**Virginia Turfgrass Council**

**PO Box 5989 **|** Virginia Beach, VA 23471 **|** Phone: 757-464-1004 **|** Fax: 757-282-2693 **|** Email:** **vaturf@verizon.net**

September 09, 2021

***Status of Processing Applications to Take the Registered Technician Exam and Grading Exams Once Have Been Given***

Over the past months persons seeking to take the Registered Technician exam (Category 60), getting appointments at the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or waiting for results of pesticide exams taken in person have experienced long delays.

Yesterday (September 08), several of us met virtually with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) persons responsible for all three items. Here are summary points from our meeting.

A. Delays in processing applications to take the Registered Technician Exam

- VDACS recognizes processing delays of four to six weeks are happening and they understand the hardship this delay places on the industry. They have a backlog of 700 applications with more coming in each day. Staff have been working overtime to process applications and VDACS has attempted to hire seasonal workers. **Because of the current job market, they have not been able to hire qualified persons to help with the application backlog. The labor issue they are experiencing is one all of us to relate to.** Starting this fall, the process will be streamlined when major components of the certification process will be online. That online option does not eliminate the current delays but it does give us all hope.

- Persons seeking permission to take Commercial Applicator exams are not experiencing excessive delays because the number of applications received by VDACS for Commercial Applicators is significantly lower than Registered Technicians and Commercial Applicator applications are processed separately from Registered Technicians.

B. Once approval to take the exam is obtained, many persons have difficulties getting an appointment at the DMV

- In early August, VDACS recognized the problem of excessive DMV delays. They worked with the DMV to temporarily set up a separate appointment process which can significantly reduce the wait time for persons seeking to take pesticide exams. Persons receiving their letter of authorization from VDACS receive information regarding the temporary appointment process.

C. Once approval to take the exam is granted, persons who choose to take the paper exam (not at the DMV) have to wait one to two weeks to learn if they passed.

- This delay is only experienced by persons who do not take exams electronically at the Division of Motor Vehicles. Persons who use the DMV option immediately get their results and they are immediately able to apply pesticides if they pass.  For many of the testing locations using paper exams, the paper exams must be delivered to Richmond to be graded before VDACS is able to notify individuals if they passed.  The Virginia Pest Management Association offers testing opportunities for Registered Technicians which are proctored by VDACS pesticide investigators and graded by the investigators on-site.

- VDACS is looking at a temporary solution of allowing their field investigators to grade exams and notify individuals of the results. Just like the DMV option, persons who pass written exams will immediately be able to apply pesticides under this temporary provision.

*We thank persons at VDACS for working with the industry to solve these problems. Taking much of the process online will alleviate many of the delays we are currently experiencing. Look for that online option to appear this fall*.