

**Virginia Wine Board Grant  
Final Report**

6/29/2025

Anne Shelton  
Virginia Cider Association  
PO Box 210  
North Garden, VA 22959

*Title:* 2023 Virginia Cider Apple Report

*Proposal Number:* [Proposal Number]

*Project Type:* ☐ Research ☒ Education ☐ Marketing

Is this a multi-year grant? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, which year does this report address? [E.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> of a 3-year grant]

*Original Funding Amount:* 22,000

*Remaining Balance:* 0.00

*Objectives and Results:*

This grant proposal was submitted with the intention of producing a second Virginia Cider Apple Report (the first having been produced for 2022 under a previous grant). The Virginia Cider Association contracted the assistance of Ringwood Boyd Marketing, LLC to build the survey, collect responses, and produce the report. Additional funds were requested based on experiences with producing the 2022 report with anticipation of having to travel to meet with stakeholders in face to face meetings. There were a few delays in the start of the project, causing the VCA to ask for an time extension. Once the 2023 report was finished under budget in August of 2024, the VCA returned to the board to request the use of the remaining funds for a 2024 Virginia Cider Apple Report to be concluded within the remainder of the fiscal year.

Ringwood Boyd Marketing, LLC created the survey in the Spring of 2024 and made only minor adjustments for the second report. VCA aided RBM in aggregating a list of stakeholders from cider producers, wine producers (who make cider), and apple growers. RBM used a survey software to collect responses and produce both reports. Both RBM (as the Virginia Wine Board Marketing Office) and VCA sent the report out to all respondents and other stakeholders in the industry.

VCA's main goal for this project was to have proper documentation of the Virginia Cider Industry for the purposes of discussions with growers and government entities. As secondary goal was to compare the statistics year over year. Key takeaways from this project are that the consistency of producing this report for three years allowed for recognition of the report, allowing for more respondents leading to more accurate data.

*Overall Benefit for Virginia Wine Industry:*

Prior to these reports being produced, the cider industry had an unclear picture of the landscape of cider production in Virginia. It was unclear how much cider was being produced from fruit grown in the Commonwealth vs fruit or concentrate purchased out of state. Another question the report hoped to answer was the economic impact of cider fruit in the state.

Both of these reports (combined with the first report from 2022) have provable data to help the industry steer their pricing and production decisions. They also give a timely snapshot of the industry for media and legislative inquiries. Recently, Dr Stewart from Virginia Tech was able to use these reports to put together a presentation on the Virginia Wine and Cider Industry for the Weincampus Neustadt in Germany.

*Publications and Activities Associated with Project:*

Both the 2023 and 2024 Virginia Cider Apple Reports are attached. The 2023 report was presented at a Virginia Cider annual meeting and sent around through the Virginia Wine Marketing Office email list. The 2024 report, having just been concluded, will be distributed in a similar manner. The VCA is undergoing a website redesign and there is space planned to post the reports, along with the 2022 report, which was funded by a previous grant.

*Future Work:*

There is not a current plan to produce a 2025 Virginia Cider Apple Report. With three years of the report published, we can start to see trends in the industry. The VCA Board is currently discussing the interval in which this report should be published. It is balancing the time and cost with the rapidity of growth in a young industry.

*Final Budget and Justification:*

Item Type	Original Awarded Amount	Final Amount Spent
Personnel	[\$0.00]	[\$0.00]
Fringe	[\$0.00]	[\$0.00]
Travel	[\$0.00]	[\$0.00]
Supplies & Materials	[\$0.00]	[\$0.00]
Contractual	\$22,000	\$22,000
Other	[\$0.00]	[\$0.00]
Total	\$22,000.00	\$22,000.00

This project used the entirety of the funds awarded but was able to double the project within that budget and produced two years worth of reports.

*References:* [List all references.]



# 2023 VIRGINIA CIDER APPLE REPORT





## Methodology

The 2023 Virginia Cider Apple Report was conducted by the Virginia Cider Association (VCA) with data collection overseen by the Virginia Wine Board Marketing Office (VWBMO). This report will serve as a data source for the Virginia cider industry, focusing on apples used in hard cider production throughout the state during the 2023 calendar year.

Data presented in this report was collected from Virginia apple growers and producers. The survey remained open from March 2024 to June 2024 and received responses from 65 apple growers and producers. The survey was conducted in two parts; one for cider apple growers and a second for cider producers. The grower section gathered information on orchard acreage, bushel totals, cultivars, distribution and usage. The cider producers supplied information on the apple cultivars processed, including the number of bushels processed, gallons of fresh juice or concentrate purchased, and total production amounts. Contact information for both surveys was compiled from databases of the VCA, Panacea Consulting, and the VWBMO. Data provided from ABC sales reports was utilized in the cider sales section of the report.



## Footprint of Virginia Cider

Nationally, Virginia is ranked sixth in apple production. In the Commonwealth, cider is predominantly made from dessert apples, although some producers are using specialized cider apple varieties to produce regionally distinctive ciders. There are 54 different cultivars of apples in Virginia that are used to make cider. Virginia cideries production ranges from small facilities producing 550 gallons up to 100,000 gallons. Producers may grow their own fruit, or are buying apples from commercial orchards and pressing it on site. There are several different custom juice operations in Virginia that provide producers with fresh pressed juice. Other producers are buying fruit or concentrate from out-of-state. Most Virginia cideries are doing a combination of these business models.



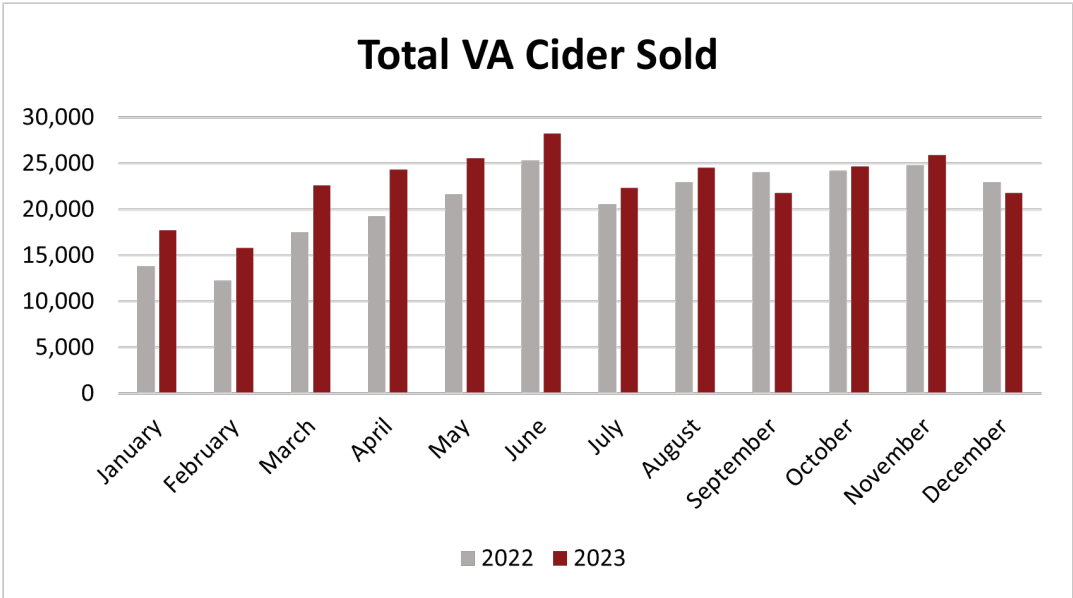
**VIRGINIA  
WINE**

# Virginia Cider Sales

The following data is reflective of Virginia ABC sales reports provided to the VWBMO. Sales data is reported directly by distributors and cideries licensed as farm wineries in liters and then converted to case equivalent values. These data points are reflective of sales in the state of Virginia only.

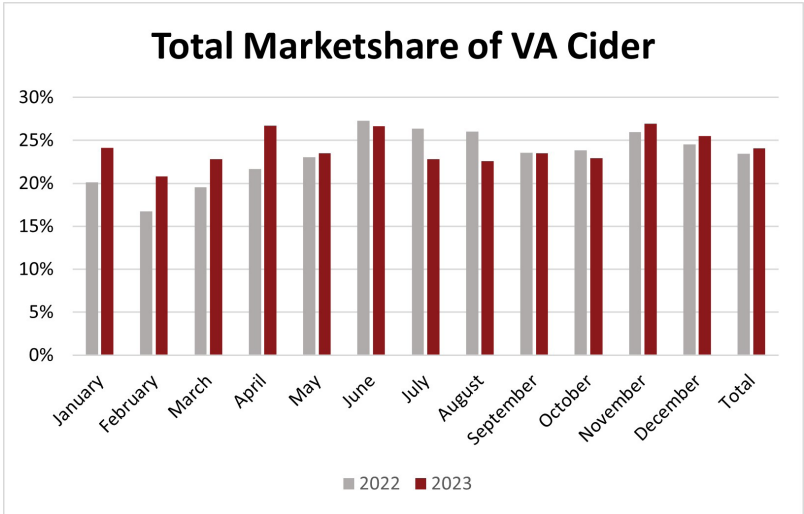
## Total Virginia Cider Sales

Total Virginia cider sales showed an 10.5% increase from 249,259 cases in 2022 to 275,455 cases in 2023. Monthly comparisons reveal consistent growth from January 2023 to June 2023, with each month surpassing the sales figures from the respective months in 2022. Notably, June 2023 recorded the highest monthly sales in both years with 28,258 cases sold. September and December 2023 showed declines compared to the same months in 2022, with September 2023 showing a 9% decrease. July, August, October, and November 2023 also experienced growth, but with smaller increases compared to the year’s earlier months.



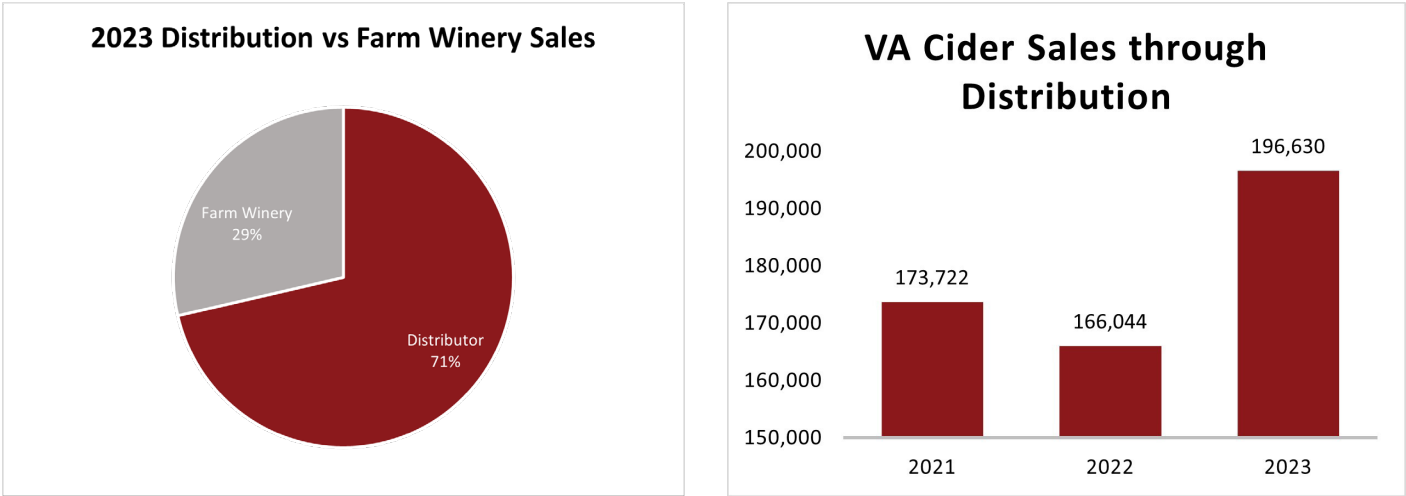
## Virginia Cider Market Share

The total sales in 2023 represent a 24% market-share for Virginia Cider compared to all cider sold in the state of Virginia. This marks a slight increase in market share from 23% in 2022. Monthly data reveals fluctuations, with significant gains in January, February, March, April, and November of 2023 compared to the same months in 2022. Despite some decreases in the summer months, the overall yearly increase indicates growing popularity and market presence of Virginia cideries.



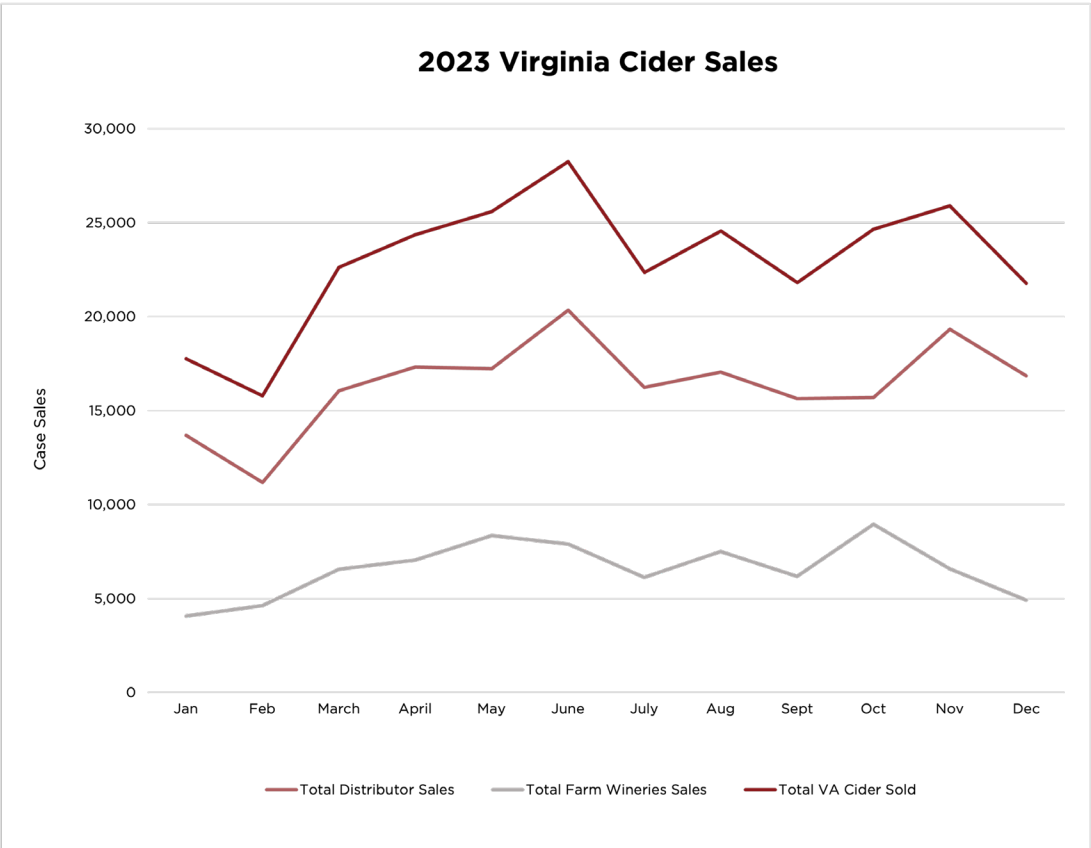
# Virginia Cider Sales through Distribution and at Farm Wineries

Of the total 275,455 cases of Virginia cider sold in 2023, 29% was through sales at farm wineries with 71% sold through distribution. Sales through distribution saw 18% increase in 2023 compared to calendar year 2022. This indicates a healthy growth in distributor sales after a drop in sales the previous year.



Sales at farm wineries varied from a low of 23% of total Virginia cider sales in December, to a high of 36% of Virginia Cider sales in October, averaging 29% for the year. The data shows consistent sales at farm wineries, with noticeable sales peaking during the fall months, indicating seasonal influences on visitation to cidery tasting rooms.

The chart below illustrates Virginia cider sales in 2023 with monthly sales broken down by total Virginia cider sold, total distributor sales and total farm winery sales.



# Cider Apple Survey Data

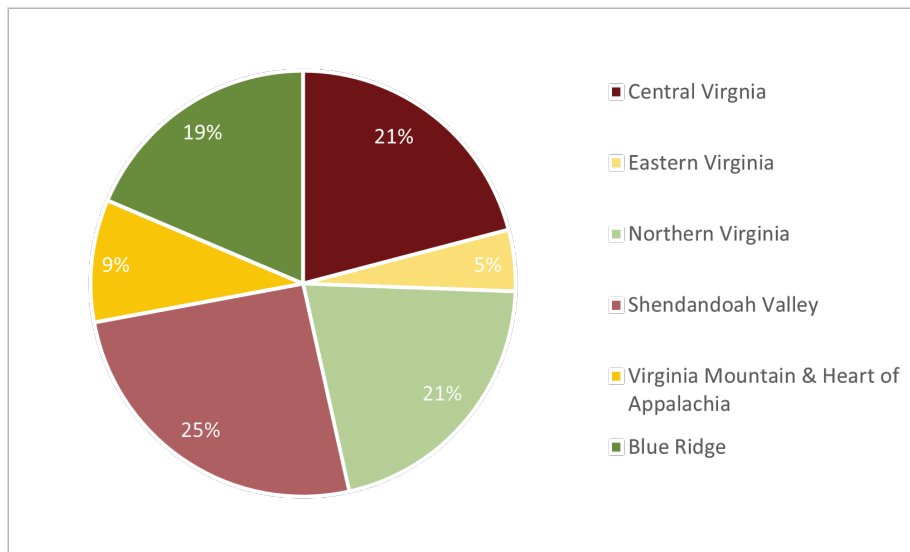
## Acreage and Harvest Data

Based on data collected in the first part of the survey from 44 apple growers in Virginia, the acreage and harvest section provided metrics such as acreage, bushels harvested and distribution channels. The respondents reported farming 10,831 acres of land, where they harvested a total of 2,200,093 apple bushels.

## Cider Apple Sales in Virginia

- Total bushels sold in-state for cider production: 176,111 bushels
- Total gallons of juice sold in-state for cider production: 424,475 gallons
- Total bushels sold out-of-state for cider production: 17,400 bushels
- Total gallons of juice sold out-of-state for cider production: 26,400 gallons

## Geographic Summary



Apple grower respondents represented 25 counties within Virginia. These are represented by the regions illustrated in the chart on the left.

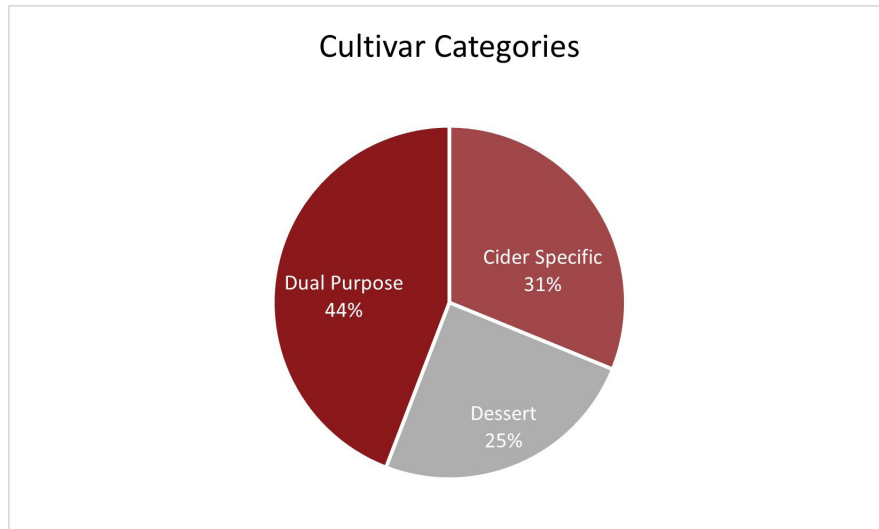
## Production Data

Based on data provided by 38 Virginia cideries in the second part of the survey, Virginia cider producers collectively packaged 1,476,291 gallons of fermented hard cider in 2023. Among these producers, 20 utilized Virginia apples for their cider, pressing 8,905 bushels to produce 29,942 gallons of apple juice. Additionally, cider makers purchased 309,530 gallons of Virginia-grown apple juice and 900 units of concentrate.

## Cultivars

Throughout both parts of the survey, respondents were asked about cultivar preferences. In part one of the survey, 10 Virginia apple growers reported the top cultivars sold for cider production in Virginia. In part two, Virginia cider producers reported top choices of cultivars for cider production. Of the 20 cider producers purchasing apples to press directly, 12 indicated a preference in cultivar. Of the 22 producers purchasing juice, 11 indicated a preference in cultivar. All cultivars with a minimum of two responses throughout the survey are listed below.

- Albemarle Pippin
- Ashmead's Kernel
- Black Twig
- Gala
- Gold Rush
- Golden Delicious
- Golden Russet
- Granny Smith
- Harrison
- Pink Lady
- Red Delicious
- Roxbury Russet
- Ruby Red Crab
- Stayman
- Virginia Hewe's Crab
- Wickson
- Winesap
- York



The graph on the left categorizes all cultivars with a minimum of two responses, listed above, into broader classifications.

---

The VCA and VWBMO thanks everyone for participating in these surveys and contributing to the 2023 Virginia Cider Apple Report.







# 2024 VIRGINIA CIDER APPLE REPORT





## Methodology

The 2024 Virginia Cider Apple Report was conducted by the Virginia Cider Association (VCA), with data collection overseen by the Virginia Wine Board Marketing Office (VWBMO). This report will serve as a data source for the Virginia cider industry, focusing on apples used in hard cider production throughout the state during the 2024 calendar year.

All data presented in this report was collected from Virginia apple growers and producers. The survey remained open from March 2025 to May 2025 and received responses from 58 apple growers and producers.

The survey was conducted in two parts; one for cider apple growers and a second for cider producers. The grower section gathered information on orchard acreage, bushel totals, cultivars, distribution and usage. The cider producers supplied information on the apple cultivars processed, including the number of bushels processed, gallons of fresh juice or concentrate purchased, and final production amounts. Contact information for both surveys was compiled from databases of the VCA, Panacea Consulting, and the VWBMO.



## Footprint of Virginia Cider

Nationally, Virginia ranks sixth in apple production. Within the Commonwealth, cider is primarily made from dessert apples, though some producers are turning to specialized cider apple varieties to create regionally distinctive styles. More than 50 apple cultivars grown in Virginia are used in cider production. Cider production across the state varies widely, from small operations making 150 gallons annually to large facilities producing over 800,000 gallons. Some producers grow their own apples, while others source fruit from commercial orchards and press it on-site. Several custom juice operations in Virginia provide fresh-pressed juice to ciders, and some producers also use fruit or concentrate from out of state. Most Virginia ciders follow a combination of these models.



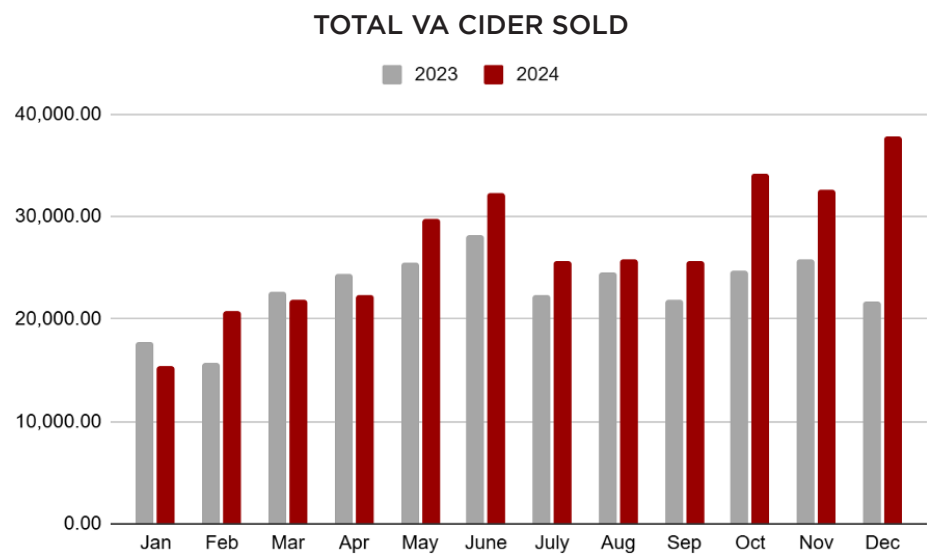
**VIRGINIA  
WINE**

# Virginia Cider Sales

The following data is reflective of Virginia ABC sales reports provided to the VWBMO. Sales data is reported directly by distributors and cideries licensed as farm wineries in liters and then converted to case equivalent values. These data points are reflective of sales in the state of Virginia only.

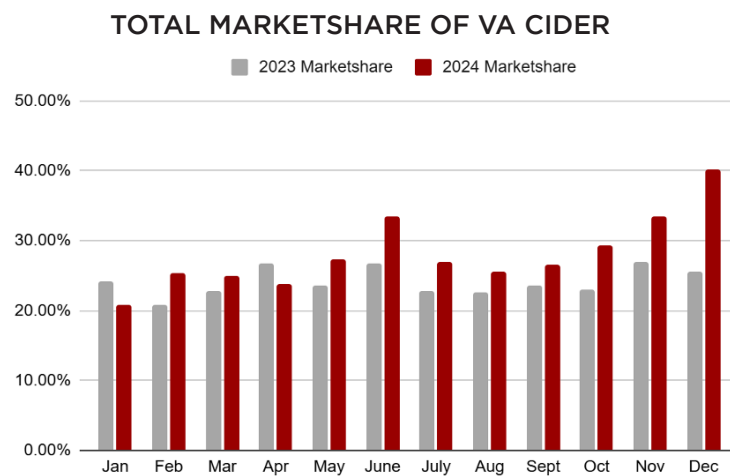
## Total Virginia Cider Sales

Total Virginia cider sales showed an 18% increase from 275,455 cases in 2023 to 324,367 cases in 2024. While a few months in early 2024 saw slight decreases compared to the previous year, the remaining months showed strong gains, particularly in the second half of the year. The most significant growth occurred from October through December. In December alone, total cider sold increased over 74% compared to 2023, signaling a particularly strong finish to the year.



## Virginia Cider Market Share

The total sales in 2024 represent a 28% market share for Virginia Cider compared to all cider sold in the state—an increase from 24% in 2023. Monthly data shows some fluctuations, with notable gains in February, March, May, June, and December of 2024 compared to the same months in 2023. While a few months, such as January and April, saw slight decreases, the overall yearly growth suggests a rising market presence and continued momentum for Virginia cideries.



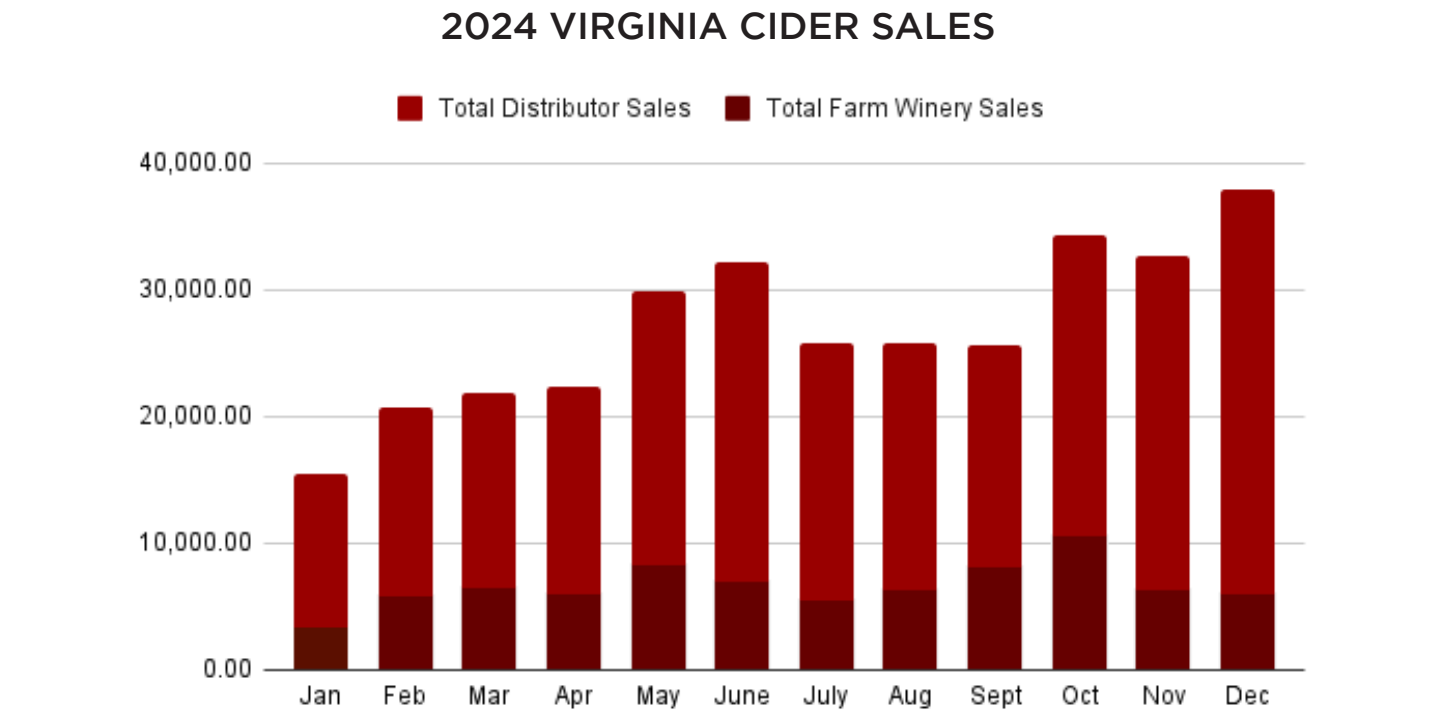
# Virginia Cider Sales through Distribution and at Farm Wineries

Of the total 324,367 cases of Virginia cider sold in 2024, 25% was through sales at farm wineries with 75% sold through distribution. Sales through distribution saw 25% increase in 2024 compared to calendar year 2023. This indicates a healthy growth in distributor sales.



In 2024, farm wineries accounted for an average of 25% of all Virginia cider sales, ranging from a low of 16% in December to a high of 31% in September. Sales remained steady throughout the year, with clear fall peaks reflecting seasonal patterns in tasting room visitation and increased interest during harvest season.

Compared to 2023, cider sales through farm wineries grew by 0.8%, driven in part by a 30% increase in September and a 19% boost in October. The data points to sustained consumer demand and continued momentum for Virginia cider.





# Cider Apple Survey Data

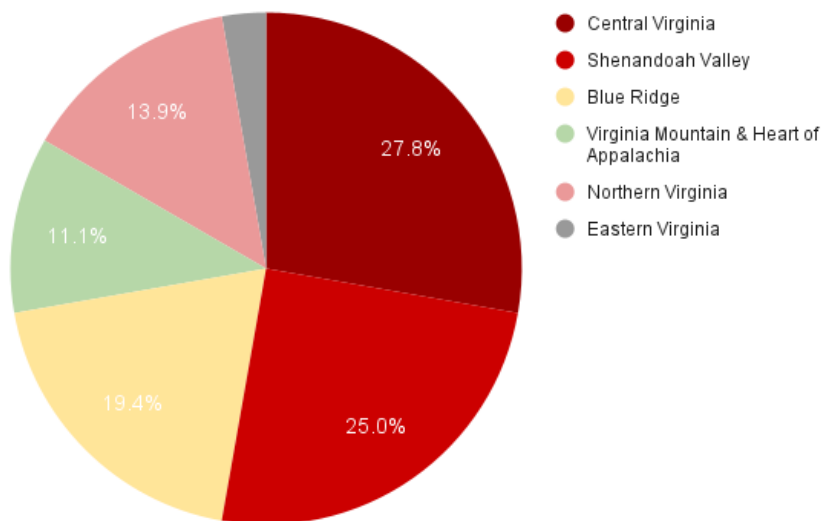
## Acreage and Harvest Data

Based on data collected in the first part of the survey from 37 apple growers in Virginia, the acreage and harvest section provided metrics such as acreage, bushels harvested and distribution channels. The respondents reported farming 8,727 acres of land, where they harvested a total of 1,038,496 apple bushels

## Cider Apple Sales in Virginia

- Total bushels sold in-state for cider production: 123,340 bushels
- Total gallons of juice sold in-state for cider production: 389,450 gallons
- Total bushels sold out-of-state for cider production: 370,400 bushels
- Total gallons of juice sold out-of-state for cider production: 26,400 gallons

## Geographic Summary



Apple grower respondents represented 21 counties within Virginia. These are represented by the regions illustrated in the chart on the left.

## Production Data

Based on data provided by 39 Virginia cideries in the second part of the survey, Virginia cider producers collectively packaged 1,222,566 gallons of fermented hard cider in 2024. Among these producers, 23 utilized Virginia apples for their cider, pressing 132,476 bushels to produce 492,198 gallons of apple juice. Additionally, cider makers purchased 184,040 gallons of Virginia-grown apple juice and 48,265 units of concentrate.

# Cultivars

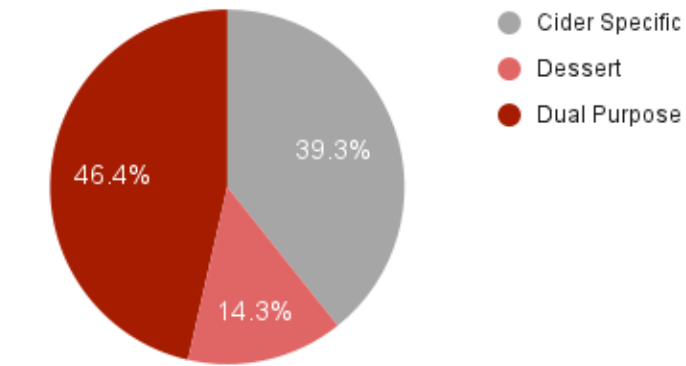
Throughout both parts of the survey, respondents were asked about cultivar preferences. In part one of the survey, 7 Virginia apple growers indicated cultivar preferences, reflected as the top cultivars sold for cider production in Virginia.

In part two of the survey, Virginia cider producers were asked their top choices of cultivars for cider production. Of the 23 cider producers purchasing apples to press directly, 12 indicated a preference in cultivar. Of the 22 producers purchasing juice, 11 indicated a preference in cultivar. All cultivars with a minimum of two responses are listed below.

Top Cultivars Sold in State	
Cultivar	Count of Responses
Harrison	3
Ashmead’s Kernel	2
Gold Rush	2

Preferred Cultivar when Purchasing Bushels	
Cultivar	Count of Responses
Virginia Hewe’s Crab	7
Albemarle Pippin	4
Harrison	3
Gold Rush	3
BlackTwig	2
Pink Lady	2
Ruby Red Crab	2
Wickson	2

## CULTIVAR CATEGORIES



Preferred Cultivar when Purchasing Juice	
Cultivar	Count of Responses
Ashmead’s Kernel	5
Harrison	4
Gold Rush	3
Ruby Red Crab	3
Virginia Hewe’s Crab	3

The VCA and VWBMO thanks everyone for participating in these surveys and contributing to the 2024 Virginia Cider Apple Report.

