



VCA Internship - Structuring Membership



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Introduction



This past summer I had the opportunity to intern with the Virginia Cattlemen's Association. This experience allowed me to become knowledgeable with the several branches that conform this beef producer association such as policy, cattle marketing, and organization. My internship project resulted in a restructure and organization of a new category of membership. My previous involvement in agricultural student organizations enabled me to effectively propose a VCA Youth Membership.

Virginia Cattlemen's Association operates as a voice for Virginia cattle producers through offering education, a voice in government, as well as opportunity for members to market their cattle for a premium price. With specifically local beef producers being the main interest of the association, it was evident that this was a beneficial experience for someone passionate about the beef industry and willing to make an impact such as myself.

Membership Categories

Youth Membership

- Junior Membership: enrolled high school student
- Collegiate Membership: enrolled college student; under the age of 24 years old
- Official Transcripts Required

Supporters of the Industry Categories

Business Membership

- Dues
- Supporters of The Industry Sponsorship Levels
 - Newsletter Recognition

Beef Foundation Membership

- Retired or family ties within the beef cattle industry
- Allows those with previous beef relations to remain up to date with VA cattle marketing, policy, and advocacy.

Friends of the Industry

- Interest in supporting the beef and cattle industry without knowledge or experience necessary.



Catering To Young Beef Producers

Youth involved in Virginia cattle production, in specific, have not experienced an organization which caters to their livelihood. Purebred Associations are in abundance and give access to seedstock opportunities to young producers. Providing a commercial production-oriented association with youth's family farm's values and interest in mind allows for the promotion of beef within the state. Granting access to critical networking through VCA Youth events is an immense stepping-stone in building a progressive and successful future Virginia beef commodity market.

Virginia Cattle Industry Board Grant



A Virginia Cattle Industry Board Grant Application was submitted to aid in creating a VCA Youth Membership. In this application I outlined the project plan, purpose, budget, and objectives of beginning this new category of membership. The application was to be submitted by July 14, 2022 to the VCIB board and determined if it was worthy of acceptance. The board requested more information before acceptance of grant funding. Once approved by VCIB, additional funding through VCA must also be approved by the VCA board.

The current status of the VCA Youth Membership project remains pending until the next VCIB board meeting. Planning and preparation for youth membership began in June; expected approval date is by March 15, 2023.

**DRAFT Example of Youth Events*

Month	Youth Events
April	Tomorrow's Prospect Producers Contests: Beef Expo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Speaking Contest - Photography Contest - Graphic Design Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Create yearly member t-shirts - Salesmanship Contest - Team Fitting Contest NCBA Youth Beef Industry Congress: Ambassadors attend
May	Cultivating Cattlemen Conference: Educational event at Blacksburg, VA
June	Summer Internships VCA Youth Ambassador Interviews
July	VCA Youth Banquet & Ambassador Induction
August	Youth Educational Webinars & Networking Opportunities
September	VCA Promotion AI School
October	Beef Bash Tailgate: Virginia Tech Football Game
November	Member Promotional Communicative Efforts: (via Ambassadors)
December	VCA Cattle Show

****VCIB Grant Application tentative event schedule*

Cultivating Cattlemen Conference

An educational event curated for cattle producing youth was outlined within the proposal of a Virginia Cattlemen's Youth Association.

Why?

Provide young beef leaders with the adequate knowledge to initiate promoted herd health and increased cost/time effectiveness in operational procedures.

Where?

Hosted in Blacksburg, VA

When?

Weekend between the end of May - beginning of July.

Scheduled Activities?

- Tour Virginia Tech beef facilities
 - Beef Barn, VT Meat Science Center, Kentland Feedlot
- Cattle Feeding Risk Management Seminar
- Local farm operation tour
- Guest Speakers
- Educational Demonstrations
 - Ultrasounds, Pregnancy Checks, Breeding Soundness Exam, Mouthing Cattle, Body Condition/Udder Scoring, etc.

Tomorrow's Prospect Producers Contests

Contests were planned to be held in correlation with other FFA/4H events at the Virginia Beef Expo to promote involvement. VCA presence at the expo due to its location of the VCA annual banquet satisfies the necessary means to pull of student contests. Contest such as graphic design and photography would be hosted online, results being announced at VA Beef Expo.

Where?

Hosted at VA Beef Expo at Rockingham County Fairgrounds

Contests

- Public Speaking Contest
- Photography Contest
- Graphic Design Contest
 - Create yearly t-shirts
- Salesmanship Contest
- Team Fitting Contest



***VA Beef Expo

Scholarships

VCA Youth eligibility for scholarships funded through the association as well as memorial scholarships.

- Memorial scholarship opportunities
- Proposed to provide 3 to 5 VCA Youth Scholarships between \$500 and \$800, annually.
- Only accessible to VCA student members.

Lobbying at The U.S Capitol

Virginia Cattlemen's Association takes pride in keeping Virginia cattlemen and women's best interest in mind at the Capitol. Policy is a major component to the association's mission. As a primarily cow-calf state, VCA's position on several governmental bills and actions may vary from other organizations.

As a part of my internship, I had the opportunity to visit Washington D.C. and meet with numerous congressional offices in attempt to push bills that would benefit our state's cattle producers. An area of primary concern, discussed in our meetings, is the loss of profit for cow-calf producers as the Big Four meatpackers monopolize the live cattle market. Along with meeting with lobbyists for house representatives and congressmen and women, I was able to meet with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association – which VCA is an affiliate of.



Conclusion

Virginia Cattlemen's Association has been a tremendous asset in broadening my understanding of each valuable component of Virginia's beef industry as I pursue an innovative future in beef production. My exposure to previously unfamiliar sectors of this great industry has allowed me to express further gratitude as well as gain a better understanding of how I can make a positive impact. My youth membership project gave me the ability to give back to the community that helped me discover my passion for agriculture. Learning how to complete a project proposal and grant application will be useful as I enter the workforce post-graduation. VCA's influence in policy, cattle marketing, and advocacy has also influenced me and my ability to be contributor to the beef industry as an animal science graduate.

VCA Youth Membership – A Self-Sufficient Structure

Youth Membership was made self-sufficient by promoting student leadership and networking. A VCA Representative is necessary as an advisor.

VCA Youth Ambassadors

- Eligibility: Junior/Senior High Schoolers or Collegiate Members
- Group/committee of youth to direct the membership and its events
- Provide officer positions
 - (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer)
- Quarterly ambassador meetings + as necessary to facilitate events
 - Held primarily via Zoom for distance friendliness

How Can These Activities be Funded?

- Grant Application for Youth Funding through VA Cattle Industry Board
- Partnerships through Farm Credit's Knowledge Center, etc.
- Charge inexpensive contestant fees to cover contest award costs
- Membership Fees
- Fundraising through selling a signature Youth VCA branded product