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Agricultural Outlook Forum
U.S. Department of Agriculture

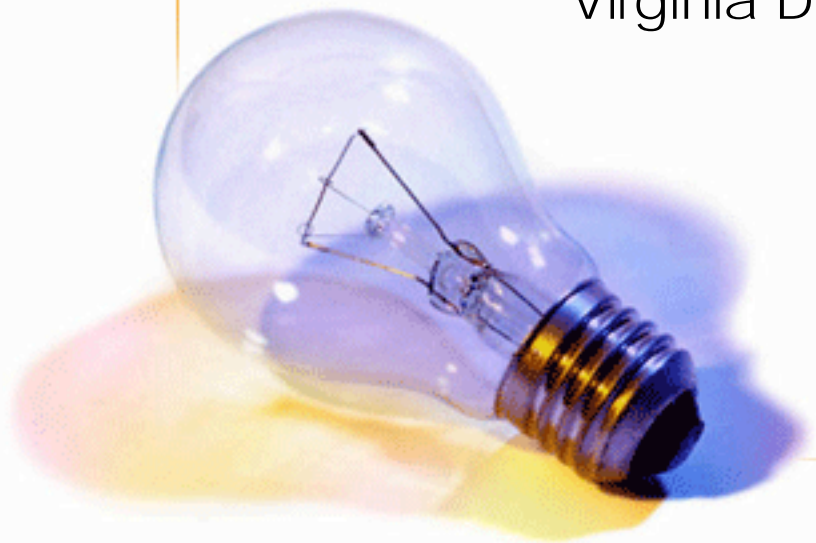
February 21-22, 2008

Public Health Partnerships & Solutions

Robert W. Hicks

Public Health Partnerships & Solutions

Robert W. Hicks, Director
Office of Environmental Health Services
Virginia Department of Health



VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH
Protecting You and Your Environment



Food Safety Mission

- Prevent foodborne illness by ensuring that foods prepared and served by food establishments in the Commonwealth are safe, unadulterated, and prepared under sanitary conditions.





Virginia Overview

- 7.6 million residents
- 95 counties
- 40 cities
- 189 towns
- 27,500+ food establishments
- Food safety is not just ONE agency's focus
- Partnerships are needed



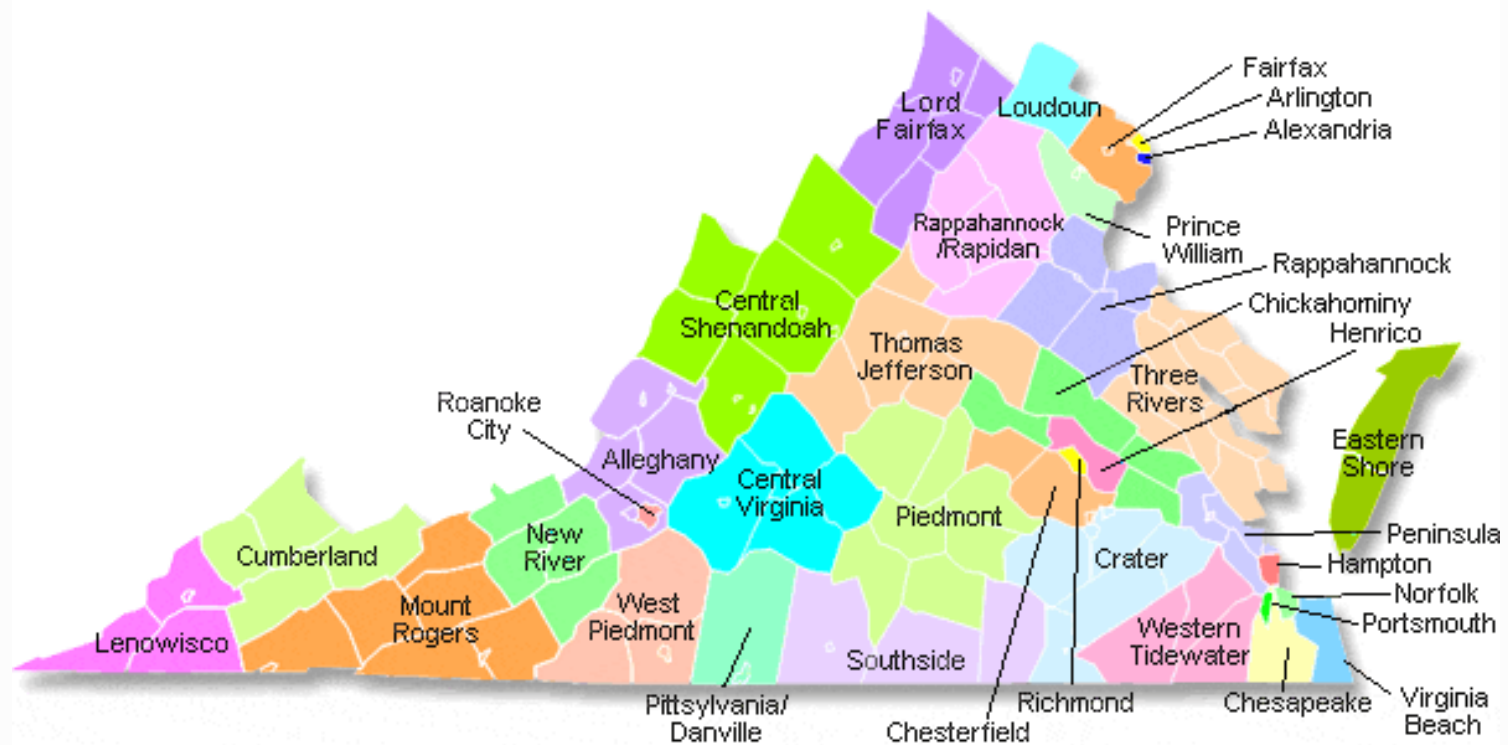


Virginia's Collaboration

- Instead of 324 agencies, created collaboration between state & localities
- Created 35 local health districts to provide public health services including food safety
- All localities contract with state Board of Health to provide uniform regulatory interpretation



35 Local Health Districts





Virginia's Collaboration

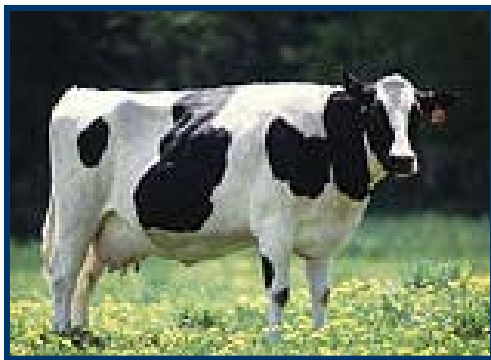
- Partnership not limited to localities
- Departments of Agriculture & Health adopt same food safety regulations
October 16, 2007
- Uniform interpretation and regulatory foundation





Example—Milk Safety

- Departments of Health and Agriculture partner in 1994 to regulate milk supply from farm to table



Agriculture



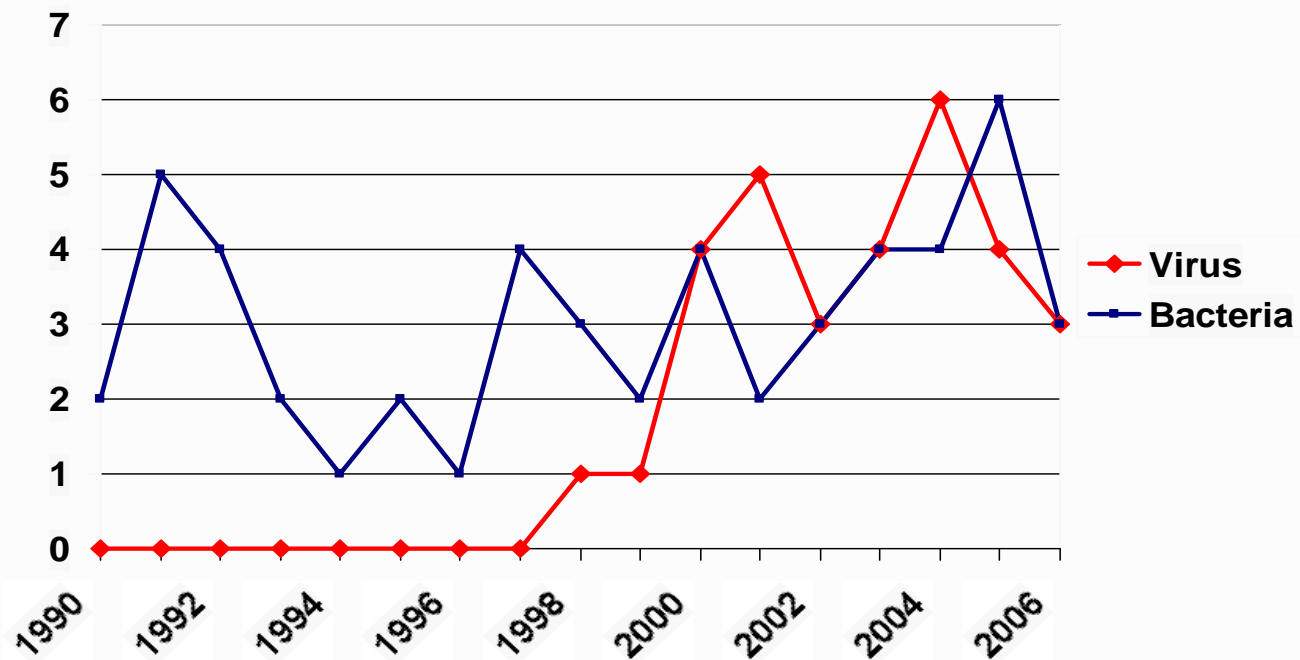
Local health dept.

State Health Department



New Challenges

Distribution of Foodborne Outbreaks by Pathogen Type (1990-2006)





Opportunities for Collaboration

- In 2007; Agriculture, Health, and state Laboratory combine to train over 300 regulators, clinicians, nurses, and epidemiologists on Outbreak Investigation with a special focus on intentional contamination





Next Steps

- Resource hurdle (\$)
- Focus on the 'risk factors', continue to collaborate with existing partners
- Establish new partnerships with industry to tackle risk factors (poor personal hygiene)





Next Steps

- Cognitive hurdle
- Bringing 'challenges' into the light
- Finding new ways to communicate
 - Internet—Food Safety site
 - *"Ask the Experts!"*





Questions?