

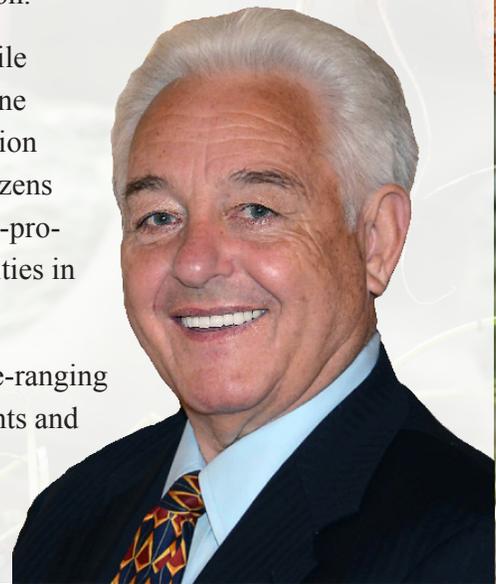
Moving AGRICULTURE *Forward*

As West Virginia moves towards diversifying its economy, Agriculture in the Mountain State is primed to become one of the fastest growing segments for existing farmers and aspiring entrepreneurs. While there are many uncertainties in our rapidly changing world, one fact remains constant—as populations across the globe continue to grow, the demand for food will grow right along with it.

Never before has there been a better time for our state to take advantage of a multi-billion dollar opportunity. According to USDA figures, West Virginians consume more than \$7 billion worth of food annually while producing approximately \$700 million.

Programs including aggregation and canning facilities, mobile processing and multi-faceted development of abandoned mine lands for agricultural purposes, are all part of the new direction the WVDA is pursuing diligently in order to provide the citizens of our state with options for obtaining fresh, healthy, locally-produced food products, in addition to expanding job opportunities in Agriculture.

The WVDA also remains committed to carrying out its wide-ranging statutory responsibilities to protect the health of people, plants and animals across our state.



Walt Helmick, Commissioner

During 2014 many initiatives were launched by the WVDA and are taking hold. With the intention of creating a statewide marketplace for our farmers that want to grow more crops and produce more livestock, plans for regional crop aggregation facilities and mobile processing were announced.

A potato processing line was established at the WVDA farm at Huttonsville in Randolph County and additional crop processing lines are scheduled to open at other locations across the state in 2015 and 2016 along with plans for the opening of at least two canneries during the next 18 to 24 months.

Our Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture program was started and has gained momentum in putting many of our loyal servicemen and women to work on numerous Agricultural projects including many apiary operations throughout the state.

Demonstrational high tunnel projects, designed to educate our citizens, young and old, on ways to extend the growing season were started with the first being at the WVDA farm at Lakin in Mason County. Other high tunnel projects have been funded and are set for construction in Wood, Kanawha and Wayne counties. Additional high tunnels will also be erected throughout the state.

A new Lime Plant designed specifically for Agricultural needs was opened at Mill Point in Pocahontas County.

Work on many other advancements also took place including development for Post Mine Lands, community gardens and Farm to School programs.

For the latest WVDA developments, follow us on Twitter @WVDeptofAg

