## GOAL 1: Develop a value added fresh food marketing cooperative to aggregate and market locally produced aquaculture, produce, and viticulture; create an identifiable Eastern Shore brand; increase crop diversity; and increase production and sale by 20% by December 2018. This goal is in support of and is targeted toward small farmers.

### Objective A: Assess the regional production capacity (small farmer focus).

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inventory growers at this scale and evaluate current production along with potential capacity.</td>
<td><strong>Primary:</strong> USDA offices (NASS, FSA) <strong>Secondary:</strong> Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia State University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Virginia Shellfish Growers Association</td>
<td>USDA/FSA; Patrick Johnson (Virginia State University); Karen Hudson (Virginia Institute of Marine Science)</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>Comprehensive inventory publication of all vegetable, grain, fiber, and oilseed crops and aquaculture.</td>
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### Objective B: Assess the potential for specific farm and farmer’s markets throughout the Eastern Shore.

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<td>Survey towns for possible establishment of additional local farm markets.</td>
<td><strong>Primary:</strong> Virginia Dept. of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services <strong>Secondary:</strong> Town Councils, local</td>
<td>Butch Nottingham (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services)</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>May 2016 and again in May 2018</td>
<td>• Establishment of local markets in major Eastern Shore towns. • Expand capacity of community-supported agriculture’s (CSA) for promotion and availability of local foods. • Promotion of local products in grocery</td>
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</table>
## AGRIBUSINESS & FOOD PROCESSING REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

**Updated April 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Mid Term</th>
<th>Long Term</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Objective A:** Improve food processing | Design a study to assess the market potential for sales off of the Eastern Shore. | Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services | USDA-NASS, USDA-ERS, Virginia Tech, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Virginia Marine Products Board | Butch Nottingham (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services) | January 2018 | • Product movement from the Eastern Shore to large city centers  
• Establishment of contracts with markets and restaurants off the shore  
Very few formal arrangements exist for off-shore food movement. |
| **Objective C:** Evaluate and enhance existing agriculture business infrastructure. | Evaluate agriculture research facility for use by local stakeholders | Virginia Tech, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Institute of Marine Science | Farm Operators | Mark Reiter & Steve Rideout (Virginia Tech); Ursula Deitch & Theresa Long (Virginia Cooperative Extension); Karen Hudson (Virginia Institute of Marine Science) | January 2017 | • Evaluate meeting facilities and demonstration areas for information dissemination for stakeholders  
• Evaluate research laboratories for assistance with local questions  
Complete – VIMS and AREC improvements forthcoming |
| **Objective C:** Evaluate and enhance existing agriculture business infrastructure. | Improve agriculture research facility for use by local stakeholders | Virginia Tech, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Institute of Marine Science | Farm Operators, Chincoteague Bay Field Station, Kiptopeke State Park, local government-owned parks | Mark Reiter & Steve Rideout (Virginia Tech); Ursula Deitch & Theresa Long (Virginia Cooperative Extension); Karen Hudson (Virginia Institute of Marine Science) | January 2020 | • Improve meeting facilities and demonstration areas for information dissemination for stakeholders  
• Funding needed to improve research laboratories for assistance with local questions  
• Purchase necessary equipment to produce new and innovative crops in test and demonstration plots  
• Opportunity for farmers to share innovative growing techniques (best practices)  
Several projects in planning phase but implementation needs support and funding |
| **Objective D:** Research and promote production opportunities. | Specialty Crops - Explore at least 3 (Hops, sweet potatoes, new varieties of potatoes, horseradish, lavender, herbs, asparagus, grapes (viticulture), bay scallops, Hog Island figs and honey) | Virginia Tech | Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Institute of Marine Science | Mark Reiter & Ramon Arancibia (Virginia Tech), Dick Snyder (Virginia Institute of Marine Science) | Dec. 2020 | • Identification and production practice development for novel and innovative specialty crops and markets for Eastern Shore farmers.  
• Identify new aquaculture opportunities for Eastern Shore producers.  
• Grant dollars to support new crop research.  
Complete – VIMS working on Bay Scallop restoration grant and potato trials on-going |
| **Objective D:** Research and promote production opportunities. | Test process for season extension of vegetable production. For example: sweet potatoes, white potatoes and strawberries | Virginia Tech | Virginia Cooperative Extension, Eastern Shore | Mark Reiter & Ramon Arancibia (Virginia Tech), Ursula Deitch & Theresa Long (Virginia Cooperative Extension) | January 2020 | • High tunnels  
• Identify, research, and demonstrate new technologies for season extension to give farmers longer crop producing time (high and low tunnels, row covers)  
Planning and preliminary data collection ongoing. Season extension projects ongoing. |
Objective E: Encourage participation in a buy fresh, buy local chapter.

Expand current interests with a formal establishment of a Buy Fresh, Buy Local Eastern Shore chapter.

Primary: Virginia Tech, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Ramon Arancibia (Virginia Tech), Ursula Deitch & Theresa Long (Virginia Cooperative Extension); Josephine Mooney (Eastern Shore Resource Conservation & Development Council)

Short/Mid Term
Farmer Launch: Sep. 2017
Public Launch: May 2018

Establish an Eastern Shore Chapter with 20 members.
Members present at each of the local farm markets.

Need to confirm interest in local participation remains as some farmers already belong to Hampton Roads Buy Fresh Buy Local group. Project pending confirmation.

GOAL 2: Develop a wholesale production facility supporting larger-scale farmers to add value to crops grown on the shore and create value added opportunities for larger-scale farmers with a focus on supporting potato chip production on the Eastern Shore. The final goal is to attract Jimmy Ash potato chip manufacturer to the Eastern Shore.

Objective A: Assess regional production capacity (larger farmer focus).

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<td>To identify potential benefactors of facility with a focus on potatoes</td>
<td>Primary: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services</td>
<td>Butch Nottingham (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services)</td>
<td>Mid Term Dec.2018</td>
<td>• Identify potential benefactors of wholesale production facility e.g. growers and skilled and unskilled labor • Work with Jimmy Ash potato chip manufacturer to create jobs in production facility • Create chip market for local growers</td>
<td>Completed – potential benefactors of potato processor (Jimmy Ash) identified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Objective B: Assess market potential.

| Potential market areas in other regional areas: Washington D.C., New York, Richmond, and Hampton Roads | PRIMARY: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
- Identify market opportunities for Eastern Shore producers.  
- Grant dollars needed to support market research. | Completed |

| Assess obstacles and competition | PRIMARY: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
SECONDARY: Virginia Cooperative Extension, USDA – FSA, USDA-NASS, Virginia Tech Association of Potato & Vegetable Growers | Butch Nottingham (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services) | Mid Term | January 2018  
Comprehensive survey publication of all vegetable, grain, fiber, and oilseed crops and aquaculture on Eastern Shore. | Completed |

| Engage produce brokers in other regional areas: Washington D.C., New York, Richmond, and Hampton Roads | PRIMARY: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
Commitment from produce brokers to sell Eastern Shore produce. | Completed |

## Objective C: Research priority crop production.

| Research production practices: explore first for potato varieties | PRIMARY: Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech  
SECONDARY: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services, USDA – FSA, USDA-NASS,  
Ursula Deitch & Theresa Pittman (Virginia Cooperative Extension), Ramon Arancibia (Virginia Tech) | Ursula Deitch & Theresa Pittman (Virginia Cooperative Extension), Ramon Arancibia (Virginia Tech) | Short Term | Dec. 2017  
Identification and production practice development (potato varieties initially) | Current research is ongoing, but more research and funding is needed. Snap bean trials underway in 2017 (Ramon). |

| Priority commodity | PRIMARY: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
- Identify, research, and demonstrate new technologies for dissemination to growers in order to increase profitability and yields  
- Identify profitable crops that are marketable  
- Identify grant dollars to support research and Extension programs. | Current research is ongoing, but more research and funding is needed. |
**Objective D: Assess and address infrastructure needs.**

| Natural Gas | Primary: Accomack & Northampton County Boards of Supervisors | Secondary: Delegate Rob Bloxom, Directors of Economic Development, Local Suppliers | Board of Supervisors – Accomack County, Sharp Energy, Pep-Up | Mid Term | Dec. 2019 | Assistance with extending a natural gas line into Accomack County to serve Eastern Shore residents and commercial operations. (Come down from Maryland) | Company identified – Somerset Utilities Current research is ongoing, but more research and funding is needed. |
| Conduct a needs assessment for cold and warm ag storage. | Primary: Virginia Cooperative Extension | Secondary: Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services, USDA – FSA, USDA-NASS, Virginia Tech | Ursula Deitch & Theresa Pittman (Virginia Cooperative Extension); Butch Nottingham (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services) | Mid Term | Dec. 2018 | Conduct assessment of warm and cold storage that may lead to expansions of existing sites such as the Bloxom Agricultural Complex or additional construction. | Not started |

**GOAL 3: Develop a sawmill on the Eastern Shore of Virginia by December 2018. (Pine)**

The forest resource on the Eastern Shore has been devalued by more than 50% since 2007 because of the loss of 80% of industrial sawmill capacity on the Delmarva peninsula, thereby reducing asset values to both Eastern Shore of Virginia forestland owners and the real estate tax base required for local County revenue generation.

**Objective A: Educate local public officials in both Accomack and Northampton Counties and State Officials on the community economic impact of the loss of pine saw timber manufacturing on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.**

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<td>Conduct presentation to both County Boards of Supervisors</td>
<td>Primary: Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Dept. of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services, Virginia Dept. of Forestry</td>
<td>Steve Mallette (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce); Butch Nottingham (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture &amp; Consumer Services); Robbie Lewis (Virginia Dept. of Forestry)</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Develop County support to provide partial funding for an Eastern Shore Forest Inventory and Market develop plan. Cost sharing available VDACS Agricultural and Forestry Industry Development Planning Grant</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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</table>
**Objective A:** Conduct educational presentation to County Economic Development organizations and stakeholders.

**Primary:** Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Virginia Dept. of Forestry, Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce

**Secondary:** Farm Bureau organizations, Agribusiness & Food Processing Working Group Partners

**Butch Nottingham (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services), Robbie Lewis (Virginia Dept. of Forestry), Robie Marsh (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce)**

**Short Term**  
**Fall 2017**  
Develop County support to provide partial funding for an Eastern Shore Forest Inventory and Market develop plan. Cost sharing available from VDACS Agricultural and Forestry Industry Development Planning Grant

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**Objective B:** Obtain funding for development of Eastern Shore Forest Inventory and Pine Sawmill Marketing Plan.

**Solicit local and state supporters for Planning Grant(s)**

**Primary:** Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

**Secondary:** Agribusiness & Food Processing Working Group Partners

**Robie Marsh (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce), Curt Smith (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)**

**Mid Term**  
**Summer 2018**  
Obtain letters of support for Planning Grant(s) including the Virginia Board of Forestry and Virginia Agribusiness Council

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**Prepare application for Gov. AFID and US Forest Service Planning Grant**

**Primary:** County Economic Development Directors, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

**Secondary:** Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, others

**County Economic Development Directors, Curt Smith (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)**

**Mid Term**  
**Fall 2018**  
Obtain approx. $100,000 for planning grant

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**Objective C:** Develop a regional Eastern Shore Forest Inventory and Pine Sawmill Marketing Plan.
AGRIBUSINESS & FOOD PROCESSING REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

Solicit Request for Proposals for Plan

Objective D: Attract forestry sector operations.

Attract a sawmill company to create a mill on the Eastern Shore.

Objective A: Establish agricultural education and training programs in middle/high schools and at the community college level.

GOAL 4: Equip individuals with appropriate skills to work in the agribusiness and food processing cluster.

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<td>By graduation every student has a Meaningful Agricultural Experience (MAgE)</td>
<td>Primary: Accomack &amp; Northampton County School Boards, Eastern Shore Soil &amp; Water Conservation District, Virginia Cooperative Extension &lt;br&gt;Secondary: Agribusiness &amp; Food Processing Working Group Partners</td>
<td>Carmie Savage (Eastern Shore Soil &amp; Water Conservation District); Ursula Deitch &amp; Theresa Pittman (Virginia Cooperative Extension); Accomack &amp; Northampton County School Superintendents</td>
<td>Mid Term</td>
<td>• Farm Tours &lt;br&gt;• Aquaculture Tour/Experience &lt;br&gt;• Pumpkin Mania &lt;br&gt;• School Gardens &lt;br&gt;• Job Shadow within industry</td>
<td>Currently being held with plans to expand. CTE High School Curriculum John Pavlik and Susie Henderson in Northampton Co.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Primary:** Expand non-credit, but credential oriented training program with a focus on areas of agribusiness | **Primary:** Eastern Shore Community College  
**Secondary:** Agribusiness & Food Processing Working Group Partners | **Primary:** Eastern Shore Community College Workforce Development Staff | **Short/Mid Term** | **Decem
er 2017** | **Offer noncredit training leading to industry-recognized credentials** | **ESCC's Adult Ed. Program does offer GED and Integrated English Literacy/Civics classes on-site at Perdue and have also had classes at Tyson's; these classes incorporate basic work skills in the industry** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Primary:** Establish an active and engaged Future Farmers of America (FFA) program in public schools on the Eastern Shore of Virginia | **Primary:** Accomack & Northampton County School Boards  
**Secondary:** Farm Bureau, Virginia Future Farmers of America Foundation, Young Farmers of Virginia, Agribusiness & Food Processing Working Group Partners | **Primary:** Accomack & Northampton County School Superintendents | **Mid Term** | **By 2018/19 school year** | • Agriculture Teachers in High Schools  
• Regional FFA Competition  
• Certificate Programs | **Planning phase** |
| **Primary:** Establish a college level program at Eastern Shore Community College (reference SVCC, CCC, RCC)** | **Primary:** Eastern Shore Community College; Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission  
**Secondary:** Agribusiness & Food Processing Working Group Partners | **Primary:** Vice President of Academic Affairs;  
Caroline Bott (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission) | **Long Term** | **By 2020 the first cohort will have associate degree** | • Agribusiness Associate  
• Horticulture Associate  
• Aquaculture Associate Degree  
Build upon Building a Sustainable rural business class | **A-NPDC grant identifying needs and exploring potential curriculum and facilities. Assessment to be completed in June 2017.** |
| **Objective B:** Prepare skilled labor within specific industries: nursery, vegetable, aquaculture and grain crops. | **Primary:** Teresa Guy (Eastern Shore Community College) | **Primary:**  
**Secondary:** Agricultural associations  
(Farm Bureau, Potato, Soybean board, Nurserymen), Virginia Institute of Marine Science | **2018; Currently in progress, but looking to expand through a Dept. of Labor grant in partnership with Tidewater Community College; timeline is being worked out with TCC** | **ESCC has an apprenticeship program with Tyson’s Foods in the Industrial Technology program. Students begin employment in their 2nd year of education, work at Tyson’s for a good wage ($14/hour) and this leads to full-time** | **Skilled labor ready to enter workforce  
Establish industry specific job fair** |
**Fund, expand and market internship programs – target agribusiness and aquaculture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Shore Community College</td>
<td>Teresa Guy, Career Pathways Coordinator, Eastern Shore Community College</td>
<td>Currently in progress, but expansion to other programs at ESCC is planned in the next 1-2 years; funding ends on June 30, 2016, but the program will continue. Additional resources need to be secured. ESCC does market the internship program through all marketing venues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current internships exist at schools although attendance yet to be cumulatively quantified. Current Internships also at Tyson and Perdue.

*SVCC- Southside Virginia Community College - Agribusiness
CCC- Carteret Community College – Aquaculture
RCC- Rappahannock Community College – Horticulture