

AGRICULTURAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FY 20

JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020



West Virginia
Conservation Agency



OVERVIEW

The AgEP program was created by West Virginians to help West Virginians meet the challenges of preventing soil erosion and reducing water quality impacts created by sediment.

BRIAN FARKAS

WVCA Executive Director

Through AgEP the conservation districts select practices that meet the conservation needs in their area. The geography and type of agriculture varies significantly in WV so maintaining this flexibility in the program is very important. There are areas of the state with limited “traditional” agriculture but districts are able to serve those more urban and suburban areas through the urban ag practice, as an example.

Other areas of the state have more crop-based or pasture-based agriculture, so practices and funding can be targeted to address those specific needs. The state program doesn’t limit based on farm size, and districts have flexibility in establishing the payment rates and practice criteria in order to make it fit for their area.

JENNIFER SKAGGS

Conservation Services Division Director

AgEP is a very valuable program for farmers in West Virginia. It reduces soil erosion and provides better use of our Natural Resources for all citizens in the state. With AgEP, locally led Conservation Districts work with landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources. The future of Agriculture is more secure through programs like AgEP.

WAYNE MCKEEVER

President, West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts



Top: Cover crop interseeded into corn in Jefferson County. Photo: Heather Duncan *Middle:* Access Road in Jefferson County. *Bottom:* Exclusion fencing in Berkeley County. Photos: Barbie Elliot

FY 20 AgEP Committee Members

Capitol Conservation District – Clyde Bailey

Eastern Panhandle Conservation District – Floyd Kursey

Elk Conservation District – Donald Burroughs

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District – Timothy VanReenen

Guyan Conservation District – Bill Stewart

Little Kanawha Conservation District – Sam Sheets

Monongahela Conservation District – Jean Conley

Northern Panhandle Conservation District – Mark Fitzsimmons

Potomac Valley Conservation District – George Leatherman

Southern Conservation District – Dennis Bailey

Tygarts Valley Conservation District – James Dean

Upper Ohio Conservation District – Bill Gellner

West Fork Conservation District– Bill Coffindaffer

Western Conservation District – Oscar Harris



MODERN HERITAGE FARM

TENNESSEE FAMILY FINDS NEW FARMING ROOTS IN WEST VIRGINIA

By: Kaitlyn Murphy

Tennessee natives Daniel and Mary Jackman followed their farming dream to Roane County, West Virginia, in 2019. That same year they established the Modern Heritage Farm.

As beginning farmers, their interests include working toward becoming a subsistence farm and using their agricultural pursuits and livestock as their income. Dan and Mary have a cow/calf beef cattle operation to raise and sell as freezer beef and are raising Buff Orphington chickens to sell at every stage – chicks, 14 weeks for slaughter, hens for breeding and are a licensed egg distributor through the WV Department of Agriculture.



The Jackmans have completed a Heavy Use Area Protection practice through the Agricultural Enhancement Program to decrease erosion and compaction associated with transportation of hay and winter feeding.



In the future the Jackmans will be utilizing the AgEP lime program, installing necessary practices to facilitate a rotational grazing system, and have discussed the new Bale Grazing practice for the coming winter feeding.

They are also planning to construct high tunnels to raise and sell vegetables and have some fruit trees established and are adding bee stands for pollinators. We look forward to working more with the Jackmans and seeing their plans and hard work come to fruition.



HEAVY USE AREA PROTECTION

The stabilization of areas frequently and intensively used by people, animals or vehicles by establishing vegetative cover, by surfacing with suitable materials, and/or by installing needed structures. The purposes include reduction of soil erosion, improving water quantity and quality, improving air quality, improving aesthetics and improving livestock health.

SPOTLIGHT BMP

URBAN AGRICULTURE AND POLLINATOR HABITAT

*Caitlin Black, Conservation Specialist,
Guyan Conservation District*

Urban Agriculture provides a safe, healthy and green environment for growing fruits and vegetables in an urban setting. This program provides cost-share assistance to cooperators that may live in an urban setting a chance to grow and produce food that could feed themselves and their families. The program encourages nontraditional participation in soil and water conservation practices. Districts that offer this program provide the cooperator with a list of practices and resources to use for their garden area.

The cooperators must purchase approved materials to be reimbursed for the AgEP Urban Ag practices.

AgEP Urban Ag programs help cooperators purchase the supplies needed to help start a garden in their backyard. From there, the possibilities are endless on what they can raise.

The Pollinator Habitat program provides multiple benefits to native pollinators. West Virginia pollinators can include butterflies, flies, moths, bees, beetles, bats, and birds. Native plant habitats will attract pollinators and beneficial insects that prey on crop pests and could reduce the use of pesticides.

The practice will help restore, enhance or create habitat for organisms that provide pollination services by establishing and maintaining pollinator habitat plots through planting native pollinator seed mixes and/or using the delayed mowing method in managed agriculture land such as hayfields, pastures and cropland. Early flowering plants will provide a food source to bees emerging out of hibernation and late flowering plants will allow bumble bees to build up energy reserves before entering winter dormancy.

In West Virginia, native pollinators can flourish using straightforward and simple practices to provided nesting sites and foraging plants.

The AgEP Urban Agriculture Program

benefits families not only by providing fresh, nutritious produce and exercise but for adults and kids alike it can be a learning experience.

Finding out how things in nature work and how to care for your garden keeps families engaged. Gardens teach patience, because plants are not moved by human need for instant gratification.

Terry Hudson, Chairman
Capitol Conservation District



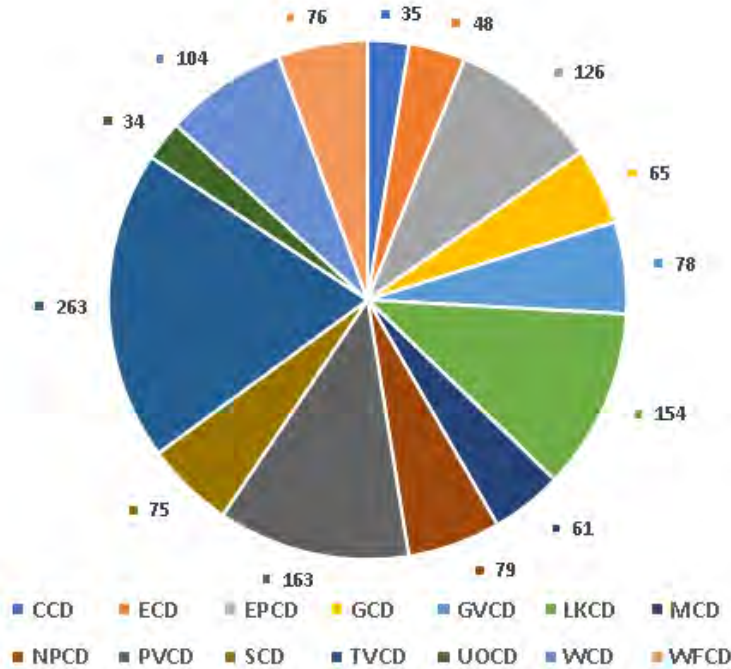
URBAN AGRICULTURE



In 2020 Urban Agriculture across the United States experienced unprecedented growth due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Surveys show that 1 in 3 Americans are now growing food at home.

AgEP APPLICATIONS AT A GLANCE

APPLICATIONS BY DISTRICT



AgEP is a District-administered program that provides locally specific agricultural enhancement BMPs that aid farmers and landowners in improving their lands.

These improvements allow for increased conservation and agricultural production on their lands while also rendering a sustainable future for generations to come.

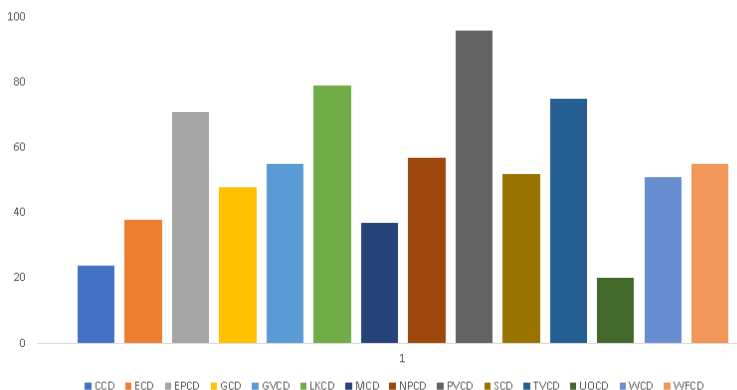
Timothy VanReenen
Greenbrier Valley Conservation
District Supervisor

**FY 20
APPLICATION
INCREASE
24%!**

AgEP is a tremendous asset to influence cooperators to start thinking about and then acting on conservation issues on their property. Conservation is a behavior and AgEP helps start the conversations and relationships to build on.

Barry Level, GVCD

PAID APPLICATIONS BY DISTRICT



1,361 Applications Received

Based on AgEP Database, total includes cancelled, paid and unfunded



758 Paid Applications

Based on AgEP database, total includes only paid



\$1,019,075.07 Total Payments



\$1,944,808.72 Total Cost

Cooperators' total cost of implementing practice



636 Cooperators

FY 20 SUMMARY PER PRACTICE

- Cover Crop
- Exclusion Fence/
Watering System
- Hay Establishment or
Reseeding
- Lime
- Pasture Division Fence
- Pollinator Habitat
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Urban Agriculture
- Winter Grazing
- Critical Area Planting
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Micro Irrigation
- Pasture Division Fence/
Watering System
- Pond Clean Out
- Roof Runoff Management
- Watering Systems
- Woodland Exclusion Fence
- Deer Exclusion Fence
- Frost Seeding
- Invasive Species
Management
- Nutrient Management
- Pasture Establishment or
Reseeding
- Precision Agriculture
- Silvopasture
- Water Protection
Exclusion Fence

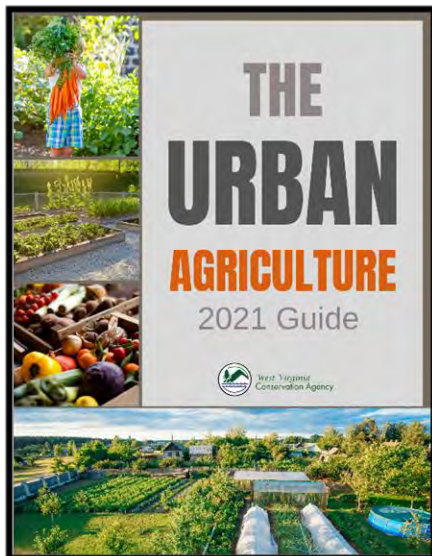


PRACTICES COMPLETED IN FY 20	UNIT TOTALS	NUMBERS OF PAID APPLICATIONS
Cover Crop	21.93* Acres	6
Critical Area Planting	2.50 Acres	2
Exclusion Fence	39,048* Feet	24
Forage Seeding	12,236.32 Acres	54
Frost Seeding	2,379 Acres	52
Heavy Use Area Protection	109,708 Square Feet	81
Invasive Species Management	762 Acres	33
Lime	9,781.66 Acres	294
Nutrient Management	1,127.51	51
Pasture Division Fence	113,111 Feet	76
Pollinator Planting	21,780 Square Feet	10
Pond Clean Out	8 ponds	8
Urban Agriculture	19 Components	19
Watering System	46 Components	46
Winter Grazing	75.8 Acres	2
	TOTAL	758

FY 20 FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

CONSERVATION DISTRICT	AgEP DOLLARS PAID	PAID APPLICATIONS	UNFUNDED APPLICATIONS
Capitol	\$10,796.02	24	
Eastern Panhandle	\$83,789.08	71	27
Elk	\$32,258.60	38	
Greenbrier Valley	\$91,090.16	55	6
Guyan	\$38,888.33	48	
Little Kanawha	\$102,862.08	79	48
Monongahela	\$68,268.63	37	
Northern Panhandle	\$141,229.94	57	12
Potomac Valley	\$119,499.22	96	
Southern	\$61,134.64	52	
Tygarts Valley	\$76,633.15	75	168
Upper Ohio	\$20,139.13	20	
West Fork	\$78,972.50	51	11
Western	\$93,513.59	55	33
TOTAL:	\$1,010,075.07	758	305



Conservation Specialists from across the state are creating an AgEP Urban Agriculture Guide for cooperators in participating districts. This guide will be available beginning in 2021 in both print or digital format.



URBAN AG BMPs at work: Top left: raised beds in a high tunnel in Tygarts Valley Conservation District. Bottom left and top: Straw weed block and a rain barrel in Northern Panhandle Conservation District

AgEP Exigency Program

Water Hauling Tank

The AgEP Program is a catalyst for soil conservation. Since the program can in no way address all the soil resource concerns on a farm, it provides a farmer with a taste of how protecting our natural resources can improve their ability to accomplish their agricultural goals.

In many cases the farmer is then inspired to seek additional conservation planning assistance from the WVCA or NRCS. These plans then further inspire farmers to participate with other conservation programs. Often these farmers then educate themselves through the process and understand how investing their own money in conservation is a benefit to not only their own property but their community as a whole.

The children of these farmers continue this chain reaction by learning about conservation- minded farming at a young age and become conservationists for life. Some of these children have even grown up to become conservation professionals providing assistance to the next generation.

DENNIS BURNS
Conservation Specialist
WVCA

In October 2019 the SCC approved a water hauling tank program through AgEP. AgEP may provide funding for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) during exigency situations.

At that time there had been an extended period of below-normal precipitation in areas of West Virginia as reported by the United States Drought Monitor. Drought can cause abnormal moisture deficiency and have adverse impacts on vegetation and animals. All districts were eligible to participate in the program.

The purpose was to fulfill livestock drinking water needs, and WVCA provided funding to the conservation districts for cost sharing on water hauling tanks and associated fittings.

The program was implemented as a reimbursement program with a cost-share rate of 50% up to a maximum reimbursement of \$400 per cooperator. All reimbursements were based on receipts for purchase of tank(s) and associated fittings.



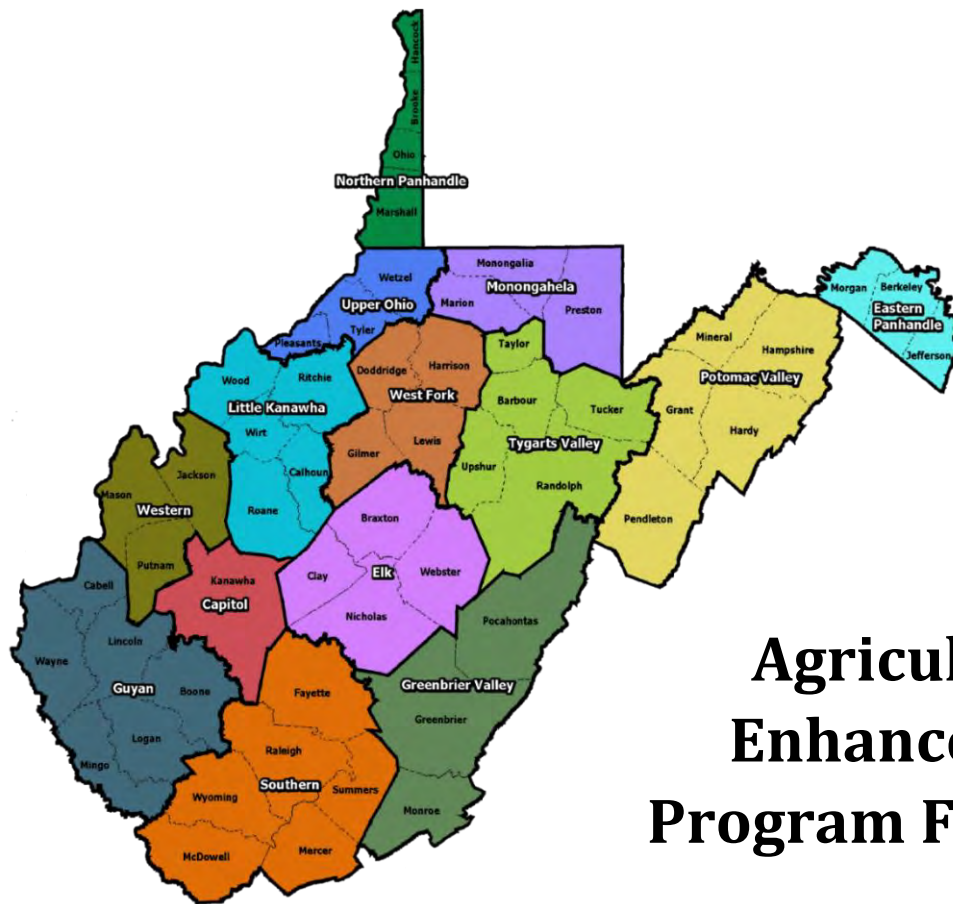
25 TOTAL APPLICATIONS

16 PAID APPLICATIONS

\$3,907.32 PAID

\$8,347.24 TOTAL COST





Agricultural Enhancement Program Field Staff

DISTRICT	CONSERVATION SPECIALIST	PHONE	EMAIL
Capitol and Elk	Russell Young	(304) 590-1540	ryoung@wvca.us
Eastern Panhandle	Barbie Elliott	(681) 247-3012	belliott@wvca.us
Eastern Panhandle	Amy Henry	(681) 247-3014	ahenry@wvca.us
Greenbrier Valley	Barry Level	(304) 645-6173	barrett.level@gmail.com
Guyan	Caitlin Black	(304) 549-1739	cblack@wvca.us
Little Kanawha	Vacant	(304) 422-9088	lkcd@wvca.us
Monongahela and West Fork	Sigrid Teets	(304) 941-2326	steets@wvca.us
Northern Pan and Upper Ohio	Jennifer Kile	(304) 238-5649	jkile@wvca.us
Potomac Valley	Ben Heavner	(304) 538-7581	bheavner@wvca.us
Potomac Valley	Tanner McNeely	(304) 553-3102	tmcneely@wvca.us
Southern	Kenny Maiolo	(304) 253-0261	kmaiolo@wvca.us
Tygarts Valley	Vacant	(304) 457-3026	tvcd@wvca.us
Western	Russell Kidwell	(304) 539-0663	rkidwell@wvca.us

This booklet is made with 100% recycled materials.



West Virginia
Conservation Agency