

Virginia Agricultural Commodity Board Annual Report

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VIRGINIA HORSE INDUSTRY BOARD

(2024-2025)

I. Narrative

Activities of the Board are supported by the Virginia Horse Industry Promotion and Development fund. Monies in the fund are generated by an assessment of \$1.50 on each Equine Infectious Anemia sample (Coggins Test) collected in the state.

The Board has identified seven focus areas in its strategic plan:

- 1) Collect and Analyze Data on the Horse Industry
- 2) Produce and Promote Economic Impact Studies
- 3) Develop Short- and Long-Term Marketing Plans to Promote the Virginia Horse Industry
- 4) Promote and Assist Educational Programs
- 5) Promote and Support Equine Research in Virginia
- 6) Utilize the Board's Annual Budget to Meet the Mission Statement and
- 7) Communicate to the Horse Industry the Plans and Progress of the Virginia Horse Industry Board

This year, the Board worked to establish a new brand image, complete with a redesigned logo, website, and a new voice to communicate with constituents, all under the direction of a contracted marketing team. This being the overarching priority for the year, the Board did continue with their marketing grant program, although it only opened one cycle versus the typical four. This was also- in part- due to feedback received from constituents of the horse industry and past grantees. With the marketing grant program, the Board traditionally opens grant cycles every quarter and awards grants on a quarterly basis according to grant guidelines which have been developed and are publicized. Grant proposals are submitted on September 1, December 1, March 1, and June 1 and are reviewed shortly thereafter by the Board. However, after listening to feedback from members of the equine industry, and past awarded grantees, it became evident that the industry's constituents prefer to interface with a single grant cycle, being held parallel to a more predictable fiscal timeline for project completion- e.g. January through December. In fiscal year 25, the Board awarded 11 grants with a total of \$52,350 in grant funding across one cycle, while intentions for the future of the grant program were established.

The Board works diligently to promote the \$2 billion equine industry in the Commonwealth—representing 183,643 horses. From the 2018 economic impact study conducted by the American Horse Council: the industry generates more than 38,874 jobs in Virginia. In total, 30.5% of households - or 1 million – contain horse enthusiasts. The recreation sector is the largest sector

of the horse industry in Virginia with more than 10% or 330,000 households in Virginia participate in trail riding. In addition to Virginian's trail riding, the American Horse Council 2018 national economic impact survey found that 49% of its respondents who trail ride in Virginia are from out of state. This sector alone supports 10,615 jobs and adds \$442 million in value to the state economy. As a priority in the new fiscal year, the VHIB is looking to perform an updated Economic Impact Study to expand on the statistics listed above, and better target their efforts for the benefit of the industry.

II. Budget and Finances

Cost Code #625

1. Cash Balance: June 30, 2024	\$2,324,031.33
2. (a) Assessment Receipts: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	(+) \$16,033.43
(b) Virginia Racing Commission:	(+) \$1,495,667.20
(c) Interest Receipts: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	(+) \$112,997.82
3. Total Balance and Receipts (1+2+3)	(=) \$3,948,729.78
4. Deduct Total Actual Expenditures (from VDACS Financial Analysis Sheet)	(-) \$1,022,096.95
5. Cash Balance: June 30, 2025	(=) \$2,926,632.83

Cost Code #626

1. Cash Balance: June 30, 2024	\$1,280,152.94
2. (a) Assessment Receipts: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	(+) \$225,550.14
(b) Interest Receipts: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	(+) \$54,603.29
(c) Miscellaneous Regulator	(+) \$705.76
3. Other Receipts: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	(+) 0.00
4. Total Balance and Receipts (1+2+3)	(=) \$1,561,012.13
5. Deduct Total Actual Expenditures (from VDACS Financial Analysis Sheet)	(-) \$106,640.87
6. Cash Balance: June 30, 2025	(=) \$1,454,371.26

III. Projects and Funding

The Board continued a modified version of their marketing grant program in FY25, hosting a single grant cycle versus its typical four cycles. The grant program is being molded to better fit the needs of the industry moving forward, as it is valuable to the entire horse industry in Virginia historically. The FY25 projects are:

CYCLE 2	
Battlefield Horse Show Association- Year End Awards Banquet	\$5,000
Capital Horse Show Association- Year End Awards	\$5,000
East Coast Stock Horse Association- Tenderfoot Award Program	\$5,000
Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park- Horse Expo and Pre-Turkey Quarter Horse Show	\$5,000
High Performance Equestrian Foundation- Marketing & Support for Twilight Jumpers Show	\$3,600
Louisa County FFA- Awards Banquet	\$4,250
Scott County Regional Horse Association- Ride the Rail or Ride the Trail	\$5,000
Virginia Horse Council- Educational Seminar	\$5,000
Virginia Pony Breeders Association- Promotion/Production of VPBA Yearbook	\$4,500
Virginia Paint Horse Club- Marketing and Event Support	\$5,000
Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom	\$5,000
	\$52,350

IV. Year-End Funding Level

The cash balance in Cost Code #625 as of June 30, 2025, was \$2,926,632.83

The cash balance in Cost Code #626 as of June 30, 2025, was \$1,454,371.26

V. Board Meetings and Board Member Attendance Roster

The Board met eight (8) times between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. It is anticipated that the Board will continue to meet ten to twelve times per year in the Charlottesville or Warrenton area as rebranding and repositioning efforts continue to mandate increased time commitment. A meeting roster/attendance sheet is attached.

Board Member	Total Meetings Attended XX/XX	Started/Ended Board service during FY Y/N
Rob Banner	03/03	Y - ended
Kelly Foltman	03/03	Y- ended
Beth Sheely	07/08	Y- ended
Ernest Oare	06/08	Y- ended
Steve Escobar	06/07	Y- ended
Christy Morton	02/03	Y- ended
Sharon Molster	05/05	Y- Started
Barbara Riggs	04/05	Y- started
Gail Rezendes-Dell	06/06	Y- started
Beth Smith	05/05	Y- started
Amy Moore	07/08	N
Oliver Brown	05/08	N
Debbie Easter	08/08	N
David Lands	03/08	N

VI. Summary

This past fiscal year, the Virginia Horse Industry Board continued efforts to promote the State's equine industry through various projects, although its primary focus was to establish redefined visual branding and communication efforts that would generate unparalleled awareness and reach throughout the equine industry in Virginia. Establishing this type of framework for branding, marketing, and communications allows the VHIB to solicit better awareness from industry constituents, maintain awareness of relevant conversations and trends within the state's equine sector, and directly communicate and interact with industry constituents. Inherent in this focus, as well as its other projects, was the Board's mission: the promotion and economic development of the Virginia horse industry.

Activities for the year included: