

For immediate release

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has awarded Fauquier County a \$25,000 grant to develop ethnic markets for pick-your-own farms with specialty fruit and vegetable crops under the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Estimates gleaned from the local native language newspapers, indicate populations of 125,000 Chinese, 100,000 Koreans, 150,000 South Asians (Indians, Pakistanis, and Middle Easterners), and the largest group -- Hispanics from Central and South America and Mexico – all living in the DC suburban area within easy driving distance of Fauquier County.

These different groups enjoy going to orchards in big family groups. Each group has special favorite fruits and vegetable. For example Chinese and Koreans prefer white peaches over the yellow ones favored by American customers.

Each of the major ethnic groups has its own native language newspapers, radio, Internet, and TV media. The South Asian ones are in English, but the others are in foreign languages (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish) that most farmers do not understand. This presents special problems for placing advertisements and press releases and in presenting information on the farm's website. This also presents opportunities for highly targeted articles and ads.

The project will experiment with new fruits and vegetables for these emerging markets and identify the media with which these groups communicate and advertise. The project will be documented on the Internet in a blog narrative and the final report will include a list of media and advertising contacts within each of the larger ethnic groups. Additionally the project will develop special "native language" web pages for various ethnic groups and create Internet tools for Americans to manage their foreign language pages without having to understand the language.

Most of the work on this grant will be done by the father and son team of Tom and Matthew Davenport of Hollin Farms near Delaplane. They will be advised by Ray Pickering, Director of Fauquier County's Agricultural Development Department and Matt Benson, a community viability specialist with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service in Warrenton.

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