

# A Look at Virginia Agriculture



## Virginia

**Capital:** Richmond  
**Population:** 7,459,827  
**Founded:** June 25, 1788 (10<sup>th</sup> state)  
**State Bird:** Cardinal  
**State Flower:** American Dogwood  
**State Fish:** Brook Trout  
**Number of Counties:** 95  
**Largest City:** Virginia Beach **Population:** 439,467

## Climate



- The average temperature in Virginia is 55.7° F and the average annual rainfall is 42.7".
- There are five different climate regions within the state. They are Tidewater, Piedmont, Northern Virginia, Western Mountain and Southwestern Mountain.
- Winters on the Blue Ridge can be bitterly cold while other parts of the state, Charlottesville, Lynchburg and Warrenton for example have long growing seasons and temperatures rarely drop below 0° F.
- Similarly, annual rainfall totals can vary from 33" in the Shenandoah Valley to more than 60" in the mountains of southwestern Virginia.

## Crops



- Tobacco remains Virginia's largest cash crop. In 2002, Virginia was the fourth largest tobacco producing state with \$161.2 million dollars in receipts. Recent changes in the historic quota system are significantly impacting the tobacco industry in Virginia.
- Soybeans are grown in central and eastern Virginia. This versatile legume generates \$65.3 in sales for Virginia farmers.
- The majority of corn grown in Virginia is for grain. Virginia corn feeds the commonwealth's poultry, equine and cattle industries. Corn for grain generates \$50.3 million in sales.
- The climate and topography of Virginia's Eastern Shore are perfect for growing tomatoes. About 4,800 acres of tomatoes are grown making Virginia 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in tomato production.
- Virginia produces winter wheat which is sold to flour mills along the east coast.

## Soil



- Pamunkey soil is the state soil of Virginia.
- These soils formed in the basin of the James River and are made up of sediments from all over the state. The soil was named after the Pamunkey Indian Tribe.
- Pamunkey soils were first identified on a farm near Jamestown, Virginia which is known as the oldest tilled farm in the United States.

## General



- Virginia agriculture generates approximately \$36 billion annually in total sales for the state. Together, agriculture and forestry are Virginia's number one industry, contributing more than \$47 billion to the state economy annually and representing more than 15% of total employment.
- About 90% of Virginia's farms are owned and operated by families.
- The average age of the Virginia farmer is 57 years old with nearly 30% of farmers 65 or older.
- There are 47,600 farms in the state covering 8.6 million acres (34% of Virginia's total land area).
- About 14% of farmers in Virginia are female and 4% are minorities.
- The Greenhouse and Nursery is one of Virginia's fastest growing agriculture segments. The greenhouse and nursery products generated \$183.2 million in receipts making it Virginia's 4th largest commodity.

## Animals



- Poultry, mostly broilers, turkeys and eggs are Virginia's most valuable agricultural product. The state's poultry farms produced 265 million broilers, 20 million turkeys and 734 million eggs in 2002.
- Beef cattle are the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading commodity in the commonwealth bringing in \$322.3 million in 2002.
- There are 120,000 dairy cows in Virginia. Milk is Virginia's third largest commodity with \$267.7 million in sales.
- Virginia hams and pork products are famous around the world. Only hams produced in the town of Smithfield, VA can be called Smithfield hams.
- With 170,000 horses, Virginia is the fifth largest equine state in the U.S. Triple Crown winner Secretariat was born in Doswell, VA.



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