



Principle 1: Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

County Information Sheet

Rockbridge County

Rockbridge County sits at the head of the James River watershed and has a visually pleasing mixture of mountains and rolling hills. The county ranked 41st in agriculture in the state and 6th in the VCC region in 1997.

Main agricultural products are cattle and hay. Horse inventory is moderate but may increase because of the presence of the Virginia Horse Center. Total market value of agricultural products in 1997 was \$15,446,000, an increase of 29% over its 1987 total. Livestock and poultry made up 89% of that value. The county lost both farms and farmland, 51 farms and 6,345 acres (4.0%), respectively, between 1987 and 1997.

The county leads the region in forestry and ranked 21st in the state overall, and 3rd for hardwood production. The value of timber harvested in Rockbridge County was \$4,768,665 in 2000, up from \$1,013,421 in 1986 (a 370.6 % increase). The county ranked 1st in the region in timber harvest value in 2000, and was tops in 1986 too. Pine volume and value and hardwood saw timber all declined, but hardwood saw timber increased significantly. Hardwood was increasingly dominant, moving from 83.7 percent of the harvest in 1986 to 98.2 percent in 2000.

Figure 1-11b.
Agricultural Census Statistics
Rockbridge County

| | 1987 | 1997 | Change 1987-1997 |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Number of Farms | 682 | 631 | (51) |
| Acres in Farms | 146,455 | 140,110 | (6,345) |
| Avg. Size of Farm | 215 | 220 | 7 |
| Market Value of Crops | \$ 980,000 | \$1,672,000 | \$ 692,000 |
| Market Value of Livestock | 10,952,000 | 13,774,000 | 2,822,000 |
| Market Value Ag Products | \$11,932,000 | \$15,446,000 | \$3,514,000 |

Note: Rank in State: 41; in Valley: 6
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Figure 1-11c.
Timber Harvest Volume and Value
Rockbridge County
(in thousand board feet)

| | 1986 | 2000 | Change |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| Volume: | | | |
| Pine Sawtimber | 612 | 518 | (15%) |
| Hardwood Sawtimber | 11,767 | 20,764 | 77% |
| Subtotal Sawtimber | 12,379 | 21,282 | 72% |
| Small Dimension | 13,718 | 9,419 | (31%) |
| Total Volume : | 26,097 | 30,701 | 18% |
| Value (\$): | | | |
| Pine | \$ 165,019 | \$87,605 | (47%) |
| Hardwood | 848,402 | 4,681,060 | 452% |
| Total Value | \$1,013,421 | \$4,768,665 | 371% |
| Percent Hardwood | 84% | 98% | |
| Rank in Region | 1 | 1 | |
| Rank in State | -- | 21 | |

Source: Virginia Department of Forestry, July 2002

Note: Volume is based on forest products tax receipts; value is based on average county stumpage costs. The standard measure for saw timber is thousand (mille) board feet abbreviated mbf. A tree 22 inches at breast height with 48 feet of usable stem would yield approximately 500 board feet.