

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

As directed following your July 27 session, Virginia Tech posted the vacant ANR position and solicited qualified candidates through August 28. They received response from slightly less than 20 interested candidates and, following their screening process, interviewed five (5) candidates earlier this month. The interviews were conducted by a panel and included active participation from a number of local agricultural producers (including Supervisor Young) and the Virginia Farm Bureau.

The panel reached consensus on the best qualified candidate, but Virginia Tech has not yet tendered an offer because available local funds are not fully sufficient to cover the cost of salary and benefits. You may recall that our FY 2010 Extension budget included roughly \$43,500 for salaries and benefits. Because the best qualified candidate already has a Master's Degree, according to Mr. Lonnie Johnson, the annual cost of salary and benefits is estimated at \$51,395. Because more than a quarter of the current fiscal year has already passed, that wouldn't be an issue in FY 2010, but will be in subsequent fiscal years (until the state lifts its hiring freeze).

Lonnie has requested the folks at Virginia Tech to chip in the difference (slightly less than \$8,000), but at this writing, has not received a response. In the event that they're unable to contribute, Lonnie will need your direction in how to proceed. He hopes to have a response from Virginia Tech prior to Monday.

DIRECTION REQUIRED: If Virginia Tech is unable to contribute, Mr. Johnson will need your direction. If you direct him to proceed in hiring the candidate with a Master's Degree, it will impact your FY 2011 budget.