

For Immediate Release:

Central Virginia Commodity Storage Initiative Awarded Grant From Tobacco Commission

Informational Sessions in March

Livestock and grain producers in thirteen Central Virginia counties will be eligible for matching grants this year under a program funded by the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification & Community Revitalization Commission. The Central Virginia Commodity Storage Initiative offers producers in a 13-county region an opportunity to apply for a cost share incentive of up to \$3,300 per producer for improvement practices in either hay/straw storage, feed/grain storage, or commodity feed storage structures. Cost share funds will be available to agricultural producers who meet all eligibility requirements.

The overall objective of the Central Virginia Commodity Storage Initiative is to improve the feed and/or storage efficiency of commodities for livestock and grain producers in tobacco dependent communities. Construction of on-farm structures will enhance farm profitability and therefore benefit the region's overall economy. Producers will have the opportunity to select between improvement practices in either hay/straw storage, feed/grain storage, or commodity feed storage structures. Participating livestock producers will increase production and profitability due to lower input costs. The initiative will enable grain producers to implement marketing strategies to capture higher prices than available on the cash market at harvest and potentially capture new market opportunity related to alternative fuel production.

During its January 12, 2010 meeting in Richmond, the Virginia Tobacco Commission approved \$500,000.00 in Agribusiness funding for the Central Virginia Commodity Storage Initiative Project. This project will include the counties of Amelia, Appomattox, Bedford, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Pittsylvania and Prince Edward. This funding will be allocated equally across the participating localities.

“As a member of the Commission, I am pleased to support this grant that will aid local farmers throughout the tobacco footprint. These grants will help retain the agricultural character of our communities while allowing farmers to keep costs under control and remain competitive in the world marketplace.” Delegate Kathy Byron.

Producers interested in applying for funding must attend a minimum of one informational/educational session on best management practices for either livestock or grain production offered by Virginia Cooperative Extension prior to applying for funds.

These sessions have been scheduled as follows:

March 22: Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Blackstone, 6:00-8:00 PM

March 25: Lynchburg Livestock Market, Lynchburg, 6:00-8:00 P.M.

March 29: Southside Virginia Community College, Keysville, 6:00-8:00 P.M.

March 30: Laurel Grove Fire Department, Pittsylvania County, 6:00-8:00 P.M.

Cost share applications will be accepted beginning Monday, April 12, 2010 at the Virginia Cooperative Extension offices in the participating counties. Funding is limited and will be provided on a first-come-first-serve basis. Incentives will only be awarded on a one-time basis per producer and/or per farm. For more information on this program, please contact your local extension agent.

The Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission is a 31-member body created by the 1999 General Assembly. Its mission is the promotion of economic growth and development in tobacco-dependent communities, using proceeds of the national tobacco settlement. To date, the Commission has awarded 1,221 grants totaling more than \$652.8 million across the tobacco region of the Commonwealth, and has provided \$234 million in indemnification payments to tobacco growers and quota holders. For complete information on all of the Commission's history, mission, funding programs and past awards, visit our website at www.tic.virginia.gov.