



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://feedthefuture.gov/article/virginia-tech-receives-feed-future-award-improve-agricultural-training-and-education>

Virginia Tech Receives Feed the Future Award to Improve Agricultural Training and Education

Last month, USAID awarded Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) \$6.2 million to improve food security in the developing world. Virginia Tech will lead this Feed the Future project, partnering with Pennsylvania State University, Tuskegee University and the University of Florida to strengthen the capacity of institutions responsible for educating the next generation of agricultural professionals.

A well-educated and skilled workforce is essential to developing a productive agricultural sector. To establish such a workforce, the four U.S. universities will work throughout the developing world with a full range of agricultural training and education institutions—from universities and technical schools to secondary and even primary schools—to transform areas such as curriculum, pedagogy, finance and administration.

Mike Bertelsen, interim executive director of the Virginia Tech office, said that the project "will combine the considerable strengths and unique regional experiences of our consortium partners with those of Virginia Tech. In partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development, this team will promote transformational change in agricultural training and education systems in countries that desperately need such change to adequately address their future needs."

Multidisciplinary teams from the universities will work together to address critical issues related to agricultural education in the 21st century, including climate change, drought, resource scarcity and undernutrition, with a particular focus on women as major food producers, preparers and marketers in many regions of the world.

Tom Hammett, professor in the Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources and Environment, will serve as director of the new program.

"We are committed to improving educational systems around the globe," Hammett said. "We are eager to build on our recent experiences in assisting educational institutions in Liberia, Nepal, Senegal and South Sudan."