

Equine Medical Center Hosts Virginia Agribusiness Council Meeting

The Virginia Agribusiness Council (VAC) recently held a roundtable forum with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Commissioner Todd Haymore at the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center.

The session, which was open to the public, was the final stop in a statewide tour during which Haymore, who was appointed in June 2007, met with representatives from all sectors of the Commonwealth's agribusiness industry.

This meeting was designed to give VAC members an opportunity to discuss with Haymore the challenges and opportunities facing their communities. More than 25 local leaders and representatives of the produce, dairy, equine, golf course and environmental conservation industries participated in the session. Five similar events were held in Caroline County, Suffolk, Danville, Staunton and Wytheville.



VDACS Commissioner Todd Haymore (center) speaks to Dr. Nat White (left) and a Virginia Agribusiness Council member at the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center.

Attendees were encouraged to express their concerns to the commissioner and to ask questions about his leadership plans. A variety of topics were addressed including funding for the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center, preservation of farmland, agri-tourism, fragmentation of farm land, agriculture product marketing, and collaboration between VDACS and Virginia Tech's extension offices. The Agriculture Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program and the National Animal Identification Program were also discussed.

"This was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our center and to reinforce the message that the equine industry is a vital contributor to the Commonwealth's economy," said Dr. Nat White, Jean Ellen Shehan Professor and Director of the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center. "We look forward to working with the commissioner and VAC leadership in their efforts to advance Virginia agriculture."

The Virginia Agribusiness Council is a Richmond-based nonprofit organization committed to representing the agriculture and forest industries in the Commonwealth through effective government relations and promotion efforts. Its membership includes farmers, foresters and other agricultural-product producers, marketers and processors, suppliers and associations.