

Draft Minutes
Virginia Cattle Industry Board
July 23, 2025 - 11:00 AM
The Etgen Center, VT
Blacksburg, VA

Presiding: Bill Tucker, Chairman

Roll Call:

Members Present

Julia Jones
Bill Tucker
Bob Threewitts
Perry Huffman
Buddy Shelton
Nick McNeil
Andy Smith

Members Absent

Perry Huffman
Matthew Hill
Richard Lloyd
Cecila Moyer

Staff Present

Matthew Sponaugle, VDACS Liaison
Melissa Ball, VDACS

Others Presents

Tracy Fitzsimmons – VDACS
Stephanie Weiss – VA Beef Council
Sam Hadacek – VCA
Leighton Huffman – VCA

Becky Roberts – VCE
Amy Byington – VCE
Brandon Reeves – VCA
Jake Tabor – VA Farm Bureau

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Grant Updates:

Stephanie Weiss from Virginia Beef Council gave a brief report on Grant #25-1B “E-Commerce Beef Promotion with a National Retailer”. Included with her report was a handout summarizing the results of the project.

Financial Report

Matthew Sponaugle reviewed the financial report as presented below:

<u>Summary:</u>		
Cash Balance:	June 30, 2024	\$1,220,193.23
Receipts through:	May 31, 2025	\$267,849.38
Interest through:	May 31, 2025	\$38,265.65
Expenditures through:	May 31, 2025	-\$317,876.70
Cash Balance:	May 31, 2025	\$1,208,431.56
Committed / Unpaid (Grants):	May 31, 2025	\$613,447.01
Committed / Unpaid (Admin)	May 31, 2025	\$22,228.73
Funds available for allocation:	May 31, 2025	\$572,755.82

Approval of Minutes

Threewitts moved to approve the draft minutes of the February 27, 2025 meeting. The motion was seconded by Huffman and the motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Action on Grant Proposals

The Board reviewed the following grant submissions:

NUMBER	TITLE	ORANIZATION	TYPE	AMOUNT REQUESTED
26-1	Grassroots to Global: Local cattle focused on National productivity	Pittsylvania Cattlemen's Assoc.	Market Development	\$2,500.00
26-2	Discovering New Placental Markers Predicting Pregnancy success for in Vitro Produced Embryos	Virginia Tech School of Animal Sciences	Research	\$19,880.00
26-3	Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association VQA Feeder Cattle Marketing Program	Abingdon Feeder Cattle Assoc.	Market Development	\$2,500.00
26-4	Exploring gene expression and hormone production in response to nutritional stress	Virginia Tech	Research	\$17,000.00
26-5	Effects of duckweed supplementation on digestibility, ruminal in situ nutrient disappearance, microbiome and fermentation parameters in forage-fed beef cattle	Virginia Tech	Research	\$37,020.00
26-6	Does the source of Trace Mineral Supplementation Influence Fiber Digestibility in Beef Cattle?	Virginia Tech, School of Animal Sciences	Research	\$19,220.00
26-7	Virginia Women in Agriculture: Women Increasing Skills and Education (WISE)	Virginia State Dairymen's Assoc.	Education	\$18,379.54
26-8	Virtual Fencing: Pilot for Southwest Virginia	Lee Co. Livestock Assoc.	Education/Research	\$11,400.00
26-9	CRISPR and the Future of Virginia Beef Production: Engaging Producers through research and education	Virginia Tech	Education	\$72,278.00
26-10	Enhancement and Expansion of Electronic Marketing Strategies for A Premium Assured Heifers; Scott County VA	Scott County Cattle Association, Inc.	Market Development/Promotion	\$3,988.00
26-11	A survey of plant-parasitic nematodes parasitizing alfalfa with an emphasis on <i>Ditylenchus dipsaci</i> in Virginia	Virginia Tech	Research	\$23,000.00
26-12	Nurse crops and phosphorus to improve native warm season grass establishment and offset delayed production	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Research	\$4,666.00
26-13	Savor the Sizzle, Promoting Nutrition, Consumer Confidence, & Vitality of Virginia Beef through a Farm to Table Dinner	Anderson and Sons Meat Processing LLC	Education/Promotion	\$13,765.00
26-14	Time Required to recover from a bout of stress in cattle from different finishing systems	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Research	\$23,000.00
26-15	Growing the Next Generation: Hands-on Beef Quality Assurance Training for Virginias Future Agricultural Leaders	Eastern View FFA	Education	\$4,999.00
26-16	Spectral Sensing for Forage Quality and Ergovaline Content Monitoring	Virginia Tech	Research	\$25,545.00
26-17	Virgina Beef Liquidity Initiative: Experiential Finance Education for VVB Supply Chain Success	Virginia Tech, Agricultural and Applied Economics	Education/Market Development/Youth Development	\$9,258.00
26-18	2025 Augusta County 4-H Meat Judging Team Journey to the National 4-H Meat Judging Contest	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Youth Development	\$2,000.00
26-19	Advancing Animal and Soil Health in pasture-based cattle operations	Virginia Forage and Grassland Council	Education	\$8,260.00
26-20	Ontario Cattle Feeders 2026 Convention	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Market Development/Promotion	\$9,640.00

26-21	2026 VA Cattle Industry Outlook	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Education	\$7,500.00
26-22	Virginia Verified Beef	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Education/Market Development/Promotion	\$33,000.00
26-23	Virginia Young Cattlemen's Conference	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Education/Youth Development	\$12,000.00
26-24	Effects of supplemental glutathione on cattle exposed to fescue toxicosis under heat stress condition	Virginia Tech School of Animal Sciences	Research	\$30,589.00
26-25	In vitro evaluation of doses of D-limonene on ruminal fermentation of forage- or high concentrate-based diets	Virgina Tech	Research	\$32,623.00
26-26	Central Virginia Cattlemen Association Special VQA Sale on August 7, 2025, in New Holland, PA	Central Virginia Cattlemen	Promotion	\$6,000.00
26-27	Hoof Health 7 Trimming Workshop for Cattle Producers	Virginia State Dairymen's Assoc.	Education	\$13,604.60
26-28	Educational Meeting for Cattle Producers	Virginia Beef Council & VCA	Education	\$3,500.00

Total = \$467,115.14

The Board discussed and voted on each grant submission individually. After minimal discussion, the following grants were passed as written with a unanimous vote:

Grant# 26-2: *“Discovering New Placental Markers Predicting Pregnancy Success for In Vitro Produced Embryos”* (motion by Shelton, Jones 2nd)

Grant# 26-3: *“Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association VQA Feeder Cattle Marketing Program”* (Motion by Smith; Shelton 2nd)

Grant# 26-4: *“Exploring Gene Expression and Hormone Production in Response to Nutritional Stress”* (motion by Shelton; McNeil 2nd)

Grant# 26-8: *“Virtual Fencing: Pilot for Southwest Virginia”* (Motion by Shelton; Huffman 2nd)

Grant# 26-12: *“Nurse Crops and Phosphorus to Improve Native Warm Season Grass Establishment and Offset Delayed Production”* (motion by Shelton; Threewitts 2nd)

Grant# 26-19: *“Advancing Animal and Soil Health in Pasture-Based Cattle Operations”* (motion by Smith, Huffman 2nd)

Grant# 26-20: *“Ontario Cattle Feeders 2026 Convention”* (Motion by Threewitts; McNeil 2nd)

Grant# 26-21: *“2026 VA Cattle Industry Outlook”* (motion by Shelton; Smith 2nd)

Grant# 26-23: *“Virginia Young Cattlemen’s Conference”* (motion by Shelton, Smith 2nd)

Grant# 26-27: *“Hoof Health & Trimming Workshop for Cattle Producers”* (motion by Jones; Huffman 2nd)

Grant# 26-28: *“Educational Meeting for Cattle Producers”* (Motion by Shelton; McNeil 2nd)

Other Grant Proposal discussion included:

Grant# 26-1: “Grassroots to Global: Local Cattle Focused on National Productivity”

Becky Roberts, VCE Pittsylvania County, provided more information to the Board on the full plans of the PCCA and how the VCIB funds would be utilized. McNeil made a motion to approve the grant request. Threewitts 2nd and motion passed. Shelton sustained from voting.

Grant# 26-5: “Effects of Duckweed Supplementation on Digestibility, Ruminal in Situ Nutrient Disappearance, Microbiome, and Fermentation Parameters in Forage-Fed Beef Cattle”

Overall, the Board felt that this was too much money for too small of an audience/impact in would have on the industry. Threewitts made a motion to deny the grant request. Jones 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-6: “Does the Source of Trace Mineral Supplementation Influence Fiber Digestibility in Beef Cattle”

The Board felt that much of this research has already been done and is available to the public. McNeil made a motion to deny the grant request. Threewitts 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-7 “Virginia Women in Agriculture: Cattle Women Increasing Skills and Education (WISE)”

Becky Roberts and Amy Byington gave a brief presentation to the Board pertaining past Cattle WISE programs and the success accompanied with them. Following their update, they highlighted their plans for the upcoming Cattle WISE program and how the funding would be utilized if granted. Tucker reiterated to both Roberts and Byington that the while the Board wants to continue support for the program, they would like to start scaling back in their commitment for future years. Smith made a motion to pass the grant as requested. Shelton 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-9: “CRISPR and the Future of Virginia Beef Production: Engaging Producers Through Research and Education”

The Board felt that this grant request allocated a substantial amount of funding for personnel and tuition while also questioning the true need for the project. Multiple Board members felt that the outcome of the grant project would ultimately be filled by private industry as they will capitalize on the utilization of CRISPER in Virginia’s beef industry. McNeil made a motion to deny the grant request. Smith 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-10 “Enhancement and Expansion of Electronic marketing Strategies for VA Premium Assured Heifers; Scott County”

McNeil made a motion to fund Grant 26-10 at \$2,500 for general marketing purposes. Shelton 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-11: “A Survey of Plant-Parasitic nematodes Parasitizing Alfalfa with an Emphasis on Ditylenchus Dipsaci in Virginia”

The Board ultimately did not feel that the outcome of the project would be widespread enough to justify the cost to producers. Threewitts made a motion to deny the grant request. McNeil 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-13: “Savor the Sizzle, Promoting nutrition, Consumer Confidence, & Vitality of Virginia Beef Through a Farm to Table Dinner”

The Board felt that this project was more regionalized, and the benefit would result more to a single private entity rather than overall support to the greater beef industry in Virginia. Jones made a motion to deny the grant request. Smith 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-15: *“Growing the next Generation: Hands-On Beef Quality Assurance Training for Virginias Future Agricultural Leaders”*

Many felt that approving grant request 26-15 would open the door for all FFA chapters to start requesting money for localized use. The Board emphasized their preference to support BQA promotion and training at a state or regional level, helping to spread the VCIB dollars over a greater area. McNeil made a motion to deny the grant request. Shelton 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 25-16: *“Spectral Sensing for Forage Quality and Ergovaline Content Monitoring”*

Some Board members questioned the science behind the project and thus the full value of the outcome. Threewitts made a motion to deny the grant request. Jones 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-17: *“Virginia Beef Liquidity Initiative; Experiential Finance Education for VVB Supply Chain Success”*

Threewitts made a motion to approve grant 26-17 at \$6,258 - deducting the \$3,000 sponsorship to the Kohl Center Agri-Food Finance (AFF) Fellows program. The \$500 support of a graduate student fellow to provide technical and econometric assistance to the AFF Fellows and undergraduate team would remain in the budget. McNeil 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-18: *“2025 Augusta County 4-H Meat Judging Team Journey to the national 4-H Meat Judging Contest”*

Shelton made a motion to support grant 26-18 in the form of a \$2,000 sponsorship. Smith 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-22: *“Virginia Verified Beef”*

After much discussion amongst the Board, and many questions for Reeves (VCA), McNeil made a motion to approve the grant at the full requested amount. Jones 2nd and motion passed. Smith sustained from the vote.

Grant# 26-24: *“Effects of Supplemental Glutathione on Cattle Exposed to Fescue Toxicosis Under Heat Stress Conditions”*

Some Board members questioned the Boards favor for funding \$11,900 in Personnel and Benefits. Huffman made a motion to approve at the fully funded amount. Smith 2nd and motion passed on a vote of 6-1.

Grant# 26-25: *“In Vitro Evaluation of Doses of D-Limonene on Ruminal Fermentation of Forage- or High Concentrate-Based Diets”*

The Board felt that the requested amount of funding was higher than the overall value the research would have on Virginia’s beef industry. McNeil made a motion to deny the grant request. Threewitts 2nd and motion passed.

Grant# 26-26: *“Central Virginia Cattlemen Association Special VQA Sale on August 7, 2025, in New Holland, PA”*

McNeil made a motion to approve grant 26-26 at \$2,500. Smith 2nd and motion passed.

A summary of grant approvals below:

NUMBER	TITLE	ORANIZATION	TYPE	AMOUNT FUNDED
26-1	Grassroots to Global: Local cattle focused on National productivity	Pittsylvania Cattlemen's Assoc.	Market Development	\$2,500.00
26-2	Discovering New Placental Markers Predicting Pregnancy success for in Vitro Produced Embryos	Virginia Tech School of Animal Sciences	Research	\$19,880.00
26-3	Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association VQA Feeder Cattle Marketing Program	Abingdon Feeder Cattle Assoc.	Market Development	\$2,500.00

26-4	Exploring gene expression and hormone production in response to nutritional stress	Virginia Tech	Research	\$17,000.00
26-5	Effects of duckweed supplementation on digestibility, ruminal in situ nutrient disappearance, microbiome and fermentation parameters in forage-fed beef cattle	Virginia Tech	Research	\$0.00
26-6	Does the source of Trace Mineral Supplementation Influence Fiber Digestibility in Beef Cattle?	Virginia Tech, School of Animal Sciences	Research	\$0.00
26-7	Virginia Women in Agriculture: Women Increasing Skills and Education (WISE)	Virginia State Dairymen's Assoc.	Education	\$18,379.54
26-8	Virtual Fencing: Pilot for Southwest Virginia	Lee Co. Livestock Assoc.	Education/Research	\$11,400.00
26-9	CRISPR and the Future of Virginia Beef Production: Engaging Producers through research and education	Virginia Tech	Education	\$0.00
26-10	Enhancement and Expansion of Electronic Marketing Strategies for A Premium Assured Heifers; Scott County VA	Scott County Cattle Association, Inc.	Market Development/Promotion	\$2,500.00
26-11	A survey of plant-parasitic nematodes parasitizing alfalfa with an emphasis on Ditylenchus dipsaci in Virginia	Virginia Tech	Research	\$0.00
26-12	Nurse crops and phosphorus to improve native warm season grass establishment and offset delayed production	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Research	\$4,666.00
26-13	Savor the Sizzle, Promoting Nutrition, Consumer Confidence, & Vitality of Virginia Beef through a Farm to Table Dinner	Anderson and Sons Meat Processing LLC	Education/Promotion	\$0.00
26-14	Time Required to recover from a bout of stress in cattle from different finishing systems	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Research	\$23,000.00
26-15	Growing the Next Generation: Hands-on Beef Quality Assurance Training for Virginias Future Agricultural Leaders	Eastern View FFA	Education	\$0.00
26-16	Spectral Sensing for Forage Quality and Ergovaline Content Monitoring	Virginia Tech	Research	\$0.00
26-17	Virgina Beef Liquidity Initiative: Experiential Finance Education for VVB Supply Chain Success	Virginia Tech, Agricultural and Applied Economics	Education/Market Development/Youth Development	\$6,258.00
26-18	2025 Augusta County 4-H Meat Judging Team Journey to the National 4-H Meat Judging Contest	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Youth Development	\$2,000.00
26-19	Advancing Animal and Soil Health in pasture-based cattle operations	Virginia Forage and Grassland Council	Education	\$8,260.00
26-20	Ontario Cattle Feeders 2026 Convention	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Market Development/Promotion	\$9,640.00
26-21	2026 VA Cattle Industry Outlook	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Education	\$7,500.00
26-22	Virginia Verified Beef	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Education/Market Development/Promotion	\$33,000.00
26-23	Virginia Young Cattlemen's Conference	Virginia Cattlemen's Association	Education/Youth Development	\$12,000.00
26-24	Effects of supplemental glutathione on cattle exposed to fescue toxicosis under heat stress condition	Virginia Tech School of Animal Sciences	Research	\$30,589.00
26-25	In vitro evaluation of doses of D-limonene on ruminal fermentation of forage- or high concentrate-based diets	Virgina Tech	Research	\$0.00
26-26	Central Virginia Cattlemen Association Special VQA Sale on August 7, 2025, in New Holland, PA	Central Virginia Cattlemen	Promotion	\$2,500.00
26-27	Hoof Health 7 Trimming Workshop for Cattle Producers	Virginia State Dairymen's Assoc.	Education	\$13,604.60
26-28	Educational Meeting for Cattle Producers	Virginia Beef Council & VCA	Education	\$3,500.00

Total: \$230,677.14

OLD BUSINESS:

Other Business

Website

Shelton made a motion to continue services with Flair Communications to provide website hosting & update services through the 2026 year. Threewitts 2nd and motion passed.

Virtual Meeting Policy

Matthew Sponaule presented the current Virtual Meeting policy to the Board. Smith moved to renew the policy for the FY25/26 year. McNeil 2nd and motion passed. The policy will be updated in the Handbook.

Grant Amendments

Four grant amendments were presented to the Board pertaining to budget changes and term extensions. McNeil made a motion to approve all amendment request as presented below. Smith 2nd and motion passed.

- 1) A no cost term extension for Grant 25-4 was requested through March 31, 2026. The extension is necessary to allow additional time for molecular testing of field samples. No additional funds for the grant were requested.
- 2) A budget change was requested for Grant 24-9B, requesting \$3,000 of funds be moved from Contractual to the Materials & Supply line item. Reasoning gave included the fact that water access points at the SPAREC needed modifications to complete the project. John Fike felt that they could contribute additional labor to the project cutting back on the Contractual needs. No additional funds were requested.
- 3) A no cost term extension for Grant 25-20 was requested. The extension is necessary to allow additional time to process blood analysis that still needs to be run. No additional funds for the grant were requested. The term extension will go through February 28, 2026.
- 4) A no cost term extension for Grant 25-17 was requested. The extension is necessary to due to setbacks and delays caused by Hurricane Helene. Amy Byington did add that the cookery class had been re-scheduled for August 9 and the Bootcamp for November. No additional funds for the grant were requested. The term extension will go through February 28, 2026.

Future Meeting Date

The next meeting date is tentatively set for Thursday February 13, 2026.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Sponaule, VDACS Liaison