

## **The History of Peanuts in Virginia**

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In Virginia, agriculture is both a historical and prosperous industry. Fueling the success of agriculture is diversity of food, fiber, and food products. Virginia boasts five diverse regions with the largest industry being agriculture. According to Terance Rephann's Economic Impact study, agriculture provides \$70 billion dollars annually and supports 334,000 jobs throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. One of the diverse crops showcased in the Coastal Region are peanuts. Peanuts rank number 19 in Virginia commodities with a cash receipt of \$15,000,000 according to Virginia Department of Agriculture. Peanuts have been a staple crop in Virginia since the 1900's thanks to Dr. George Washington Carver. The Virginia Peanut Growers Cooperative Marketing Association estimate commercial peanut crops flourished and the first Commercial peanut crop was grown in Sussex County, Virginia in the mid 1840's. The peanut crop has thrived in the Coastal Region due to the sandy soil and ideal growing conditions. Virginia peanuts are desired today due to their large kernels, size, extraordinary flavor, and crunchy texture according to the Buy Virginia Grown Guide. Virginia is also home to numerous peanut processors from small gourmet shops to multi-national corporations.