

**9. DISCUSSION REGARDING VACANT
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AGENT POSITION**

As directed last month, I coordinated a meeting with Mr. Lonnie Johnson, our District Director for Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), and Mr. Doug Caskey, County Administrator of Isle of Wight County, to discuss the possibility of sharing the service and expense of an Agricultural/Natural Resource (ANR) Extension Agent.

We were scheduled to meet on November 13, but Doug and I received an email from Lonnie advising us of further state budget reductions and requesting that we postpone the meeting until the dust begins to settle in Richmond and Blacksburg.

Based on budget reductions, he indicated that VCE is evaluating a revision of its staffing model to reduce the number of statewide districts from 6 to 4 and clustering counties together for service. Under the new model there would be approximately 50 local Unit Coordinators that would work with multiple localities and provide overall program leadership. Every unit *will not* have an ANR agent, 4-H agent or FCS agent. All agents will serve multiple counties with the help of lower-level program assistants. VCE will be reducing its agent ranks by about 50 positions statewide and local support staffs will be reduced by approximately 50%. The plan is expected to be finalized in January 2010.

In order to maximize scant state resources, Lonnie suggested that we wait to see the statewide impacts before developing our local plan. He stressed that he's continuing to work hard to provide reasonable options for both Southampton and Isle of Wight, but simply has insufficient information to proceed further at this point.

NO MOTION REQUIRED