

SOUTHERN PIEDMONT

Agricultural Research and Extension Center



The Southern Piedmont AREC is committed to conducting research and delivering Extension education to support the Southern Piedmont region's integrated and diverse production systems. The Southern Piedmont AREC is the only research and Extension center offering support to tobacco producers in Virginia by providing research-based management guidance for sustainable tobacco production. We have now enhanced our ability to address the needs of our regional stakeholders in various production systems by adding several new specialists and programs, recent investments in the latest technology and equipment, and access to various production habitats. Our signature programs have generated ample training opportunities, and we have invested heavily in educating and preparing the next generation of specialists, educators, and professionals to ensure the continuity of our impacts.

Our programs continue to develop and deliver timely, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research to facilitate the incorporation of the latest scientific findings and technological advances into the Southside production systems, focusing on improved production health and efficiency and reduced input costs in tobacco, specialty crops, small grains, corn, forage, and livestock. In doing so, we directly address our stakeholder-prioritized initiative of *“resilient, profitable, and sustainable agriculture.”*

A DJI AGRAS T40 spray drone in action over a tobacco field.

PARTNER WITH US

2375 Darvills Road
Blackstone, VA 23824
(434) 292-5331

[www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/arec / southern-piedmont](http://www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/arec/southern-piedmont)



“As a new faculty member at the Southern Piedmont AREC and the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, I look forward to collaborating with faculty, extension agents, and growers to conduct meaningful, policy-relevant research. My primary interest lies in applying economic tools to address critical challenges in agricultural production, technology adoption, conservation practices, and crop profitability. My work encompasses specialty crops, field crops—including tobacco—and row crops. I aim to leverage research to provide timely, relevant, and accurate insights on agricultural productivity, profitability, and sustainability to farmers and stakeholders across Virginia.”



SHOURISH CHAKRAVARTY
APPLIED AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST

“This AREC has been vital to my farming career. Their research in tobacco has been key to my success and helped me keep up with changes in the industry. With the information the staff provides, I can fix or prevent a problem that could cause me financial loss. I also depend on their research in small grains and beef cattle. When I make decisions for the upcoming year, I use the information provided to me by the AREC to direct my purchases.”



RICHARD HITE
LUNENBURG COUNTY PRODUCER

SOUTHERN PIEDMONT AREC AT A GLANCE



DISCIPLINES

- Tobacco agronomy and curing technologies
- Field crops and small fruit disease management
- Field crops integrated pest management
- Forage production and management
- Specialty crop production
- Applied agricultural economy

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

- Tobacco curing, monitoring, and automation
- Spore trapping and predictive model development
- Drones and sensors in agricultural production

FACILITIES

- 1,180-acre farm with 130 acres of crop research plots (including 16 acres of certified organic), 120 acres of fenced grazing land, 40 acres of silvopasture, and > 850 acres of woodland
- Specialized tobacco curing facilities
- Extensive greenhouse facilities and high tunnels
- Several fully equipped laboratories

PARTNERS

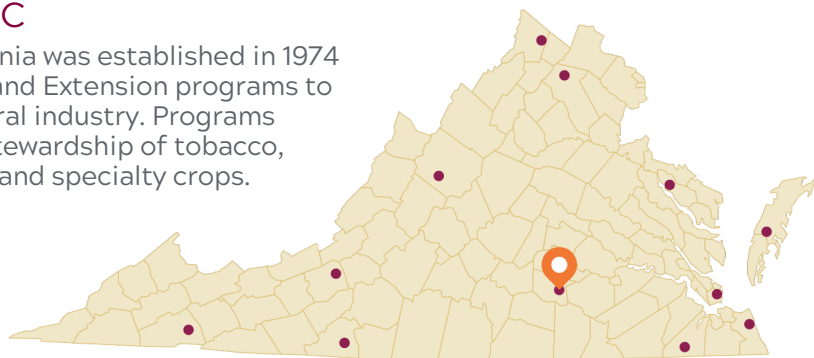
- Tobacco industry and growers
- Agrichemical industry
- Forage and livestock industry
- Virginia Farm Bureau, SWCD, NRCS, VDACS, USDA

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN PIEDMONT AREC

The Southern Piedmont AREC near Blackstone, Virginia was established in 1974 and conducts strong commodity-oriented research and Extension programs to provide information and technology to the agricultural industry. Programs enhance the economic viability and environmental stewardship of tobacco, forage crops, beef cattle, small fruit, and other field and specialty crops.

A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK

The ARECs are a network of 11 centers strategically located throughout the state that emphasize close working relationships between Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the industries they work with. The mission of the system is to engage in innovative, leading-edge research to discover new scientific knowledge and create and disseminate science-based applications that ensure the wise use of agricultural, natural, and community resources while enhancing quality of life.



Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, ethnicity or national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or military status, or any other basis protected by law.