



PRESS RELEASE

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Regional Food Label Program Launched

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission is pleased to announce the launch of the Purely Piedmont label program, developed to promote the region's locally grown food and beverages. Similar in concept to the state's Virginia Grown program, producers who register their products with the program will receive labels with the Purely Piedmont logo to affix to their products, in addition to digital versions of the logo to incorporate into their own marketing materials. Displaying the regional logo allows consumers to easily identify our farmers' products and make more informed choices.

The Commission released the Purely Piedmont brand and logo in May of this year for use on marketing materials for the current public awareness campaign being funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At that time, a label program was planned as a follow-up project to the three-year grant ending in September 2019. Due to farmer interest following publicity of the brand, however, the label program was fast-tracked.

The program currently covers products grown within Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock Counties. Use of the logo is governed by both product and use standards contained within a license agreement that producers must submit in order to become members. By purchasing products with the Purely Piedmont logo, consumers can be confident they are truly buying local.

Buying locally-grown foods and beverages helps our region's farmers keep farming, supports the local economy, and maintains the region's rural character. 70% of the region's farmers reported a loss during the last agricultural census in 2012. If each resident purchased \$5 of food from the region's farmers each week, it would generate \$793 million of new income for our farmers.

There is no cost to participate in the Purely Piedmont label program. To register for the program or to learn more, visit the new Purely Piedmont website at www.purelypiedmont.com. Paper copies of the registration form are also available by contacting Michelle Edwards at medwards@rrregion.org, or by calling (540) 829-7450. This effort is part of the Commission's on-going implementation of its 2015 Regional Farm and Food Plan.

About the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission serves the counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock, and the towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Madison, Orange, Remington, The Plains, Washington, and Warrenton. The 21-member RRRC board includes elected and appointed officials appointed by each member jurisdiction. Localities with greater than 3,500 residents appoint two members to the regional commission, while localities with fewer than 3,500 residents appoint one member to the regional commission.

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission facilitates a collaborative approach to regional cooperation, and serves as a convening forum for the interaction of appointed and elected local government officials, regional stakeholders and citizen members. The Regional Commission coordinates a broad range of regional planning activities – including multi-modal and human services transportation, environmental planning, homelessness and affordable housing coordination, regional tourism, agricultural, and economic development activities. The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission is located in Culpeper, VA, and can be found online at <http://www.rrregion.org/>.