



Bette Brand is President and CEO of Strategic Consulting LLC. She works with lenders, rural businesses and communities to access much needed capital and other resources to improve the quality of life and prosperity in rural America.

She also serves as the Senior Advisor of Generation Food Rural Partners Fund (venture capital fund) and is a member of the Frank M. Ruff, Jr Center for Rural Virginia and the Virginia Racing Commission.

Prior to starting her own company, Bette served as the Deputy Under Secretary with USDA Rural Development.

Bette began her career with the Farm Credit System where she held various leadership positions over her 35+ years with Farm Credit.

She has wide-ranging experience promoting rural communities, having served on the Virginia Agribusiness Council, the Virginia Horse Council, the Virginia Cooperative Council, and the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

Brand has a BS degree in Animal Science and an MBA from Virginia Tech.

Bette B. Brand

Experience

2/15/21 – Present
President and CEO

Strategic Consulting LLC

Roanoke, VA

Consulting services to rural businesses, non-profits, and municipalities in the areas of access to capital, economic development, growth opportunities and strategy, perspective and leadership expertise and connection to network of resources.

- Board Leadership
- Federal Loan, Grant, and Program Resources
- Economic Development for rural America
- Business Development and expansion

1/1/24 – Present
Board Member

Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia

Appointed by the Speaker of the Virginia House of Representatives to this non-profit organization established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2004. The Board works in collaboration with the Council for Rural Virginia to analyze rural Virginia economies and recommend flexible but targeted state policies which, combined with local efforts, will help foster sustainable economic growth in Virginia's rural areas.

6/1/22 – Present
Commissioner

Virginia Racing Commission

Appointed by the Governor, this board of five individuals are charged to promote, sustain, grow, and control a native horse racing industry with pari-mutual wagering by prescribing regulations and conditions that command and promote excellence and complete honesty and integrity in racing and wagering.

7/15/21 – 12/01/24
Board Member

Virginia Cannabis Control Authority Board

Appointed by the Governor, this independent, apolitical subdivision is responsible for regulating cannabis in the Commonwealth of VA, overseeing the medical cannabis program and promoting public safety, advancing public health, and protecting communities.

3/1/21 – Present
Senior Advisor

Big Idea Ventures – Generation Food Rural Partners Fund

Advisor to GFRP Fund that commercializes university-developed intellectual property focused on food, protein, and agriculture innovation to support economic development in rural communities and drive innovation in university ecosystems across the U.S.

2/27/20 -1/20/21
Deputy Under Secretary

USDA, Rural Development

Washington, DC

- Senior leader of one of the eight mission areas within USDA and

member of Secretary Sonny Purdue's Subcabinet.

- Led a team of 4500 employees in 477 field offices across the U.S. and in Washington, DC committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America.
- Led the delivery and management of a \$233B loan and loan guarantee portfolio (89% of all lending in USDA) as well as grants and technical assistance for businesses, housing, water infrastructure, electric and broadband, and community facilities (including rural hospitals and telemedicine).
- Led Rural Development throughout the pandemic, telework posture and phased reopening while maintaining performance and program delivery, employee engagement and recording the highest obligations for many of our programs in years.
- Led the team to gain efficiencies, streamlined processes and regulations and repositioned the organization more specifically as a lending organization with a mission through multiple realignments, improvement in processes and IT modernization.
- Proactively supported a "local first" press strategy, announcing each loan and grant in the field, resulting in over \$22 m. in earned media and more importantly, insured our programs were more accessible to more rural communities across the county.
- Worked closely with government contractors and USDA team to develop complex IT loan systems for Housing and rural broadband programs and developed a universal Special Assets Unit within Rural Development.

1/20/18-2/27/20 USDA, Rural Development Washington, DC
Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service

- Led the effective delivery of loans, guarantees and grants to businesses, agricultural producers and biorenewable energy projects to make positive impact in the economy of rural America and to improve the quality of life in these communities.
- Facilitated the partnership with private companies to bring more capital to rural America to generate a sustainable economic engine driving true economic development.
- Contributed to the overall improvement of all RD programs to improve customer service and ensure increased access to rural customers.

12/2018-4/1/19 USDA, Rural Development Washington, DC
Acting Administrator, Rural Utility Service

- Led the effective delivery of loans, guarantees and grants for electric, water and telecom projects in rural America.
- Led and directed development and overall implementation of the ReConnect broadband program.
- Utilized the unique opportunity of leading two agencies in Rural Development to assess and implement better underwriting standards, servicing policies and other best practices consistently across agencies to better serve our customers.

2017 Farm Credit of the Virginias Roanoke, VA
Chief External Affairs Officer

- Served as the legislative officer for the association, effectively building relationships with members of Congress, advocating for Farm Credit and our members, and collaborating with other System officers.
- Responsible for association messaging and communications.
- Oversaw the continued impact of the Farm Credit Knowledge Center.
- Served on the Farm Credit University Board of Visitors.

2014-2016 Farm Credit of the Virginias Roanoke, VA

Chief Sales Officer/Legislative Affairs

- Led the business development of a \$1.8 billion lending organization.
- Led a team of Commercial Agricultural and Agribusiness lenders located across the FCV footprint- 2015-present.
- Supervised the continued impact of the Knowledge Center team and the branding of our organization through the Marketing Department team.
- Served as the Legislative Officer for the association, effectively built relationships with members of Congress, advocated for Farm Credit and our members, and collaborated with other System Legislative officers.
- Served on Farm Credit University Board of Visitors.

2005-2014 Farm Credit of the Virginias Roanoke, VA
Chief Sales Officer

- Responsible for sales development for a \$1.6 billion lending organization with 24 branch offices in 96 counties of Virginia and West Virginia.
- Worked closely with CEO and Board to advocate to members of Congress and the Virginia and West Virginia General Assembly on behalf of our customers and FCV.
- Responsible for the creation and development of FCV Knowledge Center.
- Served as an external public relations specialist with other agricultural and rural organizations.
- Worked closely with Human Resources Department to recruit and train new sales officers.
- Served as Project Manager for Association Quality Customer Service Action Team.
- Served as a member of the TOTAL (Training of Today/Tomorrow Association Leaders) Action team.
- Instrumental in the creation of Farm Credit University and served as a member of the Farm Credit University Board of Visitors 2004 – present.
- Completed Foundations of Leadership Development Program – Level II-2006, Level III-2010

2001-2005 Farm Credit of the Virginias Roanoke, VA
Southern Region Sales and Lending Manager

- Led team to increase loan volume from \$83 million to \$95 million in six months.
- Processed \$33 million in loan actions in six months with a staff of 18.
- Exceeded all goals in first six months.
- Guided my team through a major merger of four organizations.
- Completed Executive Leadership Coaching Program with Mark Wright, Wright Group, USA, Inc. – 2001.

1985–2001 Roanoke Farm Credit Roanoke, VA
Chief Financial Officer

- Responsible for the development and implementation of policy and management initiatives in the areas of finance, marketing, administrative services, management information systems, and human resources in an association with \$110 million loan portfolio and a territory covering 20 counties in Virginia and West Virginia.
- Managed the automation and networking of six branch offices involving 26 employees.
- Responsible for all financial and regulatory reporting and disclosures to stockholders, outside auditors and federal examiners.

1985–1986 Roanoke Farm Credit Roanoke, VA

Loan Officer/Marketing Manager

- Responsible for loan origination, financial analysis, appraisal, servicing, and collections of a diverse loan portfolio of approximately \$20 million in the counties of Roanoke, Allegheny, Botetourt, and Craig. Also responsible for the planning and implementation of an aggressive marketing effort for the Association and handling public relations matters.

1982-1985 Warrenton Farm Credit Leesburg, VA

Loan Officer

- Responsible for originating and servicing a diverse portfolio of approximately \$63 million, consisting of large complex loans in Loudoun and Fairfax counties in Northern Virginia.

Education June 1991 VPI & SU Blacksburg, VA

- **Master of Business Administration**, The R. B. Pamplin College of Business
- Concentration in Finance and Management.

1978-1982 VPI & SU Blacksburg, VA

- **B.S. Animal Science**

**Professional
Organizations**

State Fair of Virginia Youth Development Board of Directors (2022-present)

Virginia Innovation Collective Board of Directors (2022-present)

Virginia Agribusiness Council Board (1990-2017, Chair 2001, 2017)

Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom Board (AITC) (2005-2017)

Virginia Horse Council Board (1986-2017, President 1988, 1991)

Virginia State University-Department of Agriculture Advisory Committee (2012-2017)

Virginia Beginning Farmers Coalition (2011-2015)

Virginia Equine Center Foundation Board (Virginia Horse Center) (2003-2006, Appointed by Governor Mark Warner, Chair 2004-2005)

Advisory Committee for Center for Agribusiness Management – Virginia Tech 2005 – 2010

Virginia Tech Animal and Poultry Industry Advisory Committee – 1984-2001, 2014-2017

Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Mentor Program - 2017

Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Ag Leadership Council 1998-2001

Virginia Tech Agricultural Alumni Organization (Board of Directors 1991-1997)

Virginia Council of Farmer Cooperatives (Board of Directors 2002-2014)

AgFirst Credit Union (Board of Directors 1998-2001)

Virginia Tech Athletic Fund (Hokie Club) (1989-2017)

Old Dominion Pony of the Americas Club, Inc. 1986-2012

Certified Open Horse Show Judge – NC State University 1993, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2007

- Awards
Received**
- Impact Award – National Cooperative Business Association 2019
 - Virginia Agribusiness Council Distinguished Leadership Award 2019
 - Virginia Agribusiness Council Distinguished Leadership Award 2008
 - VA Tech Agricultural Alumni Organization Distinguished Service Citation 1998
 - Virginia Horse Council Distinguished Service Award 1995

- Community
Service and**
- Covenant Presbyterian Church (1994-present, Elder 2006-2008, Long Range Planning Committee 2022-2022)
 - Member of Roanoke Valley Horsemen's Association (1988-2016)