

**FINAL REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
to
Joint Committee on Government and Finance
2015 - 2016 Interims**

Members

Senate

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Senator Robert Karnes, Vice Chair
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The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met three times during the 2015-2016 period beginning in June 2015 to discuss and study agricultural issues.

During the 2015 – 2016 Legislative Interim meetings, your Committee has met with the representatives of state government and agricultural industry and REPORTS as follows:

JUNE 2015

The Joint Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development met on Monday, June 8, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. Robert Hinton, the Executive Director of the Upshur County Development Authority discussed possible community efforts to increase the number and development of food hubs throughout the state. Mr. Hinton responded to questions. Next, Ms. Cindy Martel, Marketing Specialist for Department of Agriculture, discussed GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) training and the Food Safety Modernization Act in West Virginia. Mr. Chris Ferro, Chief of Staff for the Department of Agriculture addressed the committee regarding aggregation and ways to improve the agricultural industry throughout the state. The final presenters were Breanna Pekula, Kieanna Pawell and Kenzie Pawell, Future Farmers of America from Cameron High School in Cameron, West Virginia to give their FFA presentation on White Nose Bat Syndrome.

SEPTEMBER 2015

The Joint Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development met in the House Government Organization Committee Room at 4:00 p.m., on Sunday, September 13, 2015. Senator Williams, State Fair of West Virginia Advisory Board of Directors, gave a brief recap of the 2015 State Fair. Next, Brian Farkas, Executive Director at West Virginia Conservation Agency, gave an update on conservation dams and the election of conservation officers and responded to questions. Last, Jeremy Grant, Executive Director of WV Farmers Market Association and Adam Taylor, Project Coordinator, WV Farmers Market Association, gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the cottage food industry and laws in West Virginia and responded to questions.

JANUARY 2016

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee will meet on Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. Melissa Williams, Assistant Program Director, Community and Agriculture Resource Development, WVSU Extension Service, will speak about vertical agriculture and production. Fritz Boettner, Downstream Strategies, will discuss community-based approaches to food access and security (i.e., Alderson's Green Grocer). Elizabeth Spillman, Executive Director of WV Food and Farm Coalition, and Adam Taylor, Project Coordinator, WV Farmer's Market Association, will discuss cottage foods, farm to food bank, and local food procurement proposals, and give an update on the WV Cooperative Collaborative

Respectfully Submitted,



Senator Robert Karnes, Vice Chair



Delegate Roy Cooper, Chair