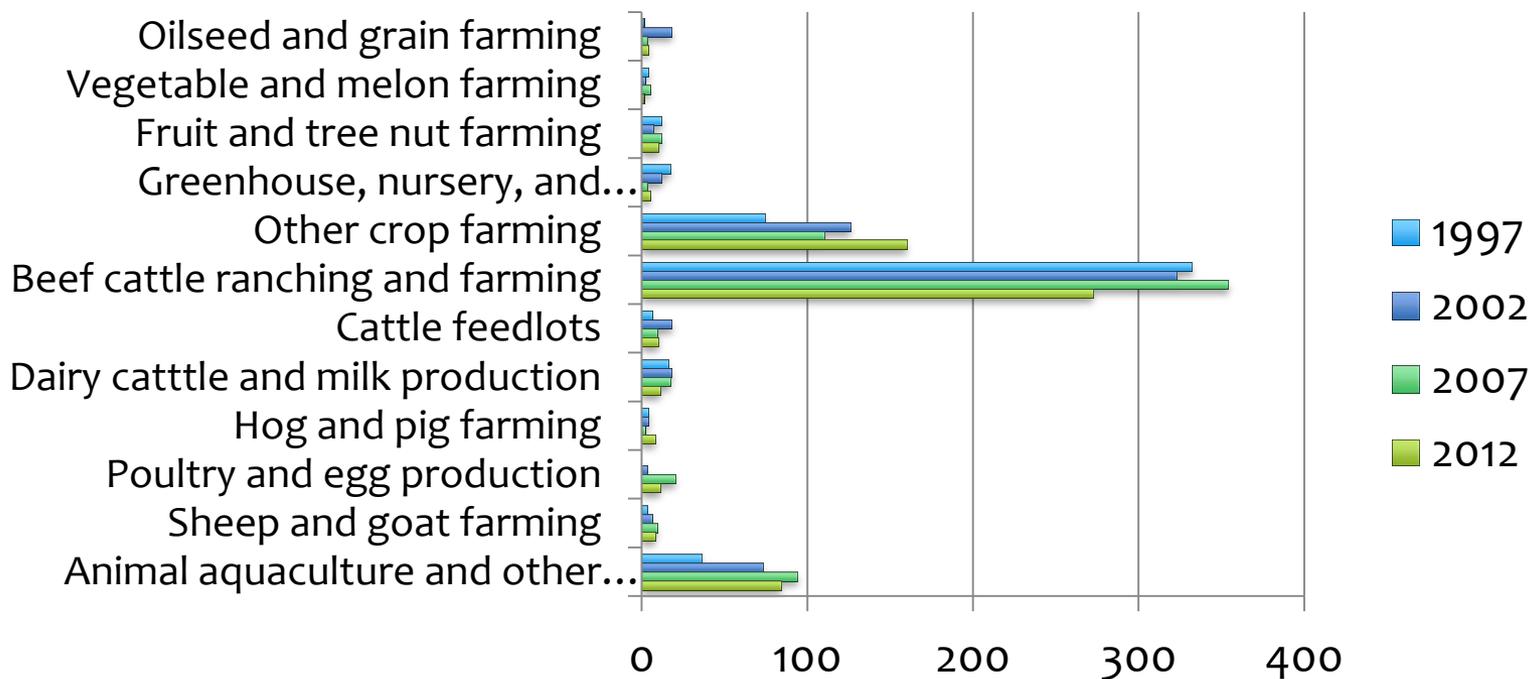


Source: USDA, NASS



Source: USDA, NASS

# Number of Farms by NAICS, Botetourt Co., 1997-2012

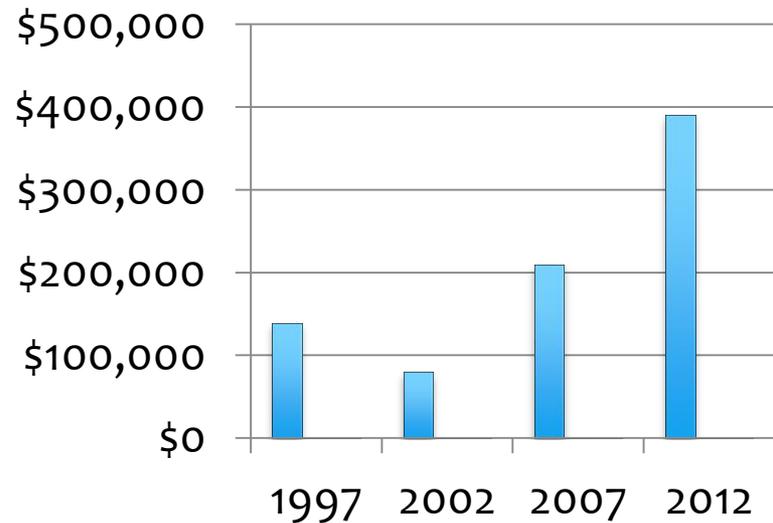


Source: USDA, NASS

# Direct Sales to Consumers

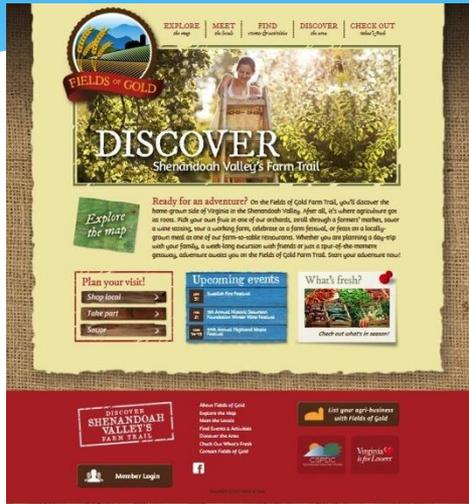


- \* Botetourt County sales directly to consumers have increased but they are a very small part (<3%) of total agricultural receipts
- \* According to the 2012 Agriculture Census, 40 farms report sales directly to consumers and 6 directly to retail outlets



Source: USDA, NASS

# Agritourism and Specialty



|  | 2007 | 2012 |
|--|------|------|
| # farms that offer agritourism                   | 0    | 12   |
| # farms producing & selling value-added products | 27   | 35   |
| Certified Organic                                | NA   | 2    |

# Focus groups and Surveys

# Focus groups

- \* Center for Survey Research conducted two focus group discussions
- \* Groups included diverse community agricultural stakeholders, including traditional farmers (cattle, dairy, hogs, poultry), specialty and niche farmers (orchards, agritourism, winery, nursery, bee keeping, small ruminants, vegetables), forestry, suppliers, business, education, government, non-profit sector, and youth
- \* Focus Group discussions were held on Thursday, February 19, 2015 at the Greenfield Education and Training Center
- \* 42 invitees; 41 participated

# Focus Group Questions

- \* Why is agriculture important?
- \* What are positive and negative aspects of agriculture?
- \* How has agriculture changed and how will it change in the future
- \* What are area agricultural assets and opportunities?
- \* What are area agricultural needs and challenges?
- \* What ideas do you have to make agriculture more viable?
- \* What farm tools or technologies would be beneficial?
- \* What products or innovations from elsewhere could be introduced here?
- \* What systems and infrastructure are needed?
- \* How can the county help?

# Themes that Emerged from Focus Group Discussions and Surveys

## Focus Groups

- \* Value of agriculture
- \* County agricultural assets
- \* Farm succession
- \* Agricultural education
- \* Agricultural marketing
- \* Local foods
- \* Role of government
- \* Farm viability and new markets

## Surveys

- \* Repeated many of the issues identified by the Focus Groups
- \* Additional themes:
  - \* Sustainable agriculture
  - \* New markets
  - \* Agriculture infrastructure

# Strategic Priority Identification

The slide features a solid blue background. At the bottom, there are several overlapping, wavy, light blue shapes that create a sense of movement and depth, resembling stylized waves or a modern graphic design element.

# Strategic Priority Identification

- \* Source for identifying of information for goals, objectives and activities:
  - \* Focus group discussions and community survey
  - \* Consultations with staff (County Administrator, Economic Development Officer), Cooperative Extension, and Board members (Supervisors Leffel and Williamson)
  - \* Descriptive analysis and environmental scanning (e.g., trend information)
  - \* Review of agriculture development strategic plans from Virginia and elsewhere
  - \* Work in other communities (e.g., Fauquier County, Loudoun County, Pittsylvania County, Wythe County)

# Content of Strategic Plan

- \* Goals, objectives, and activities
- \* Supporting data and analysis
- \* Description of important information resources (Boxes)

# Goals

- \* Improve Administration, Planning, and Policy Coordination for Agriculture
- \* Preserve Valuable Farmland
- \* Facilitate Farm Succession and the Agricultural Workforce
- \* Promote Agriculture Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- \* Expand Local Food Sales, Production, and Capacity
- \* Enhance Marketing and Promotion of Agriculture
- \* Improve Farm Viability and Profitability

# Improve Ag. Administration, Planning, and Policy Coordination

- \* Expand Agriculture Administration and Planning Capacity
- \* Work Towards Adopting an Agriculture Strategic Plan, Review, and Update
- \* Develop Agriculture Leadership Capacity
- \* Coordinate Plans and Activities with Local, Regional, and State Organizations and Agencies



# Preserve Valuable Farmland

- \* Create New Farmland Preservation Incentives
- \* Reduce Land Use Conflicts that May Hinder Agriculture



# Facilitate Farm Succession and the Agricultural Workforce

- \* Encourage Increased Youth Exposure to Agriculture
- \* Encourage Expanded Post-Secondary Agricultural Learning Opportunities
- \* Support Beginner Farmer Training and Technical Assistance
- \* Consider Marketing and Providing Beginning Farm Financial Assistance Programs
- \* Promote Farm Estate Planning and Multigenerational Connections

# Promote Agriculture Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- \* Promote Agricultural Modernization and Technology Diffusion
- \* Connect with Innovators
- \* Encourage Agriculture-related Entrepreneurship
- \* Target AgTech Companies and Startups for Recruitment



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**When:** Oct. 16-17  
(pre-conference Oct. 15)

**Location:** Moorefield Armory

**Sponsors:** RCBI and Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College

**West Virginia Agricultural Innovation Showcase**  
*Building a 21st Century Agriculture Economy*

Underwritten by a grant from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

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# Expand Local Food Sales, Production, and Capacity

- \* Increase Local Food Marketing
- \* Encourage the Establishment of a Local Food Hub
- \* Explore Community Value-Added Production Facility Needs



# Enhance Marketing and Promotion of Agriculture

- \* Improve Awareness of Area Agriculture and Agricultural Resources
- \* Promote Cooperative Marketing Arrangements
- \* Consider Expanding County Fair



Photo courtesy

# Improve Farm Viability and Profitability

- \* Explore the Potential for New Agricultural Products
- \* Promote Landowner Forestry Management Practices
- \* Review Taxes and Regulations for Possible Reform
- \* Promote Soil, Water, and Energy Conservation Programs



# Questions and Comments?

