

ACT NO. 8404

BILL NO. 33-0376

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Regular Session

2020

An Act requiring the Department of Agriculture and the President of the University of the Virgin Islands to develop a territorial agriculture plan; and for other related purposes

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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. (a) The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and the President of the University of the Virgin Islands shall develop a territorial agriculture plan.

(b) The territorial agriculture plan, known as the "agriculture plan" must contain policy and funding recommendations to support and expand the local food system, to increase locally grown food production and to provide food security for the Territory. The agriculture plan must include short-term and long-term goals, including proposals for legislative enactment.

(c) The agriculture plan must be comprised of:

- (1) A comprehensive regulatory component for the territory's farming industries;
- (2) Business models for profitable and sustainable community-based local food and farming businesses;
- (3) A plan for the development of a position for and the hiring of a local food and farm coordinator to carry out programs and to coordinate efforts within 180 days of submission of the plan;
- (4) The creation of a local food and farm fund from voluntary sources to support initiatives, and agriculture-related activities;
- (5) Recommendations for the establishment of a local food and farm advisory committee, composed of seven members, including the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture or the Commissioner's designee, the Executive Director of the Economic Development Authority or the Executive Director's designee; two members from the University of the Virgin Islands, including the President of the University of the Virgin Islands or the President's designee and the Dean of Agriculture

or the Dean's designee and three other members appointed by the Governor, with those three being farmers from each island, to create and oversee the local food and farm fund, participate in the grant decision-making process, disburse resources from the fund, advise the Local Food and Farm Coordinator, collect and evaluate critical local food systems production and marketing data and, respond to any requests by the Legislature for policy or funding recommendations;

(6) The creation of a "local food symbol" that can be placed on stickers, posters, stamps, etc. for sale;

(7) The Development of education and training programs for local food farmers, entrepreneurs, and processors; and

(8) The collection of data, creation of benchmarks, and assessment of progress on the building of the local food and farm economy.

SECTION 2. (a) The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and President of the University of the Virgin Islands shall submit the agriculture plan to the Governor and to the Legislature not later than 180 days after the enactment of this act.

(b) A request to the Governor for an extension for the submission of the agriculture plan may be considered upon proof that substantial work on the plan has been completed.

SECTION 3. The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture shall review the agriculture plan and submit any recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature every five years beginning from the date on which the agriculture plan was submitted to the Governor and the Legislature under section 2 (a).


SECTION 4. Funding to carry out the requirements of this act is appropriated as provided in the Fiscal Year 2021 Executive Appropriation Act.

Thus passed by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands on December 11, 2020.

Witness our Hands and Seal of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands this 21st day of December, A.D., 2020.




Novelte E. Francis, Jr.
President


Alicia V. Barnes
Legislative Secretary



Bill No. 33-0376 is hereby approved.

Witness my hand and the seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, this 31st day of December, 2020 A.D.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Albert Bryan, Jr.", is written over the printed name.

**Albert Bryan, Jr.
Governor**