



United States Department of Agriculture

Virginia StrikeForce Report July 18, 2014

Gleaning Project Supports StrikeForce Initiative

On Virginia's Northern Neck, the local Food Bank is working with area farmers to grow produce not only for their food pantries, but for other food banks in Eastern Virginia as well. This year, 20 USDA employees and Earth Team volunteers teamed up to do a gleaning project on the Forrester farm as part of USDA's StrikeForce initiative.

Ronnie Forrester has been farming in Lancaster, Virginia, since 1953. He says that dedicating a few acres to grow food for the Northern Neck Food Bank is a way of giving back. "It's something we can do that is so good for the community. We have an abundance here and want to share the blessings we have."

Son Dwight, an NRCS soil conservation technician, owns the 300-acre Holyoke Farm, one of three operated by the family. He says the idea for planting a field dedicated to the food bank started with one farmer and just grew. Today, 17 farmers plant a few acres each year to be harvested by volunteers for donation to the local food bank.

Lance Barton from the Northern Neck Food Bank says about 10,400 residents are food insecure. He started working with local farmers four years ago with just a pick-up truck. Now, the Food Bank provides fresh, locally grown produce year round to consumers.

Below: USDA employees and volunteers gleaned 4,000 pounds of corn.



Above: Dwight and wife Amy, father Ronnie, and children Grafton and Sara



Right: B.J. Fulcher of RD and DC Debbie Bullock from NRCS

Below: Lance Barton, Northern Neck Food Bank CEO



Below: Neighbor and Earth Team volunteer Stacey Seed



Below: Earth Team Coordinator Georgia Solseth and SC Alexa Clark from NRCS unload their bags.

