

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

FY 2025-26 Budget Hearing

Agency Attendees

- Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner of Agriculture
- Clint Leach, Assistant Commissioner for External Affairs and Economic Development
- Derek Underwood, Assistant Commissioner for Consumer Protection
- Aaron Wood, Assistant Commissioner for Agency Operations

Greenville State Farmers Market Renovation



New Outdoor Event Space



New Retail Food Safety Office Space



On-Boarding Food Protection Employees



FOOD GRADE RATING

C

Needs Significant Improvement



South Carolina
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Scan the QR code with your mobile device to access all of the South Carolina retail food inspection reports



Needs Improvement

B



South Carolina
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

For more information, visit

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For more information, visit
AGRICULTURE.SC.GOV/RETAIL-FOOD-SAFETY

FOOD GRADE RATING

A

Meets Requirements

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Vehicles from DHEC



Hurricane Helene Disaster Impact



Recurring Budget Requests

- **\$1,000,000: Customer Service Enhancements.**
 - SCDA is only budgeted \$300,000 (2013) for Farmers Markets operations in Columbia, Florence, and Greenville.
 - Need additional microbiological testing capacity to support all Food and Feed regulatory programs.
- **\$8,000,000: Increase Federal Funds and Positions Authority.**
 - 4 new positions requested; 5 to be realigned from earmarked (9 total).
 - Expecting a \$23,000,000 grant from USDA NRCS
- **Realign FTE Positions**
 - Move 12 from Earmarked (Other) to State (General)

Recurring Budget Requests, p.2

- **\$2,000,000: Statewide Agricultural Marketing.**
 - Target audiences are growing.
 - This would enhance statewide campaigns to promote local ag products at farm stands, farmers markets, retail outlets, and restaurants.
- **\$2,465,000: Certified SC School Cafeteria Program.**
 - Reimbursement cost-share program to encourage schools to purchase from farms, specialty food producers, food hubs, and distributors in our state.
 - Educate students, parents, and schools about SC agriculture.
- **\$1,000,000: ChangeSC Statewide Implementation**
 - Expand the 2024-25 pilot statewide.
 - Improve health by increasing access to nutritious food in food deserts.

Non-Recurring Budget Requests

- **\$1,400,000: Equipment Replacement**
 - Many vehicles received from DHEC are 15+ years old; 32 will meet the replacement criteria.
 - Modular benches, incubators, real-time PCR and whole genome sequencing instrumentation.
- **\$3,000,000: Regional Farmers Markets.**
 - Reimbursable grant program for towns and counties to build or expand farmers markets.
- **\$441,469: Harvest Hope Food Loss Repayment to USDA.**
 - Restitution liability to USDA if a court impedes collection from Harvest Hope's self-reported food losses.

Provisos

- ***NEW: Commodity Boards**

- This would allow commodity boards, established by the Commodities Marketing Act, to retain and invest interest earned on producer assessments, for which SCDA (the State) is a fiduciary agent.

- ***NEW: Earmark Redirect for Equipment Replacement**

- This would redirect an unclaimed \$950,000 earmark in 2022 Act 94, Part 1B, Proviso 118.18(B)(77) Berkeley County Agricultural Educational Exhibition Area, to be used for much-needed vehicle and laboratory equipment replacement purchases.

Cost Savings Plans

- A 3% (\$763,284) reduction in appropriated funds would be shared between Agency Operations, Consumer Protection, and External Affairs & Economic Development without reducing FTEs.
- Eliminating regional offices for Retail Food Safety Inspectors and realigning inspectors' territories improves efficiency (less windshield time), lowers overhead costs, and reduces turnover and associated training time.

South Carolina Department of Agriculture
 Budget vs Actual For Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 and Carryforward Balances
 December 20, 2024

	Fiscal Year 2024		Cash Carried Forward From FY2024	Fiscal Year 2025	
	Authorization	Expenditures		Authorization	Expenditures Through 12/20/24
General Funds	74,971,504	62,451,093	718,270	45,082,218	14,624,098
Earmarked Funds	13,866,665	8,218,421	17,152,574	18,108,919	5,530,496
Restricted Funds	40,126,000	2,779,749	45,333,033	37,347,557	2,612,220
Federal Funds	12,535,444	13,705,391	3,715,353	14,494,463	5,214,069

* Includes budgeted accounts, capital project funds and unbudgeted trust & agency accounts.

Agency Name: South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Agency Code: P160

Section: 44

Agency FTE Authorized: 274

FTE Filled: 250.563 + Agency Head

Temp Grant (TG): 7

Time Limited (TL): 1

December 17, 2024

