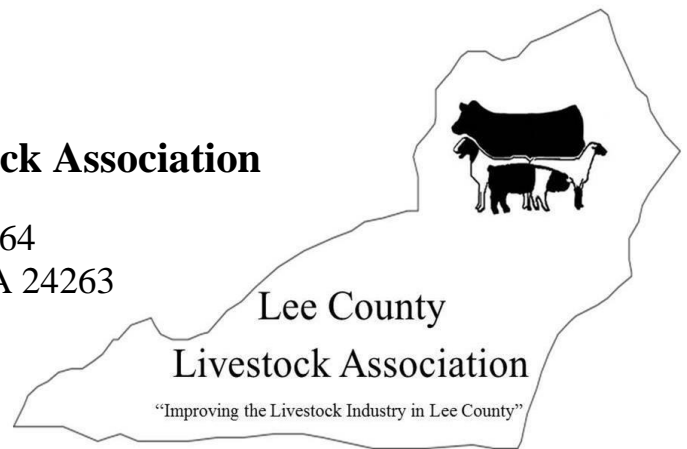


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Lee County Livestock Association

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Forage Production Initiative for Southwest Virginia

Description:

Forage Production Initiative for Southwest Virginia is a cost-share program administrated by the Lee County Livestock Association and funded by the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. Farmers who have operations in Lee, Scott, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Russell, Tazewell, Washington, Smyth, Wythe, Grayson, Carroll, and Bland Counties who meet the basic qualifications and fulfill the educational hours required will be eligible for funding based on first come first serve. Offering the cost-share program gives Southwest Virginia's producers the ability to improve forage quality and storage capability.

Project Objectives & Outcomes

- Increase farm profitability
- Increase forage quality
- Increase forage production

Participant Requirements

- Produce 10 acres of hay and/or 20 head of sheep, goats, or cattle.
- Owns or rents (renting must have a written 5-year lease) a farm in a qualifying county with FSA number and tract numbers.
- Attend an approved educational session on improving forage production. Educational sessions must be attended before reimbursement. Previously attended educational programs will be accepted if attended after July 1, 2023. Proof of attendance will be required if the event was not hosted by Virginia Cooperative Extension. For programs hosted by Virginia Cooperative Extension, producers should have signed-in during the program and the sign-in will be accepted as proof from the sponsoring Extension Agent.
- Maintain any built storage structure or equipment for 5 years and hold insurance.
- All practices funded through this program shall be maintained for a minimum of 5 years and are subject to inspection for program compliance during the life-span of the practice.
- Maintenance of the practice is the responsibility of the applicant. Applicants who fail to meet these requirements will be notified by mail that repayment of the funds is required.
- Applicants must fill out a W9 with their application.
- Applicants will be based on first-come, first-serve.

Qualifying Purchases Details

- 33% reimbursement to each applicant up to \$5,000. Participants will not receive any more than \$5,000 for qualified approved purchases.
- A minimum purchase amount of \$1,000 is required to receive cost share with a cost-share reimbursement amount of \$330.
- **Purchases must be made by credit card or check. No cash purchases.**
- Labor conducted by contractor; reimbursement for labor cannot exceed 30% of total reimbursement. **LABOR PROVIDED BY APPLICANT OR THEIR EMPLOYEES NOT ELIGIBLE.**
- Used equipment can purchased through the Forage Production Initiative, but equipment must be in good condition to operate reasonably for five years. Used equipment will need to be inspected by either the County Extension Agent or a qualified mechanic.

Items qualified for purchase:

- **No-till Seed Drill**
- **Lime and/or Fertilizer Spreader**
- **Hay Wrapper**
- **Manure Spreader**
- **Harrow**
- **Aerator**
- **Forage & Soil Testing Equipment**
 - Forage Sampler
 - Drill (Limit to one for use with forage sampler. Must purchase forage sampler to also buy a drill.)
 - Forage Moisture Tester
 - Soil Probe
- **Permanent & Temporary Fencing**
 - Fence posts, fencing wire, braces, step-in posts, reels, ploy wire, fence charges, grapples, gates, and steeples are included.
 - Fencing must be used to allow to promote forage utilization and growth. A plan for the use of the fencing must be approved by the local Extension Office.
 - Permanent fencing must be established and functioning prior to reimbursement.
 - Border fencing or replacing existing fencing is not qualified for reimbursement.
- **Hay Storage (must be used for hay)**
 - New structures or additions to existing structures
 - New structures or additions must be a minimum of 900 square feet.
 - Minimum height – 14 feet high clearance for new structures and additions, to allow round bales to be stacked 3 high.
 - Site preparation – site must be well drained; cost of elevated pad construction is eligible, clearing of land not eligible
 - Roof – metal, shingles or a polymer coated fabric (e.g. Cover-all)
 - Flooring – recommended but not required; 4-6 inches of gravel on geo-textile fabric is eligible for cost share

Ineligible Items:

- Cost of clearing land Renovations of existing structures
- Labor provided by applicant or their employees
- Concrete flooring
- Doors – walk through and drive through
- Used materials for hay storage are not eligible for cost share but can be used.
- Accessory farm structures such as modular/prefabricated car ports

Reimbursement Process

- Total cost-share dollars that can be received by any participating participant is \$5,000. Participants may allocate funding on multiple practices in order to get the most benefit from funds provided.
- An Oversight Committee will be created with one member from each county to review applications, process, and reimbursements. The committee shall meet when there is need in regards to the grant.
- Cost-share will be on first-come, first-served basis. Applications start being accepted at counties' Extension Offices on July 1st. Completed applications will be numbered based on received time by Extension staff. The Oversight Committee will meet and 3 distribute grant money evenly among grant counties. Producers will be sent notification of their status in grant process.
- Approved producers will have 180 days to complete purchases. An extension may be requested by the producer to the Oversight Committee with just cause. An extension will be no longer than another 90 days and no shorter than 30 days. Money will be forfeited if not spent within the allotted timeframe and be given to the next producer on the list. Producers who do not make purchases in their allotted timeframe and have forfeited their money, can request to be put on the waiting list.
- Producers shall notify in writing if they wish to not participate after being approved.
- Producers shall notify their Extension Agent when they have completed purchases and turn in original paid receipts. Extension Agents will certify purchases and complete application forms.
- Should a producer fail to utilize funds by the reimbursement deadline, their allocation will be redistributed at the discretion of the Disbursement Oversight Committee.
- Each individual/producer who receives \$600 or more shall be provided an IRS Form 1099 by the Lee County Livestock Association.
- Participants are required to supply an original numbered and dated receipt indicating buyer and seller information/address to be eligible for payment. The receipt should indicate that the bill has been paid. If the receipt does not state that the bill has been paid, then a cancelled check should be included with the documentation. At the discretion of the VTRRC, a cancelled check(s) with buyer and seller contact information and a written itemized list of purchases may be accepted depending on the circumstances. No cash transactions will be considered for reimbursement.
- The Oversight Committee will review reimbursement requests and once approved, the Lee County Livestock Association will work with the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission's staff to complete reimbursement paperwork. Producers will receive a reimbursement check from the Lee County Livestock Association.

Other Participating Organizations

Lee, Scott, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Russell, Tazewell, Washington, Smyth, Wythe, Grayson, Carroll, and Bland Counties Extension Office will assist with application process and certification of proper purchases.