

Virginia Agribusiness Council
We Represent Virginia Agribusiness with a Unified Voice

MEDIA RELEASE

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**PHILLIP PUCKETT NAMED DISTINGUISHED FRIEND
OF VIRGINIA AGRIBUSINESS**

*State Senator Praised For His Support of Agriculture and Forestry Industries in
Virginia General Assembly*

(Richmond, Va.) State Senator Phillip J. Puckett of Russell County has been named the Distinguished Friend of Virginia Agribusiness for 2012 by the Virginia Agribusiness Council.

The award was presented January 12 at the Agribusiness Council's Annual Legislative Appreciation Banquet at the Arthur Ashe Athletic Center in Richmond.

A native and lifelong resident of the Town of Lebanon, Senator Puckett was first elected to the Virginia State Senate in 1998. He was re-elected in 2011 and continues to represent the 38th Senatorial District which encompasses all of Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Tazewell counties and parts of Smyth, Wise, Pulaski, and Wythe counties. He currently serves as the ranking member of the Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee.

In presenting the award, Eric Holter, chairman of the Agribusiness Council board of directors, said, "Those of us who represent agribusiness – Virginia's largest industry- have witnessed Senator Puckett's steadfast commitment to and recognition of a strong agriculture industry to provide economic prosperity – not only to his district – but to the entire Commonwealth. He has proven to be one of the most reliable advocates for issues and legislation that promote and protect the rights of Virginia agribusiness – from peanut growers to wineries...from grain farmers to livestock producers ...from horse owners to food processors...from dairy operations to agritourism sites."

Agribusiness Council president Donna Pugh Johnson pointed out that during the 2010 and 2011 General Assembly Sessions, Senator Puckett earned "a perfect 100 percent record of voting in support of legislation endorsed by the Agribusiness Council."

"In 2011, he also stood up to not only support but also serve as a patron of legislative to advance our industry's initiative regarding agricultural animal care standards," Johnson added. "As his many friends and colleagues have noted, the Senator is more than just a committed and trusted

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public servant, he is also a man of strong faith who is devoted to his God, his family and his community.”

Since its inception in 1978, the Distinguished Friend of Virginia Agribusiness Award has been presented thirty times to a Member of Congress, a State Legislator, Governor or other influential public official who has shown “exceptional support of Virginia’s agribusiness industry for a period of years.”

At the Virginia Agribusiness Council’s banquet, Governor Bob McDonnell addressed the over 850 persons in attendance and praised the contributions of Virginia agribusiness to the state economy. He was joined by Lt.Gov. Bill Bolling, Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, 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 at the event which is held each year when 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 the non-profit organization committed to represent 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 product producers; marketers and processors; industry suppliers; and commodity and industry associations. It is headquartered in Richmond. For more information, please visit www.va-agribusiness.org .

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