



## Situation Analysis Report



# Rockingham County 2018

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## Introduction

Rockingham County conducted a comprehensive situation analysis in the winter of 2018. The situation analysis process was led by the Rockingham County Extension Unit and involved the development of a Rockingham County Unit Profile, as well as gathering community and resident perspectives on issues and problems in the county. Data and information from these activities were analyzed by the Rockingham County Unit and priority issues were identified.

Unit staff met several times to develop a survey tool and to discuss a distribution strategy. Staff discussed appropriate survey methods, terminology for headings and options, and overall layout. Following tool development and proofing, survey links were distributed by e-mail, included in mailings and distributed to individuals over a six-week period. Throughout the six-week period a volunteer compiled all hard copy surveys into a database. At the final meeting, key findings from the unit profile and results from the surveys were presented and discussed. Following a thorough evaluation of qualitative and quantitative data, the key issues for Rockingham County were identified, including those that could be addressed with current Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) resources and those that were outside the scope of VCE.

## Unit Profile

Rockingham County is located in the central Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.



The data indicated that population by race has remained unchanged between 2011 and 2018. The total population has steadily increased from 2011 to 2018.

In Rockingham County, the median property value has increase from \$195,300 in 2013 to \$206,700 in 2017 a 5.8% increase in 5 years.

Information from the county comprehensive plan showed that there is a need for balancing preservation and development of land resources techniques.

The percent of high school graduation remains at 82%. Additionally, individuals with some college education has remained steady at 47%.

Current estimates of residents living below poverty level is 11.6%.

From 2012 to 2017 both the number of farms and total acres farms has increase (1,902 to 2,023 and 222,049 acres to 228,542 acres).

Additionally, net farm income has increase by 100% (\$123,343,000 to \$246,964,000) from 2012 to 2017.

## Community and Resident Perspectives

We separated the community survey into agriculture and non-agriculture priority questions. Some questions were on both as they affect all people. Of a population of 82,432 in the county, 72 respondents completed the survey. After survey compilation, there were a few things that sorted themselves as top community priorities (survey results attached).

Water quality was the top priority for both lists. In addition, Youth life skills and food safety were highly ranked for everyone. Other issues that were top priorities included the aging population, agriculture sustainability, farm safety, mental health, agriculture profitability and the environment. These are broad and dynamic issues that affect people both locally and globally. Virginia Cooperative Extension is uniquely positioned to tackle these issues like they have done for the past 100 years. Listed below is a summary of the priority issues identified for Rockingham County and how they are currently being addressed.

## Priority Issues

### **Agriculture: Local Food, Horticulture, On-Farm Food Safety**

- Foster strong, resilient local and regional food systems through the development of extensive diverse community-based partnerships
- Offer educational programming related to the Virginia Farm-to-Table initiative including conferences, workshops, and farm tours
- Promote beginning farmer development via the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program's many outreach efforts, such as curriculum development, workshops, fact sheets, and consults
- Organized an 80-member volunteer association (Central Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners (MG)) and offer training for new MG volunteers, and on-going development of programming related to home, school, and community gardening
- Develop a strong on-farm food safety program to help fresh produce growers implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) aimed at reducing fresh produce contamination risks

- Use a multi-pronged approach to educate growers needing GAP certification by using group grower trainings, one-on-one farm consults (on-farm assessment, GAP audit manual preparation, on-farm compliance, mock audit walk-throughs), and post-audit follow-up

### **Agriculture: Profitability and Environmental Sustainability**

- Develop and offer educational programming based on on-going crop, horticulture, livestock, and dairy producer input, and changing market trends
- Promote diversification of farm enterprises to spread risk and provide additional income sources
- Provide pesticide safety education to protect water quality and improve producer profitability
- Encourage no-till strategies to reduce erosion and protect water quality
- Provide production workshops and field days to growers, as well as one-on-one consultations in the areas of crop, livestock, dairy, and horticultural production
- Partner with other agencies and industry to hold programs advocating agricultural best management practices (BMPs) to minimize erosion and runoff of soil and nutrients into the local watersheds

### **Environmental/Land Use: Environmental Quality – air, soil, water**

- Provide conferences and field days to help farmers implement and refine management practices related to no-till cropping systems and cover crops in order to minimize sediment and nutrient losses
- Promote agricultural BMPs such as the exclusion of livestock from water bodies using fencing
- Evaluate manure management and other technologies that minimize pollution and allow more precise application of nutrients to crop areas
- Provide field days and demonstrations for new technologies to improve efficiency and profitability
- Promote homeowner BMPs for lawn and garden via various outreach venues

### **Environment/Land Use: Land Use Planning - farmland preservation, green space**

- In order to slow the loss of farmland to residential and commercial development, educate farmers and land owners about land conservation and preservation options, such as conservation easements, land use taxation, and farm transition between generations
- Foster the value and contribution of farmers to the larger local citizenry via regional promotion like the “Buy Fresh Buy Local Directory” and other similar initiatives
- Provide local agriculture products for breweries, wineries and local farmers markets
- Promote green space development and beautification through Master Gardener outreach aimed at the general public at local farmers’ markets, library, and gardening seminars
- Partner with other environmental organizations and non-profits to support farmers needs

### **Families and Communities: Financial Management and Housing**

- Education related to creating a secure financial future for individuals and families is developed and presented in the community
- To reduce the need for predatory lending products, educational programs focus on goal setting and the creation of emergency savings funds
- Housing and financial counseling are provided to assist local citizens in securing and maintaining housing
- Programming designed to assist first time homebuyers and help them prepare for homeownership, including saving for home repairs
- Youth financial management programs, including “Reality Store” to increase the financial literacy of our younger population

### **Youth: Leadership Training & Teen Involvement**

- Have an active Young Leaders Association which involves teens 14-19 to become more involved in promotion, advocacy, community service and recruitment in Rockingham County
- Provide officer training at club and county levels, and promote and advocate youth to run for club offices
- Involve intermediate and teen-aged youth in assisting with workshops as helpers and instructors
- Provide an extensive training for camp counselors for day camps and residential camps
- Encourage and promote youth to run for 4-H cabinet, attend Washington Leadership Conference and National Congress
- Involve youth in programming efforts including content, dates and ideas/suggestions

### **Youth: Life Skills/Decision Making**

- Involve youth in club order and programming efforts
- Provide educational programming focused on life skill development, citizenship and leadership including workshops, day camps, residential camps, state-level events, and team events
- Advocate a long-term project book opportunity focused on specific projects (e.g., woodworking, photography, livestock)
- Involve youth in club- and county-level community service and fundraising efforts
- Host county-level contests for public speaking, presentations, fashion revue.
- Offer dynamic workshops on a variety of soft and hard skills
- Support teams that teach collaboration, decision making and prioritization
- Partner with schools to provide school enrichment opportunities including embryology, horticulture, agriculture production and Character Counts!

### **Other: Community Development**

- VCE does not directly create job opportunities in the community, but several of our programs address this issue
- Provide volunteer training and experience that can extend beyond the goals of VCE
- Provide paid and unpaid internship opportunities
- 4-H youth development programs help youth build skills to prepare them for working in the community
- Family and Consumer Sciences programs help provide skills that youth and adults need to be productive employees
- Agriculture programs work to increase the profitability of farms and provide the opportunity to employ more people
- Foster collaboration within the community and with outside organizations

## Appendices

Non-AG	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Ag	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Water Quality	2	19	79	Water Quality	0	20	80
Aging Population	7	19	74	Life Skills for Youth	0	25	75
Life Skills/Decision Making for Youth	2	26	72	Agricultural Sustainability	0	27	73
Food Safety/Preservation	2	31	68	Farm Safety	4	26	70
Healthy Food Access	2	32	66	Mental Health	2	29	70
Human Nutrition	2	33	65	Food Safety/Preservation	2	29	69
Youth Activities	0	35	65	Agriculture Production/Profitability	0	33	67
Poverty	2	34	64	Environment	2	32	66
Child Development	2	34	64	Land Use	0	35	65
Land use	2	34	64	Dairy Productivity	7	28	65
Adult Nutrition	11	27	61	Consumer Agriculture Awareness	0	36	64
Teen Leadership	2	38	60	Farm Financial Management	2	42	57
Parenting	3	36	60	Livestock Nutrition	2	42	56
Food Security	0	40	60	Local Food Systems	4	41	55
Housing Affordability	19	23	58	Fruit Production	8	38	55
Long Term Care	9	35	56	Crop Protection	4	43	54
Local Food Systems	4	40	56	Agricultural Leadership Development	2	45	54
Youth Volunteers	2	42	56	Crop Production	0	47	53
Career Development	7	39	54	Energy	4	44	53
Financial management	16	32	52	Livestock Productivity	2	46	52
Local Government	4	46	51	Vegetable Production	2	47	51
Housing Availability	20	30	50	Science and Technology	2	48	50
Obesity	3	48	48	Agriculture Marketing	5	45	50
Chronic Diseases	9	44	47	Organic Agriculture	8	45	47
Science and Technology	2	51	47	Pests/Pesticides	4	50	46
Dependent Care	5	48	47	Poultry Production	8	46	46
Energy	3	52	45	Invasive Species	8	47	45
Small Business/Entrepreneurs	9	47	44	Farm Transition	4	51	45
Gardening	7	49	44	Local Government	4	52	44
Landscaping	21	58	21	Alternative Crops	9	47	44
<b>Average Deviation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	Forest Production	8	49	43
<b>Average</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>57</b>	Forage Production	6	51	43
<b>Median</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>57</b>	Wildlife	6	51	43
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	Alternative Agriculture	7	53	40
				Land Access	2	59	39
				Human Wildlife Conflict	10	55	35
				Horticulture	4	65	31
				Precision Agriculture	8	63	29
				Livestock Genetics	8	66	26
Orange cells are 1 Standard Deviation above the Median				Genetically Modified Organisms	16	59	25
				Small Ruminants	8	76	16
Yellow cells are above the Median				<b>Average Deviation</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>
				<b>Average</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>51</b>
				<b>Median</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>
				<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>