

**City of Virginia Beach
Agricultural Advisory Commission
Annual Report to City Council
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026**

John Cromwell, Chair
Due by August 31, 2026

Executive Summary

During the fiscal year covering the period of July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, the Agricultural Advisory Commission (AAC) and liaison met 4 times.

Our most significant accomplishments are detailed below.

Mission Statement

The Commission shall serve in an advisory capacity for the purpose of providing recommendations to the City Council concerning issues of special interest to the rural/agricultural community of the City, and to that end, shall have the duty to investigate and determine the needs and interests of the rural/agricultural community.

Accomplishment of Goals and Objectives

Over the period of July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, the agency, through its appointed volunteers and its liaisons, worked on the following key matters in furtherance of its mission:

1. New Agricultural Reserve Program (ARP) Coordinator, Sarah Grimstead Cotten was hired in September 2025. The Dept. of Agriculture is now fully staffed.
2. Princess Anne County Grill at the Farmers Market was approved by Council to come back and operate the restaurant, they opened back up in November 2025.
3. After 10 years, we have a new 4-H Agent, Desmyn Owens.
4. Virginia Cooperative Extension became fully staffed as of October 2025.
5. Several staff members represented Agriculture at the 1st Annual Civic League Academy Presentation at the Convention Center in February 2026.
6. The Annual Excellence in Agriculture Banquet was held in March 2026.
7. The AAC approved for Cedar Hall Farms to hold up to 10 wedding events per year, subject to the required permit approval.
8. The Farmers Market celebrated 50 years in April 2026.
9. The Agricultural Reserve Program (ARP) now has a total of 11,358 acres enrolled.

Meetings

Please note the AAC meets quarterly on the second Monday of the first month of each quarter (January, April, July, and October).

Current Commissioners

John Cromwell, Chair - Expiration: 9/30/2029
Jason Dawley, Commissioner - Expiration: 9/30/2029
Ryan Horsley, Commissioner - Expiration: 9/30/2029
Betsy Morris, Secretary - Expiration: 9/30/2027
Ryan Dudley, Commissioner- Expiration: 9/30/2028

Financial Report

N/A

Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year

The AAC will continue their focus on the growth and sustainability of agriculture by representing and working with farmers and citizens with “on farm” marketing and growth opportunities, agricultural education, farmland preservation and the Agricultural Reserve Program.

Closing

Should you have any questions or need a formal City Council briefing from our commission, please contact David Trimmer, Director of Agriculture, staff liaison for the Agricultural Advisory Commission.

FY 25-26 Agricultural Advisory Commission Volunteer Hours

Name	Jul-25	Oct-25	Jan-26	Apr-26		TOTAL
John Cromwell	1.22	0.83	1.66	1.00		4.71
Ryan Horsley	1.22	0.83	1.66	1.00		4.71
Jason Dawley	1.22	0.83	1.66	0.00		3.71
Ryan Dudley	1.22	0.83	1.66	1.00		4.71
Betsy Morris	1.22	0.83	1.66	1.00		4.71
Total						22.55