

# Peaks Country

## Agriculture in Bedford

Did you know that Bedford County ranks #4 statewide in Beef Cows? We have over 27,000 beef cows!

Among Virginia counties, Bedford County also ranks 3rd in hay production, 4th in horses, 10th in milk cows and 14th in apple production. In 2007, there were 1,428 farms, encompassing 212,237 acres.

**Bedford County farmers sell over \$23,000,000 of products every year.**

Farming in Bedford is very diverse. Most farmland is devoted to pasture, hay and beef cows. However, we have several dairies and orchards. Agriculture interests on the rise include horses, wine grapes and plant nurseries. A common theme of these new enterprises are farming activities that can be done on smaller tracts of land and/or an attempt to capture more of the consumer dollar. From 2002 to 2007, Bedford saw growth in farm products being sold directly to consumers.

**Agriculture pays its way** – a recently completed study found that agriculture only requires 25 cents in services for every dollar it pays in taxes, while residential development requires \$1.07 in services for every dollar of taxes it pays.

Agriculture remains a big business in Bedford, but there are many challenges facing our farmers including weather, rising input costs and variable sale prices. Another concern is the fact that about 50% of farms are owned by individuals over the age of 60. However, agriculture has always been an evolving industry. With continued adoption of innovative technologies, an emphasis on programs that encourage younger people to enter farming and a balanced approach to growth and development, Bedford can maintain a viable agriculture base that provides significant benefits to our community. We invite you to spend some time with us and learn more about Bedford agriculture.

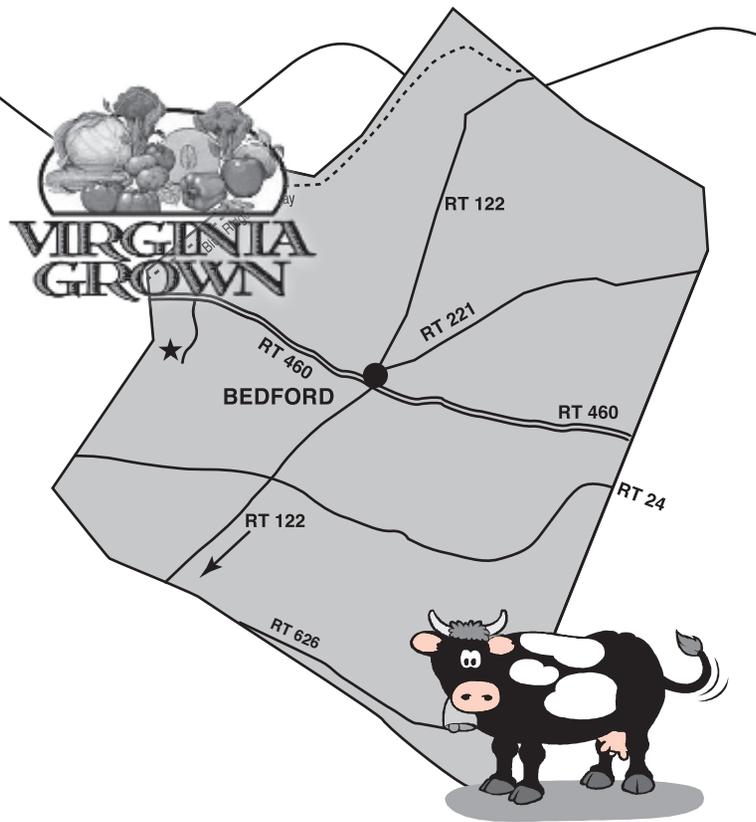
To learn more about agriculture in Bedford and the efforts of the Bedford County Agriculture Economic Development Advisory Board, please visit Bedford's agriculture web site,

<http://bedfordeconomicdevelopment.com/agriculture/>

**Layman Family Farms, LLC** – operated by Eric & Sharon Layman and their family in Bedford and Botetourt Counties. The farms consist of 150 acres - 85 acres owned in Blue Ridge, VA (Montvale area) and 65 acres leased in Fincastle, VA along Catawba Creek. The farm in Bedford County is home to their annual Corn Maze, Pumpkin Patch and Fall Festival. The idea of the corn maze began in 2003 when Eric visited a corn-field maze at a farm in Utah. The business of "Agritainment" (entertainment and fun on a farm) was booming across the country on small family farms. He realized that there weren't any small family farms in the counties of Bedford, Botetourt or Roanoke who had a corn-field maze. The first couple of corn mazes were grown in 2003 and 2004 at Eric's family's orchard along US RT 220 in Botetourt

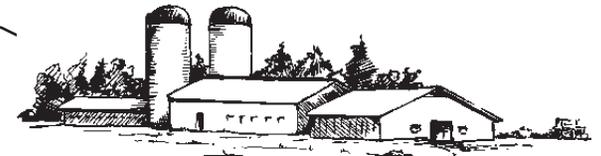
*Agriculture is the most useful of the occupations of man*

-Thomas Jefferson, 1807



## FARM TOUR 2010

**Saturday, August 21st  
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM  
Layman Family Farms, LLC**



County. In 2005, the 105 acre farm, known as Layman Bros. Orchard, leased by Eric, was sold. Eric had to find a new location to continue his love of farming and agriculture.

In the fall of 2006, Layman Family Farm opened its gates in Bedford County and over the past four years thousands of people have visited the farm and experienced the thrills and challenges of The Maize™. New attractions have been added to the farm each year so visitors experience something different. The farm now offers a 10 acre corn maze, 15 acre courtyard, 5 acres parking, 20 acre pumpkin patch, hay rides, cow train, corn cannon, pumpkin blaster, animal alley, and children play area with a corn crib box, rubber duck races, horse swings, giant tube slide and tires. Additionally, in 2006, Eric tried his hand in the produce business, planting 4 acres of vegetables on the farm. However, a drought stricken growing season hit hard and without irrigation, the crop failed. Eric now leases and farms 65 acres from his father and uncle in Botetourt County along the Catawba Creek where he grows vegetables including tomatoes, cantaloupes, squash, zucchini, peppers, watermelons, beans and other vegetables sold at local farm markets and wholesale to area supermarkets and upscale resorts. In the spring of 2009, Eric planted the first fruit tree on the farm and within the next 2-3 years, the farm will offer Pick-your-own apples from the new orchard.

On Tour day, guided tours of the farm will be given with stops throughout the operation. Try your hand at the corn maze, kids can enjoy cow train rides and time in the corn crib. Other anticipated activities include hands on history with Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest; a demonstration of an antique cider press, farm equipment and livestock; a demonstration hive of honeybees; Bedford Area Master Gardeners on hand to answer lawn and landscape questions. Additionally, groups scheduled to be with us with information and displays include the Peaks of Otter Soil and Water Conservation District, the Virginia Department of Forestry and Bedford 4-H. Lunch and locally produced foods will be available for purchase.

The Tour is free and will be family-oriented, so come out, enjoy the scenery and learn about Bedford's important agriculture industry.

[www.bedfordfarmtour.org](http://www.bedfordfarmtour.org)

Directions: FROM BEDFORD: take Rt. 460 West toward Roanoke for approximately 10.5 miles. Turn LEFT on Mountain View Church Road. Proceed 0.7 miles and Layman Family Farm will be on the RIGHT.

<http://www.laymanfamilyfarms.com>

*If you are a person with a disability and desire assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate, contact the Bedford Extension office (540-586-7675) at least 5 working days prior to the event.*

*Cultivators of the earth are the most virtuous and independent citizens*

-Thomas Jefferson, 1782

**a family event !**

Discover Bedford County's

# Peaks Country!

Join us for Farm Tour 2010 at  
Layman Family Farms, LLC  
Enjoy a fun day in the country –  
rain or shine.

Informative demonstrations and  
exhibits.

Lunch and locally produced foods will  
be available for purchase.

You are invited to bring a picnic and a  
camera, but please leave your pets at  
home.

## Celebrating Agriculture

- Guided Tours
- Farm Animals
- Farm Equipment
- Master Gardeners
- Corn Maze

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## FARM TOUR 2010 SPONSORS

Bedford County  
Bedford Agriculture Council, Virginia Cooperative Extension  
Bedford Tourism, Poplar Forest  
Bedford Area Businesses

"Peaks Country" places to visit:

Bedford Welcome Center [www.visitbedford.com](http://www.visitbedford.com)

Bedford County Farm Wineries  
[www.bedfordwinetrail.com](http://www.bedfordwinetrail.com)

Bedford now boasts 5 farm wineries. At the wineries you can expect a unique experience with several offering additional agricultural opportunities including interaction with farm animals, vineyard and orchard tours, and picnic areas. Bedford Wine Trail brochures are available at the wineries and the Bedford Welcome Center and visitors are encouraged to have their brochure stamped as they visit each of the wineries. Once you have acquired a stamp for every winery, you can return it to the Welcome Center for a complimentary gift. Throughout the year each winery has several special events designed to delight the entire family.

### National D-Day Memorial

National memorial honoring Allied Armed Forces who participated in the 1944 Normandy France invasion. Bedford was chosen as the site because the community sustained the highest per capita loss of lives during the invasion. 540-586-3329.

Sedalia Center [www.sedaliacenter.org](http://www.sedaliacenter.org)

"For the living arts and the art of living." This center offers a wide variety of concerts and workshops.

### Smith Mountain Lake and State Park

This 40-mile stretch of shimmering waters forms the southern boundary of Bedford County, creating a paradise for fishing and water recreation. The State Park, comprised of 1506 acres, offers 16 miles of shoreline with a 500-foot public beach. Fishing, boating, swimming, hiking trails, picnicking, camping, public boat ramp, interpretive programs. 540-297-6066.

### Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest

Designed and built for Jefferson's private use, Poplar Forest was the first octagonal brick home built in America. It was his most personal architectural creation and landscape, a place where he came to find rest and leisure, to rekindle his creativity, and to enjoy family time. Today under the guidance of the Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest, Jefferson land is being rescued and house and plantation are undergoing preservation, restoration, reconstruction and archaeological investigation. 434-525-1806

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For more information:  
Phone 540-586-7675  
[www.bedfordfarmtour.org](http://www.bedfordfarmtour.org)

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