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## V.I. Local Food and Farm Council Awards Over \$500,000 in Grants to Boost Food Security Across Territory

**Twelve farmers, fishers, and related organizations selected from over 100 applicants to receive grants aimed at improving local food production and reducing reliance on imports**

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On Wednesday, the V.I. Local Food and Farm Council announced the recipients of \$500,567 in grant funding for the 2024 cycle. The funds will be used to improve food security in the territory.

According to the release, a total of 106 applications were received, seeking over \$4.6 million in funding for agricultural projects in the territory. Twelve farmers, fishers and related organizations were selected by the Council's Review and Selection Committee from the pool of applicants,

representing all three islands.?

Grants were awarded in two categories: Tier 1 for those with up to 5 years of experience, and Tier 2 for those with 5 or more years of experience in their field. The four Tier 1 grants awarded ranged from just over \$21,000 to \$55,000, while the eight Tier 2 grants ranged from \$15,000 to over \$65,000.?

“We are gratified by the dedication of the many grant applicants in envisioning a better future and enhanced food security for the territory, and thank them for their submissions,” said Agriculture Commissioner Louis E. Petersen Jr., co-chair of the Council. “These grants empower farmers and fishers with the financial resources necessary to bring their impressive plans to fruition, allowing vital progress on local sustainable food production.”?

Former Council co-chair David Hall recognized the importance of the grants, as well as the importance of the grantees’ efforts toward the collective goal of advancing food sovereignty. “We look forward to the exponential returns that will surely be sowed,” he remarked.

?Improving food security is a key objective for the territory, which imports approximately 97% of its food supply. The grants come from the Public-Private Partnership Investment Fund, created under Mandate 2 of the Virgin Islands [Agricultural Plan](#) and funded by [ACT 8700](#).