



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin

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CONTACTS:

Office of the Governor

Contact: Peter Finocchio

Peter.Finocchio@governor.virginia.gov

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Contact: Michael Wallace

Michael.Wallace@vdacs.virginia.gov

Darden Hams

Contact: Thomas & Elizabeth Darden

DardenHams@outlook.com

**Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces New
Country Ham Processing Facility
in Isle of Wight County**

Darden Hams to construct new production facility in Isle of Wight County and purchase more than \$305,000 in Virginia-grown agricultural products

RICHMOND, VA — Governor Glenn Youngkin announced today that Darden Hams will invest \$1.2 million to construct a new 7,200 sq. ft. facility on a 10-acre site in Isle of Wight County to meet growing demand. The project will bring country ham production back to the area, known as the “Ham Capital of the World,” and expand the market for ham products. Darden Hams is committing to purchase \$306,331 (or 300,942 lbs.) of Virginia-grown pork.

“Virginia’s economy grows stronger when our local businesses expand, invest, and create new opportunities right here at home,” said **Governor Glenn Youngkin**. “Darden Hams’ expansion reflects the strength of Virginia agriculture, the Commonwealth’s largest private industry, and the confidence that family-owned businesses have in our economy and our communities. I congratulate the Darden family on this exciting milestone and thank them for continuing to grow and invest in Isle of Wight County.”

“I am pleased that we were able to partner on this project through the Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development fund,” said **Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matthew Lohr**. “This project supports the growth of the Commonwealth’s hog production industry by creating new and expanding markets for Virginia pork, while also building on Southeastern Virginia’s heritage of providing quality cured and smoked hams.”

Darden Hams will expand production of Darden’s Country Ham, which will be produced as a product line under TLD Hams, LLC, doing business as Darden Hams. In addition to housing a new and efficient curing and smoking operation, Darden’s new facility will offer more than five times the company’s current production capacity, as well as a warehouse, processing area, and a show kitchen for demonstrations and product tastings. Darden Hams will seek a USDA grant of inspection for the facility, which will allow the company to sell products online and through wholesale interstate distribution.

“Thank you, Governor Youngkin, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Isle of Wight County, for supporting the expansion of Darden Hams,” said **Thomas Darden, owner of Darden Hams**. “We are excited for this opportunity to expand our facility and product line and reach new market opportunities while also helping to strengthen the agricultural economy of Southeastern Virginia.”

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services worked with Isle of Wight County to help fund this project. Governor Youngkin approved a \$50,000 facility grant from the Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund, which Isle of Wight County will match with local funds.

“For nearly 75 years, Darden’s Country Store and Smokehouse has been a local landmark and tourism destination,” said **State Senator Emily Jordan**. “The Darden Family has been a staple in our community and has always been deeply committed to the motto we embrace in our community: Hams, History & Hospitality. I congratulate Darden Hams on this expansion and thank them for their continued investment in Isle of Wight County.”

“This project is great news for Isle of Wight County and the surrounding area, as it builds on the success of Darden’s Country Store and helps to further ham production in Southeastern Virginia,” said **Delegate Nadarius Clark**. “Congratulations to the Darden family and everyone at Darden Hams.”

“I would like to thank the Youngkin Administration, Isle of Wight County and the Darden family for investing in our community,” said **Delegate Otto Wachsmann**. “This project helps to further agriculture in the area and build on the success of a local landmark business.”

“We congratulate the Dardens on their expansion and investment in Isle of Wight County,” said **Don G. Rosie II, Chairman, Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors**. “We strongly support this project, as agribusiness is a growing and vital component of our economy and community.”

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