

Virginia Poultry Federation Positions on State Issues 2024

Dear General Assembly Members,

Virginia Poultry Federation (VPF) wishes you a productive legislative session in 2024. As always, we appreciate the chance to share information about the poultry and egg industry in Virginia and our views on various issues.

Poultry and eggs are Virginia's largest agricultural sector, supporting hundreds of family farms and thousands of jobs. In addition to the livelihoods of farmers, our industry provides well-paying jobs in poultry processing plants, feed mills, hatcheries, distribution centers, and other related operations.

VPF members include about 350 poultry farms, eight poultry processing companies, and about 90 allied companies that provide products and services to the poultry industry. Our strong allied company membership, which includes a diversity of firms from banking to equipment manufacturers, reflects the breadth of our more than \$13 billion economic impact in Virginia.

Please continue to partner with us to ensure that poultry remains a job-creating industry for Virginia. We respectfully ask for your support on the issues described below. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional information about these issues or our industry.

Hobey Bauhan, President
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Animal Care

- VPF supports responsible use of animals for human purposes, such as food and fiber, and believes animal care decisions must be based on scientific knowledge and professional judgment.
- VPF supports proper handling, nutrition, management, and animal health practices appropriate to the care and use of agricultural animals.
- VPF opposes state and local actions that are not based on scientific



Dillon Rule

VPF supports the current use of the "Dillon Rule" regarding the relationship of state and local government powers and opposes efforts to amend or abolish the

research and that could adversely impact animal agriculture producers.

“Dillon Rule” in Virginia.



Funding for Land Grant Mission and VDACS

- VPF supports adequate funding for programs that advance research, education, and extension at Virginia Tech and Virginia State University.
- VPF supports maintaining adequate poultry faculty at Virginia Tech to enable quality poultry science research, education, and extension.
- VPF supports timely renovation or replacement of outdated Virginia Tech poultry farm teaching facilities.
- VPF supports adequate funding for VDACS to support programs and robust modern laboratory and other infrastructure in animal health, including avian influenza prevention and response capabilities, and other agency operations.

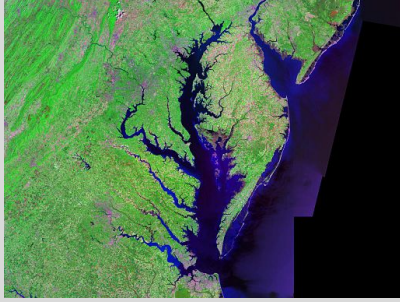


Energy

- VPF supports a stable, affordable, and reliable supply of all forms of energy.
- VPF supports maintaining energy independence through a combination of environmentally sound use of domestic fossil fuels; economically practical development of renewable energy production; and energy conservation.
- VPF opposes mandates or subsidies for corn ethanol and other biofuels that use feed/food crops as a source of energy production due to such policies' adverse impact on the available and affordable inputs for traditional animal and food production purposes.
- VPF supports economically balanced approaches to climate change and opposes those that substantially increase the cost of energy and place the Commonwealth and the nation at a competitive disadvantage.
- VPF supports balanced approaches to utility-scale solar development which preserve local decision-making, minimize placement on prime agricultural lands, and ensure proper erosion and sediment control.

Environmental Issues

- VPF supports the application of scientific research, innovative technology, and cost-effective best management practices to restore the Chesapeake Bay and protect the health of Virginia's rivers and streams. Strict caps, inflexible deadlines, unrealistic assumptions, and burdensome regulations are counterproductive to better water quality and damaging to Virginia's economic health.



- VPF supports ongoing collaborative efforts within the Chesapeake Bay to ensure that the Chesapeake Bay Model utilizes accurate, scientifically based assumptions concerning the quantity and management of poultry litter (manure) and associated nutrients within the Bay Watershed.

- The Bay Model must account for all agricultural BMPs, not just those mandated or supported by government cost-share programs.

- VPF supports sufficient funding for the Agricultural BMP Cost-share Program and adequate resources for soil and water conservation districts to administer cost-share and technical assistance.

- VPF supports making nutrient management planning more user-friendly through enhanced flexibility and simplicity.

- VPF supports adequate regional nutrient management plan writing staff at the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

- VPF supports policies that maintain poultry litter as a valuable organic source of essential plant nutrients for Virginia's crop, hay, and pastureland.

- VPF opposes policies that unnecessarily restrict traditional uses of poultry litter without a sound scientific basis and consideration of economic impacts.

- VPF supports collaboration between the poultry industry and state government to facilitate transportation and alternative uses of poultry litter but opposes mandates or levies upon the industry for such programs.

- VPF supports continued state funding in DCR's budget for the Virginia Poultry Litter Transport Incentive Program.

- VPF supports maintaining state primacy over permitting of poultry and livestock farms and opposes efforts to subject Virginia farms to federal point source discharge permits in the absence of such a discharge.

- VPF supports community notification requirements during the permitting process that are clear, reasonable, and achievable for those applying for the permit.

- VPF supports research and development to commercialize technology to utilize poultry litter for energy production and other alternative beneficial uses.

- VPF supports science-based regulation of biosolids and industrial residuals at the state level.

- VPF supports sound water use policy planning that fairly and equitably addresses water uses and opposes withdrawal regulations or laws that result

in adverse financial or operational impacts.



Regulatory Reform

VPF supports the thorough analysis and consideration of the full economic costs of new regulatory legislation and agency regulations.



Right to Work

VPF supports Virginia's current status as a Right-to-Work state.

Right to Farm Act

VPF supports the Virginia Right to Farm Act, which protects responsible farmers from unfair claims of nuisance.



Tax Policy

- VPF supports maintaining favorable current tax status and policies specific to the agriculture industry.
- VPF supports Virginia tax laws that rely more on taxes that can be fairly assessed on all taxpayers (i.e., income, non-food sales, and fuels) and less on taxes that are unfairly assessed and are burdensome to agribusiness growth (i.e., real estate, services, personal property, machinery and tools, and Business, Professional, and Occupational License).

User Fees

VPF opposes the imposition of taxes disguised as user fees to fund mandatory regulatory programs designed to benefit society as a whole.

Transportation

- VPF supports adequate government funding to

maintain and enhance transportation infrastructure in Virginia, including roads, bridges, rail, and the Port of Virginia.

- VPF supports a multifaceted approach to improve safety and reduce congestion on Interstate 81, including additional lanes and infrastructure in strategic locations; use of technology to inform drivers of backups and help them reroute their travel; and greater enforcement of traffic safety laws. Funding for improvements should be fairly distributed across all who utilize and benefit from Interstate 81.
- VPF opposes unreasonable bans, restrictions, and selective tolls on commercial truck traffic. On existing Interstate highways, VPF opposes onerous tolls placed solely on commercial truck traffic due to the increased cost, competitive disadvantage, and increased traffic diversion on parallel rural roads.
- VPF supports reasonable vehicle size and weight policies that foster efficient transport of agricultural products and the competitiveness of Virginia agribusinesses, and supports Virginia's participation in a federal pilot program to allow for increased truck weights on interstates.
- VPF supports a viable, responsive rail transportation system that provides competitive rates for transportation of agricultural commodities, supplies, and finished products. VPF also supports state programs and investments that support Virginia's rail infrastructure.



Workforce



- VPF supports strategies and programs to create an affordable, accessible, and qualified workforce, including secondary, post-secondary, higher education, and other technical certification programs as well as efforts to increase access to affordable housing and childcare needed for workers.
- VPF opposes state workplace and employment regulations, such as mandatory paid leave and overly prescriptive health and safety standards, which impose unreasonable burdens on employers or exceed federal requirements.



- VPF supports federal immigration reforms that provide secure borders and access to legal foreign workers for the agribusiness industry. VPF opposes state and local employment requirements, procedures, or penalties that create additional burdens or duplicative processes for employers, exceed federal requirements or are pre-empted by federal law, or would adversely impact businesses acting in good faith to comply with federal immigration laws.

Wage Policy

VPF opposes any change in wage policy that could negatively impact Virginia agribusinesses.

Worker Classification

VPF supports the protection of the independent contractor relationship as an option for the agribusiness industry and opposes government intervention into private contracts.



Workers' Compensation

VPF supports mechanisms to control rising medical costs within Virginia's workers' compensation system while opposing any changes that will undermine the basic concept and sound balance of the law, such as broadening conditions not clearly arising in the course of employment.

Youth Education

VPF supports Ag in the Classroom, 4-H, FFA, and the Governor's School for Agriculture.





Eight poultry processing companies operate in Virginia and are members of VPF:

- Cargill
- Farmer Focus
- George's Foods
- New Market Poultry
- Perdue Farms
- Pilgrim's Pride
- Tyson Foods
- VPGC, LLC

According to a recent economic study*, the poultry industry in Virginia employs as many as 17,245 people across the Commonwealth and generates an additional 36,702 jobs in supplier and ancillary industries. These include jobs in companies supplying goods and services to the industry.

*2022 Economic Impact Study of the Poultry Industry. Prepared for U.S. Poultry & Egg Association by John Dunham and Associates, Inc., Brooklyn, New York



Poultry and Eggs:*

- Support the livelihood of nearly 1,000 farm families
- > 275 turkey farms
- > 700 chicken farms
- Provide direct wages of \$715,997,200 and directly and indirectly results in wages totaling \$2,978,748,600
- Provide a direct economic impact of \$5,781,736,600 and overall contributes \$13,488,081,000 in economic activity in the Commonwealth

Virginia's poultry industry and its employees pay local, state, and federal taxes totaling about \$991,000,000.

*2022 Economic Impact Study of the Poultry

Virginia's poultry industry is helping to meet growing nutritional needs in the U.S. and around the world:

Per capita U.S. poultry meat consumption has risen from 34 pounds annually in 1960 to about 110 pounds today.

With demand for healthy protein, egg consumption is also on the rise, increasing from 239.7 eggs per capita annually in 1999 to 289.5 in 2019.

In the early 20th Century, it took more than 5 pounds of feed to produce a pound of chicken; today's farmers produce a pound of chicken with less than 2 pounds of feed.

Industry. Prepared for U.S. Poultry & Egg Association by John Dunham and Associates, Inc., Brooklyn, New York

In 2022, Virginia farmers produced:**

- 294.5 million broiler chickens
- 1,884,800,000 pounds produced
- Ranks 7th nationally

- 15.3 million turkeys
- 425,340,000 pounds produced
- Ranks 6th nationally

- 743.0 million eggs
- Ranks 24th nationally

**USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

This efficiency, which helps reduce our environmental footprint, is the result of scientific advances in breeding and nutrition. It is also the result of how well farmers take care of their birds in modern poultry barns or houses, which use the latest technology to deliver feed and fresh water, protect birds from predators and avian diseases, and maintain the right temperature – all to maximize the health and welfare of the birds to help them grow well.

Synthetic hormones and steroids are **NEVER** given to poultry. It is against federal law and not beneficial or practical for poultry flocks.

The United States exports about 16 % of chicken and about 10% of turkey produced in the nation.

Virginia Poultry Federation Board of Directors

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