



# Clay County Event Recap

**21** total  
attendees

**6** farmers/value-  
added producers

**3** grocery  
stores/retailers

**6** support service  
providers

**6** county range

The West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition's (WVFFC) first Rural Grocer Network gathering of 2023 took place on Tuesday, September 5th. A healthy mix of retailers, farmers, value-added producers, and support service providers were in attendance from Braxton, Calhoun, Clay, Kanawha, Logan, and Roane counties!

As a group, we identified the wants and needs of retailers and farmers/value-added producers alike. We then turned to the 6 support service providers in attendance to discuss solutions to the challenges facing each group. The following page provides a summary of both the problems and solutions we identified.

**Rural retailers** from the region identified multiple challenges they have been facing, and the support service providers in attendance provided solutions in response.

## Challenges

## Solutions

Staffing/employees

Workforce West Virginia and Jobs & Hope have multiple programs that pay for on-the-job training, summer interns, wage reimbursements, tax credits, & more!

Sourcing  
(flexibility, proximity/  
location, etc.)

If you're looking for new vendors to buy from, reach out to Audra O'Dell for a comprehensive list of farmers & producers in your region.

Clay County retailers currently struggle with order minimums and a centralized location for deliveries - we hope to address that in the future!

Marketing

Social media is a great tool! If you're looking to gain expertise in marketing, WV Food & Farm Coalition or FASTER WV can pay for you to receive technical assistance in this area.

**Local farmers and value-added producers** identified multiple challenges they have been facing, and the support service providers in attendance provided solutions in response.

## Challenges

## Solutions

Scaling

Audra O'Dell (WVFFC) offers assistance in scaling farm and value-added businesses. FASTER WV also offers business coaching. WVDA can offer multiple services, such as business planning, label review, etc.

Distribution  
(challenges related to the distance between retailers)

Clay County currently struggles with order minimums and a centralized location for deliveries - we hope to address that in the future! Please reach out to Jess Toon (WVFFC) to discuss this further.

Balancing of workload/production planning

Audra O'Dell/Mtn. State Co-Hop and WVDA offer assistance in production planning for farm and value-added businesses. FASTER WV also offers experienced business coaching, having worked with both ag and manufacturing businesses.

Low profit margins

FASTER WV offers business coaching to assist in increasing revenue, technical assistance grants, and free courses in accounting, marketing, and more. The WVDA's Business Development team can also offer guidance in this realm.

Scattered resources & unclear path forward

Audra O'Dell is working to form Mountain State Co-Hop, which will serve as a resource guide for farm & value-added producers! In the meantime, Audra herself is a great resource as well as Kacey Gantzer (kgantzer@wvda.us) from the WVDA.



# Clay County Event Contacts

## Grocers/ Retailers

### Legacy Foods Indore (Clay Co.)

Duane Legg  
(304) 587-3041  
legacyapplebutter@gmail.com



### Murphy's Gifts, Flowers, & More Clay (Clay Co.)

Joe & Rebecca Murphy  
(304) 880-0352  
murphysandmore@gmail.com



### Nottingham's Store Duck (Clay Co.)

Bryan & Pauline Nottingham  
(304) 364-8596  
nottinghamsstore@gmail.com



## Farmers/Producers

### Baxter Mallory Champanville (Logan Co.)

(304) 546-6169, baxter.mallory@gmail.com

★ Future producer!

### Bop & Nana's Bakery & Catering Chloe (Calhoun Co.)

(304) 532-6650, melodyurbanice@icloud.com

✓ WV Grown certified bakery!

### Bruce Murphy Cross Lanes (Kanawha Co.)

(304) 993-8173, brmurphy@wvda.us

★ Future apple producer!

### In the Nook Farm Burnsville (Braxton Co.)

(304) 904-3357, aine@inthenookfarm.com

✓ Fresh herbs & lavender, teas, sprays, & edible flowers producer!

### Sugar Bottom Farm Ovapa (Clay Co.)

(304) 206-7362, mgrandon@frontier.com

✓ Honey producer!

### Wonder Valley Farm Gandeeville (Roane Co.)

(304) 482-2214, kcox@wvda.us

★ Future veg, herbs, and cider apple producer!

# Support Service Providers

## **Tyler Brandstetter**

**(681) 220-2888**

### **Business Coach, FASTER WV (Advantage Valley)**

**tylere@advantagevalley.com**

Tyler's work with FASTER WV (Fostering Advantages for Start-Ups & Entrepreneurial Resurgence in WV) identifies, encourages, and supports small businesses and entrepreneurs through one-on-one business coaching, free classes and workshops, business plan formulation and guidance, mini-grants (for equipment or technical assistance), and loans from a micro-loan fund (can be used for most anything, except vehicles).

## **Sierra Cox**

**(304) 558-2210, ext. 2535**

### **Veterans & Heroes to Ag. Program Manager , WVDA**

**kcox@wvda.us**

Sierra's program with the WVDA works to integrate veterans into the field of agriculture and support veterans currently working in agriculture. These programs may include, but are not limited to: using post-mine land for agricultural development, promoting high tunnel crops and production, expanding the apiary industry, developing cottage industries, exploring niche crops, raising more livestock, increasing the aquaculture industry and helping veterans promote their agricultural products through farmers markets and cooperatives. The program offers scholarships for training and certifications (up to \$600 annually), a Pitch Competition allowing for up to \$10,000 to be awarded for a veteran's new business idea, an additional grant program awarding up to \$24,000, networking events, and grant writing trainings.

## **Audra O'Dell**

**(304) 669-8973**

### **Value-Added Product Coordinator, WVFFC**

**aodellewvfoodandfarm.org**

Audra's work with WV Food and Farm Coalition provides multifaceted support to value-added product producers statewide. She also is working to form Mountain State Co-Hop, a cooperative group offering a marketing platform, a solid partnership with Future Generations to extend distribution beyond WV's borders, assistance in scaling food business, as well as a curriculum being built to address label design, logistics and aggregation assistance, non-food shelf-stable assistance, and a guide/decision tree to alleviate the stress of navigating value-added and cottage food businesses and their relevant regulations.

## **Jess Toon**

**(304) 926-0567**

### **Rural Grocer Network Coordinator, WVFFC**

**jtoon@wvfoodandfarm.org**

Jess' work with WV Food and Farm Coalition is centered around promoting sustainability and viability of rural grocers. Her work involves coordinating: tailored technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning through Rural Grocer Network member gatherings, access to necessary equipment through a Revolving Equipment Fund, and collaborative placemaking activities to highlight regional identities and promote ecotourism efforts.

## **Bruce Murphy - Special Projects Coordinator, WVDA**

**304-993-8173, brmurphy@wvda.us**

## **Joyce Johnson - Clay County Commissioner**

**304-982-0211**

**commissioner.j.johnson@outlook.com**