



MEDIA RELEASE

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VIRGINIA SENATOR LYNWOOD LEWIS NAMED DISTINGUISHED FRIEND OF VIRGINIA AGRIBUSINESS

Senator Honored for Commitment to Agribusiness Industry

(Richmond) Senator Lynwood W. Lewis, Jr. (D-Accomac) has been named the Distinguished Friend of Virginia Agribusiness for 2016 by the Virginia Agribusiness Council.

The award was presented to Senator Lewis on January 14th at the Agribusiness Council's 45th Annual Legislative Appreciation Banquet held in the historic Old Dominion Building at the Richmond Raceway Complex in Henrico County.

In presenting the award, Lynn Graves of Graves Mountain Farms, and chairman of the Virginia Agribusiness Council's board of directors, spoke of Senator Lewis's long history of support of the agriculture and forestry industries and his district's profile as a top agricultural region in the commonwealth.

Lynwood Lewis was first elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 2003 representing the 100th District. In January 2014, he was elected to the Virginia Senate from the 6th District, succeeding Dr. Ralph Northam who had been elected Lieutenant Governor. His Senate District includes the Eastern Shore, parts of Virginia Beach and Norfolk and Mathews County.

Chairman Graves noted Senator Lewis's many accomplishments throughout his career in both the Senate and the House of Delegates, specifically referencing his leadership in working with farmers to find solutions to water quality programs. He has served on the Chesapeake Bay Commission and has worked extensively with industry partners to find innovative solutions to improve water quality while ensuring economic success for agricultural producers.

Furthermore, Chairman Graves discussed Senator Lewis's role as a member of the Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee, where he continues to be a strong proponent of the work of Virginia Tech's Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center and in assuring citizens of the safety of their food. As the Eastern Shore is home to significant poultry production, he has also worked with that sector on legislation to combat the threat of avian influenza.

(more)

Steve Sturgis, a farmer in Northampton County and a member of the Council's Board of Directors said, "Senator Lewis is a champion for agriculture and aquaculture. He works on both sides of the aisle to get things done for all Virginians – not just those who live in his district and not just the Eastern Shore."

And Agribusiness Council President Katie Frazier pointed out that Senator Lewis represents a very unique district, as the district quite literally includes some of Virginia's most rural and most urban constituencies. "As a voice for the agribusinesses in his district, the Senator not only represents their interests, but also helps educate all voters about the importance of agriculture to the entire Commonwealth," she said.

Graves said, "With Virginia's population becoming more concentrated in urban areas each year, it is increasingly important to the members of the Council to have champions for agriculture in the General Assembly. Senator Lewis can not only be counted on to support the agribusiness industry but works diligently to educate his colleagues about its economic importance as Virginia's top private sector industry."

Since its inception in 1978, the Distinguished Friend of Virginia Agribusiness Award has been presented annually to a Virginian who is a Member of the United States Congress, a State Legislator, Governor or other influential government official who has shown "exceptional support of Virginia's agribusiness industry for a period of years."

Along with Senator Lewis's award presentation, Governor Terry McAuliffe addressed nearly 900 persons in attendance, highlighting the first two years of his administration's efforts to promote the Commonwealth's largest industry. Specifically, he mentioned his efforts to promote Virginia agricultural products overseas and his support of the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Fund.

Also in attendance were members of the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates, members of the Governor's cabinet, Agribusiness Council members, and representatives of industry and educational institutions. Each year, the Council hosts its annual legislative appreciation banquet as the General Assembly convenes. Attendees dined on a buffet of "Virginia's Finest" foods and beverages.

About The Virginia Agribusiness Council

The Virginia Agribusiness Council is a non-profit organization committed to representing the interests of the agriculture and forestry industries in the Commonwealth through effective governmental relations efforts and initiatives. Its membership includes farmers, foresters, and other agricultural producers; industry suppliers; marketers and processors; and commodity and industry associations. It is headquartered in Richmond. For more information, please visit www.va-agribusiness.org.

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Photo (attached), left to right: Lynn Graves of Graves Mountain Farms and Virginia Agribusiness Council Chairman, Senator Lynwood W. Lewis, Jr. (D-Accomac), and Steve Sturgis of Tri-S Farms in Eastville