

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rockingham Cooperative Awards Agriculture Production Education Grants to Local FFA Chapters and Agriculture Education Programs

Harrisonburg, VA – Rockingham Cooperative is excited to announce the recipients of its 2024 Agriculture Production Education Grant Program. Grants have been awarded to several local FFA chapters and agricultural education programs to support hands-on learning and development in the field of agriculture.

The following programs have been awarded grants

Appomattox County High School, Appomattox, VA – Creation of a “Pig Palace” with permanent housing for sows on school farm, promoting better animal welfare, safety for students and overall better learning environment.

Buffalo Gap High School, Swoope, VA – Purchase and installation of waterers in outdoor lots at school farm, providing consistent fresh water to livestock throughout the year.

Hampshire County High School, Romney, WV – Upgrade of the school quarantine barn to meet industry standards with installation of water system and new penning system.

James River High School, Buchanan, VA – Establishment of a barn on-site at school facilities, creating more effective learning and operating environment for students.

Massanutten Technical Center, Harrisonburg, VA – Acquisition of a portable graded scale system as a resource to land lab operations.

Signal Knob Middle School, Strasburg, VA – Expansion of the outdoor forestry land lab classroom with native Virginia trees.

Stuarts Draft High School, Stuarts Draft, VA – Groundbreaking of a new land lab facility, and construction of a barn, on school property.

Turner Ashby High School, Bridgewater, VA – Establishment of a land lab facility on school grounds.

Valley Career and Technical Center, Fishersville, VA – Completion of in-school farmers market facilities and processing space.

Wilson Memorial High School, Fishersville, VA – Purchase of equipment to start new farrow to finish show pig operation on-site.

As shared prior, these funds will be used for a variety of projects, including facility upgrades, equipment purchases, as well as enhancements to and creation of land labs, providing students with practical, real-world agricultural experiences.

"We are thrilled to support all of these outstanding programs as they work to cultivate the next generation of agricultural leaders. Students impacted in these programs will be the future member-owners of our cooperative and leaders in our agricultural industry in the years and decades to come," said Sam Ligget, CEO of Rockingham Cooperative

Recipients of the grants expressed their gratitude

"I would like to thank the staff at Rockingham Cooperative for making this grant available to agricultural education programs. Their generosity is going to have a significant and long-term impact on our program and its students." – Ed McCann, Agriculture Education Instructor at Appomattox High School

"This project will enhance our land lab by teaching our students to be good stewards of the environment through conservation and natural resource management." – Dakota Stroud, Agriculture Education Instructor at Signal Knob Middle School

"This grant encourages our students to think outside of the box when it comes to agriculture. It also gives students who do not have an agriculture background interest in production agriculture to see the steps involved in getting food from the farm to the table; it also shows them how they can be involved and profitable in this industry." – Kristin Beery, Agriculture Education Instructor at Valley Career and Technical Center

"We appreciate Rockingham Coop's interest in growing real hands-on agriculture opportunities for students." – Isaac Lewis, Agriculture Education Instructor at Hampshire High School

The grant program underscores Rockingham Cooperative's ongoing commitment to agricultural education and community development, aiming to foster innovation and skill-building opportunities for students within their service area.

"In the short term, students are gaining valuable career skills such as equipment operation, surveying and land measurement, concrete forming, fence design and installation, and more. In the long term, students will be able to raise, breed, and market countless litters of market pigs. This will provide our



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community with access to wholesome and locally grown pork,” said Shirley Kaufman, Agriculture Education Instructor at Buffalo Gap High School.

For more information on the Agriculture Production Education Grant Program, visit [Rockingham Cooperative's website](#).

About Rockingham Cooperative

Rockingham Cooperative is a farmer-owned cooperative dedicated to supporting local agricultural producers through a range of services and products, from agronomy and feed supplies to hardware and educational programs.