



The Senate Committee on Finance

Budget Bulletin

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BUDGET

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is responsible for supporting agriculture and ensuring food safety in the state through numerous programs. The Department’s total budget for this fiscal year (FY2020) is \$55,141,084. Almost half of the money budgeted to the WVDA comes from the federal government to fund meat inspection and land conservation initiatives. The Department also has several special revenue funds, meaning that they are funded through various fees rather than from the general revenues. Most recently, the Department has been put in charge of developing and regulating the emerging hemp industry.



CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICE

AGRICULTURE FUNDING FY2020

General Revenue.....	\$11,092,373
Special Revenue.....	\$17,309,246
Federal Revenue.....	\$26,739,465
Total:	\$55,141,084

The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of the six constitutional officers of the state. Constitutional officers are a unique feature of West Virginia government. These officers, including the auditor and treasurer, are directly elected by the people, not appointed by the governor.

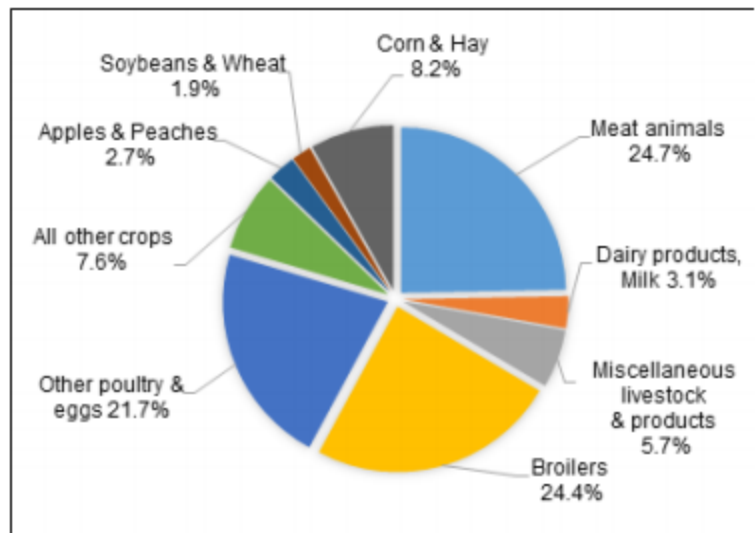
DUTIES

Animal Health

The mission of the Animal Health Division is to prevent, suppress and control any communicable diseases of animals or poultry. In FY2020, the WVDA had a budget of \$131,942 for their Animal Identification Program. The Department uses this money to assign a unique identification number to cattle so that they can track the spread of disease. The Division also inspects horses upon sale.

WVDA staff educates poultry farmers on preventing the spread of disease and monitors poultry to prevent the spread of diseases including avian influenza. Poultry is the state's largest agricultural sector with a \$325 million annual value of production. On the right is a graphic representing the relative shares of WV's agricultural commodities.

Cash Receipts: Selected Commodities, West Virginia, 2016



Food Safety

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture's food testing laboratory in Charleston provides analytical services for food safety programs. They test dairy products for disease and for the accuracy of their milk fat labeling. The WVDA lab also tests meat for diseases like E. coli and salmonella.

Agriculture Industry Protection

The WVDA protects farmers by testing fertilizer to verify compliance with the label. In 2016, they found 175 violations and collected \$25,344 in fines for the special revenue fund they use to run the program. The Department also collects seed samples to ensure proper product labeling of company as well as seed purity, germination rates and the presence of noxious weed seed.

Food Distribution

The WVDA administers federally funded Food Distribution and Child Nutrition Programs in the state. In FY2017, the Department administered \$12.6 million in federally funded food to 725 schools and 162 summer feeding programs. The WVDA also runs the state's two food banks, delivering food to 426 food pantries.

Forest Health Protection

The WVDA is tasked with protecting forests from invasive pests and diseases. The Department visits over 5,000 landowners per year to survey for gypsy moth presence. The WVDA also helps source and plant disease resistant trees to stop their spread.

Industrial Hemp

Legislation passed in 2017 allowed farmers to begin growing hemp for commercial purposes and gave the WVDA liscensing authority. For the 2019 growing season, the Department issued 158 individual licenses for a total acreage of 2,531. The WVDA is awaiting forthcoming guidelines from the federal government before it can use the money collected from liscensing.

PROGRAM COSTS

The following are major programs all funded through General Revenue:

Gypsy Moth Program

FY2020 Appropriation: \$1,003,440

Gypsy moths are an invasive species that can devastate hardwood trees. The money for this program allows the Department to survey tree health, set thousands of gypsy moth traps and plant resistant trees.

Moorefield Agriculture Center

FY2020 Appropriation: \$975,284

The Department's Animal Health Division examines animals for signs of disease at markets, fairs, festivals and farms. This allows them to track and control the spread of diseases between animals.

Black Fly Control

FY2020 Appropriation: \$453,698

One of the Department's central missions is pest control, both for farms and forests. The black fly control program allows the department to survey, track and control these pests.

Veterans to Agriculture

FY2020 Appropriation: \$255,624

This program helps veterans to get agricultural training as well as loans to start their farm business. In addition to economic benefits, working on a farm is thought to have theraputic benefits for participating veterans.