

# *Prince George's County Strategic Program for Agricultural Development*



*The Maryland-National Capital  
Park and Planning Commission  
[www.mncppc.org/pgco](http://www.mncppc.org/pgco)*



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# *Where We are Today*

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## *Prince George's County Agriculture since the Tobacco Buyout*

Southern Maryland is Maryland's oldest region and one of the least changed in terms of its agricultural economy. Settled in 1632, the region quickly established its economy and its currency as one backed by tobacco. Until the later half of the 20th century, tobacco remained the economic currency of the region and the primary economic engine. Today, tobacco is joined by government, business services, government-sponsored defense research, military bases, and retail in its economic mix.

As sectors outside of agriculture have grown in importance to the region, and the urban boundaries of nearby Baltimore and Washington have expanded, Prince George's County has seen a rise in suburban development and large lot subdivisions. This trend is increasing as Southern Maryland has taken the distinction of being the fastest developing region in Maryland and is likely to continue, given the advance of land banking by regional developers that has been encouraged by the structure of the tobacco buyout contracts.

Since 1998, the State of Maryland and the region have recognized that the economic role played by tobacco, nationally and regionally, was diminishing and that historically low levels of commodity prices were enhancing the conversion of agricultural lands. In an effort to stabilize the land base and search for a suitable substitute for tobacco, Maryland instituted a tobacco buyout program, beginning in 2001, that included the following elements:

1. Contract with growers not to produce tobacco.
2. Agreement by growers to remain in active agriculture for a period of ten years.
3. Support and development of new production and marketing techniques to support transition of the agricultural industry.
4. Enhanced agricultural preservation efforts.

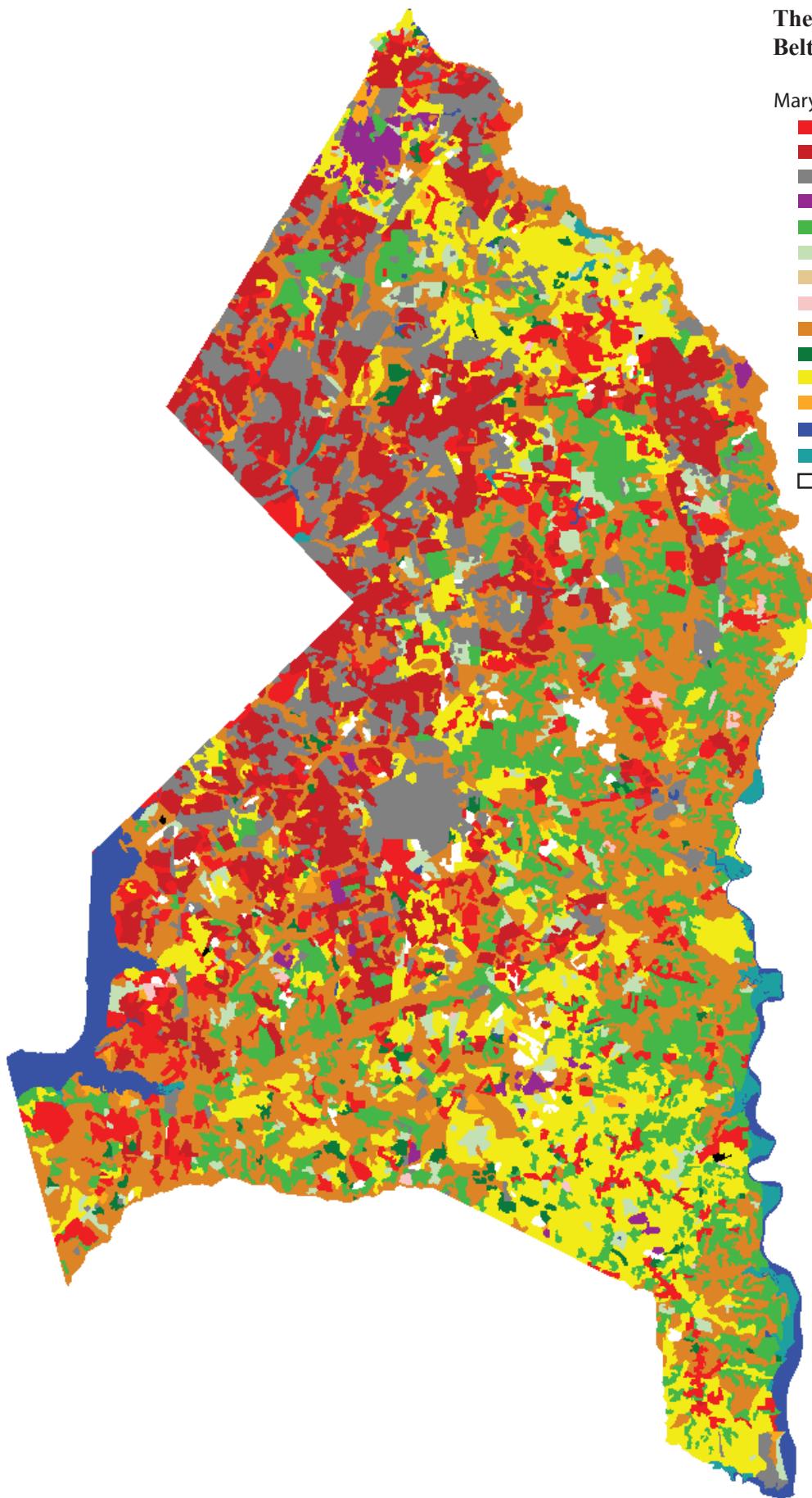
The confluence of these trends has placed the county in a state of flux and uncertainty. Growers are expressing concern over the future of agriculture and are looking for clear leadership to aid in the transition, especially as the ten-year period is set to begin expiring in 2010. Policymakers are expressing concern over the sociological, land use, and cultural changes that will inevitably follow the transition from agriculture, which may increase when buyout payments cease between 2010 and 2012.

As evidenced by the map on the following page, Prince George's County continues to urbanize, which challenges agriculture by disaggregating operations and reducing access to infrastructure. This highlights the need for a strategic program for action to stabilize the industry and assure continued agribusiness success. The map also outlines the integration of forestry and agricultural operations, which emphasizes the need for an integrated approach to agricultural and forest products industry development.

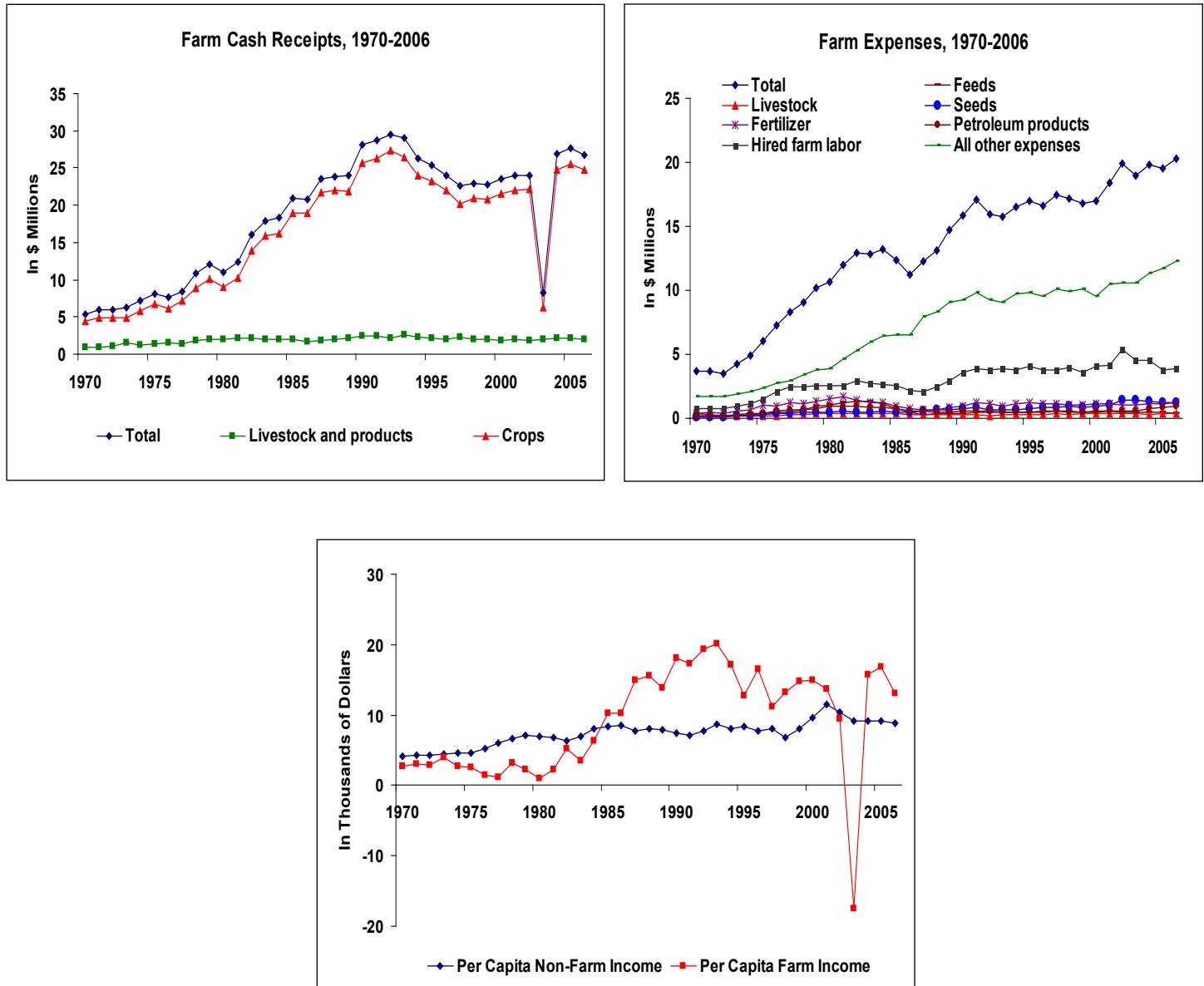
The land cover map, as created by the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

Maryland Agricultural Research Station.

- 1 Low Density Urban
- 2 Medium Density Urban
- 3 High Density Urban
- 4 Surface Mining Operations
- 5 Cropland
- 6 Pasture
- 7 Orchards, Horticulture
- 8 Agricultural Facilities
- 9 Deciduous Forest
- 10 Evergreen Forest
- 11 Mixed Forest
- 12 Brush
- 13 Water
- 14 Forested/Nonforested Wetlands
- 15 Bare



# Economic Impact, 2008<sup>1</sup>



1. All non-cited data from non-Agricultural Census years comes from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

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Agriculture in Prince George's County, Maryland, consisted of 454 farm enterprises as of 2006. Farm receipts amounted to over \$27 million and were led by \$25 million in receipts from crop production.

Gross farm sales have been on a stable upward trend from 1970 to 2006. Receipts slowed down in 1994 in crop sales before experiencing a significant \$22 million drop in 2003 following a drought and the tobacco buyout program. The trend has stabilized since and as of 2006, crop receipts totaled \$25 million.

Despite the growth over the years, the local farming economy continues to suffer from similar economic woes as the U.S. farm economy. Chronically low commodity prices and rising farm costs have been a common trend both nationally and locally for traditional farm commodities, as seen in grain production—one of the county's prime agricultural products.

Although lower farm prices and higher costs are indeed a national phenomena for U.S. agriculture, the area's farmers find their problems further exacerbated by local conditions. For one, trends in dairy production show declines in output. In addition, lagging crop production growth has created an unfavorable economic environment for county farmers.

These challenges have led to pressures in farm incomes. In fact, since 1990, average per-capita farm income in the county has stabilized but has not experienced significant growth even though it has remained higher than other surrounding farming communities.

Even with these problems, there remains some stability and growth in parts of the area's agriculture. Nurseries and greenhouse production remained strong in 2006 and have a value-added impact nearly equal to output levels.



<i>Agricultural Input and Output Industries</i>						
<i>Sector Name</i>	<i>2003</i>			<i>2008</i>		
	<i>Firms</i>	<i>Empl.</i>	<i>Sales (mil)*</i>	<i>Firms</i>	<i>Empl.</i>	<i>Sales (mil)*</i>
Direct Agricultural Service	61	191	\$7.2	46	160	\$6.5
Food Manufacturing	55	1,604	\$152.8	55	1,436	\$148.9
Food and Farm Product Wholesale Activities	40	971	\$273.7	53	1,176	\$178.8

\*Sales figures reflect 2008 dollars.

## **Food Manufacturing**

### **Over \$1 Million in Sales (2008)**

All That Catering (All That Soulfood), Hyattsville, MD  
 Canada Dry (Canada Dry Potomac Corporation), Hyattsville, MD  
 Delicias Bakery (Panamara Bakery, LLC), Riverdale, MD  
 Mountainside Gourmet Inc., Capitol Heights, MD  
 Rolando Curtis Foods, Hyattsville, MD  
 Soda Bar Systems Inc., Hyattsville, MD  
 Trinity Springs Water, Bowie, MD  
 Upper Crust Bakery Warehouse, Beltsville, MD  
 ZP of Maryland, LLC, Temple Hills, MD

## **Food and Farm Product Wholesale**

### **Over \$10 Million in Sales (2008)**

Bowie Produce Company, Inc., Hyattsville, MD  
 C & C Meat Sales, Inc., Upper Marlboro, MD  
 Cameron Seafood Restaurant (Cameron Enterprises Ltd), Capitol Heights, MD  
 Clemente Pastry Shop, Inc., Hyattsville, MD  
 DPI Specialty Foods Mid-Atlantic, Upper Marlboro, MD  
 EMD Sales, Inc., Hyattsville, MD  
 George S National Beef (Stanley Foods), Capitol Heights, MD  
 Instantwhip (Instantwhip Baltimore), Hyattsville, MD  
 Metropolitan Meat, Seafood & Poultry (Metropolitan Poultry), Hyattsville, MD  
 Pamex Foods, Inc., District Heights, MD  
 Rio Grande Foods (Rio Grande Products), Beltsville, MD  
 Snow Valley, Inc, Upper Marlboro, MD  
 Uptown Bakers (Uptown Bake and Brew, LLC), Hyattsville, MD

# *SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)*

## *Strengths*

Prince George's County is the leader in food manufacturing employment and payroll in the region. It does not have the strongest agricultural sector in terms of farm receipts or output compared with other counties in Maryland, especially neighboring Montgomery and Howard Counties. The county's greenhouse production is strong, as measured by total sales, exceeded only by Anne Arundel and Howard Counties. Prince George's also has an indirect strength due to its proximity to the abundance of entrepreneurial talent combined with resources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), which is located within the county.

In addition to agricultural sector strengths, Prince George's County is and will continue to be a significant beneficiary of its proximity to the Baltimore-Washington consumer market, the fifth wealthiest region in the nation. This strength is becoming increasingly important in conjunction with access to major transportation corridors due to the increase in fuel and transportation costs. The demographic characteristics of the Baltimore-Washington market and Prince George's County itself are quite favorable, even with the recent economic downturn. For example, the Baltimore-Washington median income of \$70,395 and the Prince George's County median income of \$68,540 are well above the U.S. median household income of \$53,154. Also, the increasing population of Hispanics and Asians in the county bodes well for the consumption of produce by county residents, as these ethnic groups have been shown to consume fresh produce items in larger quantities and with more frequency than other demographic groups.

Finally, the economic output multiplier for the agriculture industry in the county (also understood as the positive economic impact of agricultural expenditures) is beneficial to the nonagricultural sector of the county's economy, despite being among the weakest in the state and region (Source: IMPLAN). This impact ranges from a low of 9 cents for every dollar spent for the tobacco sector of agriculture to a high of 51 cents of economic impact for every dollar spent for agriculture and forestry support activities. This essentially means that the agricultural industry significantly benefits all other industries and businesses in Prince George's County. Specifically, this means that for the \$43.6 million in agricultural output, the county economy receives an additional \$11.73 million throughout all other industries.

## *SWOT Analysis Matrix*

### *Internal Factors*

#### *Strengths*

Large, Relatively Wealthy Population  
Strong Local Demand  
Food Leakage  
Strong Food Manufacturing Employment  
Positive Economic Benefit to County's Other Sectors from Agriculture Sector  
Educational and Research Institutions and Resources

#### *Weaknesses*

Aging Farm Population  
High Land Values  
Parcel Fragmentation  
Diminishing Manufacturing and Wholesale Structure  
Declining Traditional Sectors

### *External Factors*

#### *Opportunities*

Growth in "Local" and Niche Markets  
Rise of Nontraditional Sectors  
Food Retail Firm Expansion  
Food Safety  
Biofuels

#### *Threats*

High Volatility in Commodity Markets  
Supply Chain Consolidation  
Globalization  
Farm Input Costs  
Labor Laws

## *Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Agriculture*

For the purposes of this study, Traditional Agriculture consists of production system, both crop and livestock, for which the area has an established historical, cultural, economic, and social basis. Regionally, traditional agriculture would consist of tobacco, agronomic crops (e.g. corn and soybeans), hay, vegetables, and livestock. Nontraditional agriculture includes those practices for which there is no historic, cultural, economic, or social basis. Non-traditional agriculture generally represents transitional or niche opportunities in crop and livestock production and may represent an entirely new type of production system or marketing opportunity. Wine grape production is one such opportunity emerging in Prince George's County. Included in non-traditional agricultural opportunities is *Agritourism*, which creates opportunities for visitors to farms and agricultural regions to participate in activities ranging from helping with farming, to hayrides and corn mazes, to farm tours.

## *Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA)*

CSA is a way for the food buying public to create a relationship with a farm and to receive a regular share of produce or other farm products. By making a financial commitment to a farm, people become "members" (or "shareholders," or "subscribers") of the CSA. Most CSA farmers prefer that members pay for the season up-front, at the beginning of the growing season when costs are high and income is low. Some CSAs also require that members work a small number of hours on the farm during the growing season.

A CSA season typically runs from late spring through early fall.

## *Weaknesses*

Similar to the national trends in agriculture, Prince George's County's agricultural sectors show weakness in several key areas. The aging of the farm operator population, whose average age is 59.4 in Prince George's County, has led to an ever increasing number of intergenerational farm transfers and loss of farm acreage for development and other uses. This has also contributed to farm operator consolidation and a decrease in the number of farm operators. Land values are related, because as they increase, they diminish the viability of low-margin farm operations such as grain and dairy farms, in favor of development, particularly for housing. This also leads to a greater incidence of neighbor conflicts as remaining farming operations and their interests compete with residential concerns. Lastly, as traditional agricultural sectors decline, loss of skills, workforce, investment, and infrastructure is likely to occur. With Prince George's County being among the more marginal farming counties in the region in terms of size and scope of each agricultural sector, these problems are further amplified.

## *Opportunities*

### *Retail/Consumer Trends*

Due to Prince George's County's proximity to the wealthy and well-educated Baltimore-Washington market, farmers have the opportunity to benefit from the increasing demand for locally grown agricultural products such as produce and locally produced beef and poultry. Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) has increased substantially in recent years nationally and Prince George's County is well-positioned to take advantage of this positive development.

There are currently five CSAs that are located in, or service Prince George's County. EcoFarms, Jug Bay Market Garden, and Good Fortune are privately owned and operated, while Ecosystem Farm and Claggett Farm are run by nonprofit groups (Accokeek Foundation and Chesapeake Bay Foundation, respectively). The nonprofit CSAs seek to use education as a way to promote the sustentation of farming throughout Southern Maryland, going beyond the basic monetary profits of private CSAs.

Niche markets and opportunities within segments of traditional agricultural sectors offer additional opportunities for growth. Organically produced fruits and vegetables, livestock, and poultry are examples of the markets seeing increased demand. High fuel costs, although also a threat, present an opportunity to county farmers as they are located near several major markets in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Food safety concerns, which are traditionally thought of as a threat to the agricultural industry at large, are actually an opportunity for county farmers. A more localized supply chain is less prone to the food safety concerns that impact global supply chains.

## *Alternative Energy*

Biofuel production and consumption offers yet another opportunity for agricultural producers. Biofuels produced from various feedstocks offer an opportunity for farm producers to make use of waste products or primary products and offer the opportunity to reduce fuel consumption of traditional fuels and their attendant higher costs.

## *Food Manufacturing and Retail Establishment Employment*

With the second highest number of food manufacturing firms in the region (26) and the largest payroll (\$30 million), the county's food manufacturing employment base serves as an anchor for the regional economy and agricultural sector. This offers opportunities for industry clustering and an expansion of the industry with support from firms such as Wegmans, which has a nationally recognized local buying program, as well as an expansion of food processing and support firms.

Related to this is the county's demand for retail food and restaurant outlets, especially full-service restaurants. The total dollar value of demand capacity for retail food establishments of all types in the county is \$2.6 billion. The supply of these establishments only meets a demand at the level of \$2.086 billion, leaving a surplus of \$524 million that is met by retail food establishments outside of the county. The opportunity for additional establishments and the attendant cluster of agricultural and related firms is due to in-county demand that is not currently met. It should also be noted that county residents spend 13 percent more than the national average for food consumed away from home (Source: ESRI).

## *Threats*

One of the biggest threats to agriculture is the volatility of commodity markets across world markets. These drastic swings in pricing impact short- and long-term investment patterns and business planning efforts.

Due to the factors mentioned above, well-capitalized producers and those able to achieve economies of scale are best equipped to weather the pricing fluctuations and survive. As smaller players cannot compete, greater consolidation occurs. This impacts the ability of locally based, smaller players to survive and speaks to what Prince George's County agricultural producers have been facing and their likely future. Tied into this trend of consolidation is the movement toward increased globalization of the agricultural supply chain. Sourcing of agricultural products from across the world is yet another factor necessitating the move toward direct marketing of agricultural products locally.

Another threat is the continued rapid suburbanization of the region and the potential for other areas to suddenly restrict or diminish their build-out capacities. This may have the effect of funneling development into underdeveloped areas of the county.

Finally, since agriculture is a very labor intensive industry, the issue of labor availability is an ongoing threat to any large scale farming efforts. The agricultural industry in the county and region is highly dependent on the use of foreign workers like in much of the country's agricultural sector. This threat speaks to yet another reason why specialized, small-scale production is the best course for the county's agricultural future.

## *Leakage/Surplus Factor (Supply and Demand)*

- The Leakage/Surplus Factor enables direct comparison of supply and demand in one simple measure.
- It measures the balance between the volume of supply (retail sales) generated by retail industry and the demand (retail potential) produced by households within the same industry.
- Leakage in an area represents a condition where a market's supply is less than the demand. In other words, retailers outside the market area are fulfilling the demand for retail products; therefore, demand is "leaking out" of the trade area.
- Surplus in an area represents a condition where supply exceeds the area's demand. Put another way, retailers are attracting shoppers who reside outside the trade area, so the "surplus" is in the supply of retail-related products.

# *Industry Status/Sectors*

## *Equine Industry*



Statewide, the equine industry is valued at over \$680 million with an overall economic impact of \$1.6 billion according to the American Horse Farm Council Foundation. Statewide, 206,000 acres are devoted to the industry. According to the Maryland Farm Bureau, the equine industry in the county comprises 7,420 horses valued at \$63,610,000 at 1,170 locations on 11,700 acres with 1,860 people involved, excluding hired labor.

In the State of Maryland, Prince George's County ranks fourth in both number of horses, and total value of horses, according to the last equine census. It only ranks ninth, however, in equine places, and people involved, and seventh in total equine-related acres.

Although the industry has struggled due to larger racing purses and breeding incentives from the neighboring states of Delaware, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the industry has persisted. With the recent passage of the slots referendum, the industry's fortunes are likely to improve. Larger purses and the attendant benefit at all levels of the racing and breeding industry should ensue in the years to come. The Rosecroft Raceway, whose average purse is four times smaller than its nearest harness racing competitor in Delaware, is an example of the significant disadvantage the county and state have faced in recent years. It should be noted that a key provision of the recently passed slots provision was that the Bowie Training Center in the county remain open. If state law no longer requires that the owner (Magna Entertainment) maintain the property, it will be conveyed to the state and preserved under the Open Space Program.

In addition to the benefits to the industry that are likely as a result of the referendum, the county can further support the industry by encouraging real estate developments that provide for riding trails and other recreational facilities for horse riding. Montgomery County has successfully encouraged similar efforts and has benefited in the form of increased real estate tax assessments for such real estate developments.

## *Livestock and Poultry Industry*



Livestock and poultry production represent the largest agricultural production segment in Maryland agriculture. Sales are driven by the poultry industry, which accounts for 87 percent of nondairy-related livestock and poultry sales and 69 percent of the entire livestock and poultry sector's sales. Most of this industry is based on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Prince George's County's livestock is small relative to the surrounding counties but is relatively stable. There are 121 Livestock and Poultry farms in Prince George's County as of the 2007 Ag Census, including 31 sheep farms, 7 hog farms, 46 cattle farms, 5 dairy farms, and 32 poultry farms. These 121 farms accounted for only \$1.5 million in total sales in 2007, driven mostly by \$500,000 in cattle and calf sales. Montgomery and Howard County, which too have low livestock production numbers compared to the rest of the state, still had \$7.9 and \$4.8 million worth of livestock sales in 2007, respectively.

## *Horticulture*

As of 2003, Maryland's horticultural industry had sales of nearly \$1.1 billion on more than 16,000 acres of production and sales area, including 17.7 million square feet of greenhouses.

Prince George's County's advantage in this sector is in greenhouse production under glass. As of 2002, the county has 615,000 square feet of production under glass. Montgomery County has much less production under glass, but due to large sod growing facilities, has significantly more acres of horticultural production in the open (1727 acres in Montgomery versus 12 in Prince George's). Howard County has a similarly small amount of non-glass greenhouse production, with 31 acres, and has 853,000 square feet under glass.



Growth in the industry is spread across sectors such as sod; field/container production of nursery stock; and greenhouse production of bedding plants, flowers, and vegetables. Open acreage production dominates the industry with fewer than eight acres under glass. According to those in the industry, development of greenhouse production (particularly high-intensity uses) is expected to become more prevalent and may change to include high-intensity production of both plant material and animal proteins such as fish and bivalves (e.g., clams, oysters, and/or scallops). Greenhouse-based production of energy crops such as algae, which may be used as a feedstock for biofuels, is also expected to rise in prominence in the region.

## *Produce Industry*

Fruit and vegetable production in Maryland is limited to just over \$73 million in annual sales, which makes it one of the state's smallest production sectors. However, it is one of the closest to Maryland consumers and accounts for the majority of the state's nearly \$13 million in direct market sales. This sector also offers some of the best opportunities for expansion of the county's agricultural sector as consumers are looking for more opportunities to purchase organic produce and direct-from-producers food commodities. This area also offers the best opportunities for agritourism since large-scale production capacity is not a requirement for efficient agritourism opportunities.



Like the state, Prince George's County's fruit and vegetable production sales are small at just over \$2 million and per farm sales of \$23,000 per farm. Of the \$487,000 in farm products sold direct to consumers, a large percentage is produce. Similarly, of the \$49,000 in direct organic farming sales a significant portion is for produce. It should be noted that while organic farming represents a future opportunity for the county's producers, the market is still quite insignificant in dollar terms.



Some of the further challenges to the growth in direct marketing and organics will arise in developing methods to ensure source verified (traceable) production in a manner that meets industry standards, but is affordable at the small scale of local producers. As well, health code enforcement issues in the state restrict product handling, sampling, and in some cases display, having a deleterious effect on the development of new farmers markets and roadside stands.



## *Field Crops and Forage*

The field crop and forage sector is a secondary use sector, driven largely by feed demand generated by livestock, poultry, and equine industries locally and regionally. Due to the relatively small size of these sectors in the county and region, this sector only accounts for 22 percent of harvested acreage, or 3,855 acres. Regionally and nationally, this sector has suffered extreme price volatility. The increased demand for ethanol and conversely the rising costs of fuel and fertilizer have impacted the supply-side costs for this sector.

Due to the above factors, the future of this industry is somewhat uncertain. Since the county is a marginal player at best, this will have no appreciable effect on this sector in the county or region.



## *Dairy Industry*

Maryland's dairy industry is the second largest livestock sector behind poultry, accounting for nearly \$170 million in farm income in 2002 and supported by approximately 730 farms statewide. Prince George's County's dairy production is minimal with only 144 cows on nine farms, among the lowest in the region. Prince George's County's dairy industry, like the rest of the state and region, has been in steady decline due to the pressures of elevated real estate prices, high operating costs, and the volatility of milk pricing over the last decade. In response, farms have typically gotten larger to take advantage of lower marginal costs of production or smaller, to reduce non-family labor overhead. Some farms have converted to seasonal, pasture-based dairy operations to manage production costs as well.

After decades of commoditization in the dairy products industry, emerging markets for fluid dairy products have arisen to service the needs of discrete, underserved market segments. These segments are primarily identified by demographic and psychographic characteristics such as education and income.



Key among these trends is a renewed focus on locally produced dairy products, insistence on higher quality milk products (as measured by lower recall rates), demand for recombinant bovine growth hormone (rbST)-free milk products, and a rise in ethnic demand for authentic fresh products. Within the larger context of the dairy supply chain, there are opportunities, even on a small scale, for cooperative efforts such as shared processing capabilities and various direct marketing and agritourism potential within the sector.

# Case Studies

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The case studies were selected by M-NCPPC to highlight successful agricultural economies in areas with common farm characteristics such as small average farm size and proximate access to urban markets. These case studies include Suffolk County, NY; Lancaster County, PA; the Finger Lakes region of New York; and the Catskill/Delaware Watershed in New York.

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## *Suffolk County, New York*

Suffolk County, New York, has some of the most productive agricultural land in the United States and some of the most comprehensive right-to-farm laws in the nation. The active preservation of the culture of farming has allowed farming to remain profitable in Suffolk County for well over 300 years. Colonial-era farmers grew and sold wheat, and eventually evolved into producing fruits, vegetables and potatoes, making Long Island's farms a multimillion dollar business by the middle of the 19th century. Today, while playing a smaller role in Long Island's total economic picture, Suffolk County's farms are more diversified than ever, even as they have dramatically shrunk in number as well as acreage (since 1959, Suffolk County has lost 55,000 acres or 61 percent of land in farms).

The disappearance of farmland can be seen in agriculture census and similar data. In 1982, there were 49,000 acres of farms and approximately 800 farmers in Suffolk County; a decade later, there were 35,000 acres and 587 farmers.

Still, the farms that remain are the most productive in New York State and add about \$150 million a year to the regional economy, the bulk of that from flowers and ornamental shrubs. Six Community-Supported Agriculture operations exist in Suffolk County, along with ten seasonal farmers markets. Supporting these agribusinesses are some of the most comprehensive right-to-farm laws in the nation.

Although municipal home rule does apply in Suffolk County, the county's policy is that farming and the preservation of open space provides the most benefit to the county, and is in accordance with the State of New York's policy "to conserve and protect and to encourage the improvement of agricultural lands, both for the production of food and the preservation of such lands as valued natural and ecological resources" § 8-1.

Without specific amendments, the policy of Suffolk County states that "it is expressly found that whatever nuisance may be caused to others by such uses and activities so conducted is more than offset by the benefits from farming to the neighborhood and community and to society in general by the preservation of open space, the beauty of the countryside and clean air and by the preservation and continuance of farming operation in Suffolk County" § 206-1. This ordinance and others make agricultural land use the preferred use in most areas of the county and is highly permissive of high-intensity agriculture.

By unilaterally supporting the growth of agribusinesses in Suffolk County, especially wineries and vineyards, the county has created opportunities for both agritourism and commercial agriculture. The well-known, high-quality wines bring tourists year round, when other main attractions, such as beaches, may not be open. Ancillary businesses such as restaurants and hotels benefit directly, as does the entire county, from the branding as an upscale, rural, wine and agricultural destination. By contrast, commercial agriculture is dedicated to high-intensity development uses in commercial horticulture and vegetable production.

Specifically, Suffolk has established agricultural districts throughout the county in order to facilitate this countywide right to farm within the various municipalities. Agricultural districts in the State of New York are loosely conglomerated areas within a local taxing jurisdiction consisting predominantly of viable agricultural land. Within these districts, property owners voluntarily agree to farm their lands for an eight-year period. In return, agriculture is deemed the priority land use and afforded benefits and protections to promote the continuation of farming and the preservation of agricultural lands, including reduced assessed value, exemption from special district levies based on frontage, and protection via right-to-farm laws.

Additional organizations that support agribusinesses in Suffolk County are the Long Island Farm Bureau and their Grown on Long Island branding campaign, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, which alongside its general extension roles, operates the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center. This model farm education facility is also a real

working farm, open to visitors year round. Visitors are able to see a century-old working farm that still holds a tie to the past through the historic hay barn, while showcasing present-day agriculture. Youth education programs are available for children pre-K to 12th grade and for those with special needs. Fun-filled education programs attract over 150,000 visitors annually.

The Long Island Farm Bureau maintains strong education programs alongside their lobbying efforts. The Young Farmer & Rancher Program for people 18 to 35 years of age provides leadership, education, and empowerment to the next generation of farmers so that they may continue a 300-year-old legacy on Long Island. “Ag in the Classroom” programs include a history of New York agriculture book, *Sowing the Seeds of Understanding*, which acts as a companion to the New York history textbooks; an education video teaching the economics of agriculture to high school students; an adopt-a-calf program; an agricultural video library, and the Be Aware of New York Agriculture Contest, which exposes students to agriculture and the food system.



# *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*

## *Background*

Pennsylvania has a robust agricultural industry, with nearly 60,000 farms, and \$4.3 billion dollars in sales. Nearly 70 percent of the farms in Pennsylvania make under \$25,000 per year in sales indicating that the presence of small farms supports Pennsylvania's agricultural identity. Half of Pennsylvania's farms produce livestock, and three quarters have active cropland. The Commonwealth is 5th in the nation in dairy production, and 12th in the nation in vegetable production.

## *Integration with Consumer Markets*

Pennsylvania's produce auctions play an important role in the disposition of the region's horticultural products and are estimated to account for 25 percent of the State of Pennsylvania's total horticultural sales. The auctions provide products encompassing nursery products, vegetables, fruits, and Christmas trees. Producer commitment to volume, quality, and diversity of products results in reliable buyer commitment from the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. In return, the auctions provide market access and liquidity to a producer corps that tends to be made up of very small farm. Anabaptist auction producers practice protected marketing, which preserves the rights of growers to supply unique products to the market without fear of losing market-maker status.

The auction market's primary buyers are small retail buyers like roadside stands that buy both fresh produce and value-added products from the market. This close relationship between producers and the end consumer leads to higher overall returns at the farm level.



## *Integration with Tourism*

Lancaster County and the surrounding counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania have a vibrant agricultural industry in addition to one of the most successful agritourism industries in the nation. With more than 8.3 million visitors each year to Lancaster County, this industry is second only to agriculture.

Lancaster Tourism, run by the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau, maintains a web site connecting visitors with many local tourist attractions, some agriculturally related and some not ([Padutchcountry.com](http://Padutchcountry.com)). Although the largest attractions in Lancaster County, especially Hershey Park, are not agriculturally related activities, the Lancaster Tourism web site clearly pushes the agricultural and rural character of the region, through tag lines such as "Get lost in our rolling hills and Amish farmland."

Larger tourist destinations, such as Cherry Crest Adventure Farm in Ronks, Pennsylvania, further this "agri-tainment" angle. Cherry Crest is a private family farm that boasts 750,000 annual visitors. Admission passes are purchased similarly to a theme park. Visitors spend the day in corn mazes, farm education centers, peddle cart tracks, the farm animal center, etc.

The clearest symbol for Lancaster County farms is the prevalence of the Anabaptist Plain Sects, especially the Amish. Their image as liaisons to rural agrarian life in Lancaster County provides an invaluable asset to the region. Many tourist destinations revolve around the Anabaptist community, including buggy rides, farm tours, and shops selling their Amish goods.



## *Policy Support for Agribusiness*

Pennsylvania has a long history at the state and local level of supporting agribusiness as a crucial element of its economy. The central tenants of these policies are underpinned by an explicit understanding that agriculture is an industry and farms are a business. This understanding is reflected at all levels of policy from local land use codes to state health codes and economic development policy making.

Nowhere is this support more evident than in the state's First Industries Fund. The First Industries Fund is a grant and loan program aimed at strengthening Pennsylvania's agricultural and tourism industries. The program, which consists of loans, grants, and loan guarantees, is part of PA Grows, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's initiative designed to assist agricultural producers in gaining access to the capital they need to begin, continue, or expand their businesses. It is administered by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

Agriculture and agriculture-related projects eligible under the program include production initiatives; agribusinesses (e.g., food processing); commodities wholesaling; commodities retailing (by rural and urban supermarkets in underserved areas), farmers markets; energy-related activities impacting agriculture; and best practices implementation of waste, by-products, and fertilizer treatment. The program has actively supported all elements of the value chain that support agriculture with recent notable successes in developing a cooperative marketing infrastructure such as the Butler Onion Network, a new sweet onion marketing initiative in Western Pennsylvania.

The State Land Preservation program also recognizes the need for agriculture to change and for farms to be economically self-sufficient. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation operates an easement purchase program. This program has no restrictions against greenhouses or retail sales as long as more than 50 percent of such processed or merchandised products are produced by the farm operator. Pennsylvania allows customary part-time or off-season minor or rural enterprises and activities, as long as those activities are approved by the county. Mining is also permitted.

State health policy also enhances the unique nature of agriculture and its relationship to consumers as it is one of the few states in the nation that still allows the sale of raw milk. Sales of raw milk are permitted from dairies that are certified to be tuberculosis and brucellosis free and maintain sanitary conditions. Raw milk can only be delivered in containers that were filled directly from the bulk tank in the milk house of a permitted dairy, and raw milk and raw cream shall be tested: (1) at least semimonthly for the standard plate count and coliform group and, (2) monthly for somatic cell count and growth inhibitor. Implicit in this law is that raw dairy products can be purchased and consumed safely within a local food system. Also implied by this rule is that farmers have the right to control their own marketing systems and the full benefit of the resulting income derived.

## *Summary*

Pennsylvania agriculture is successful for many reasons including its proximate access to large East Coast markets, strong industry clusters, and a policy culture that supports farming activities. What differentiates Pennsylvania from its neighbors, and contributes to the success of its agricultural industries, is a long standing commitment to supporting production agriculture at all levels of government and industry. Farmers and communities participate in the process of integrating agriculture in all policy discussions on a regular basis, which ensures that agriculture has a future.

# *Finger Lakes Wine Region of New York*

## *Background*

New York State has a history of grape and wine production that dates back to the 17th century. New York's unique climate and soil characteristics allow for a wide variety of grape and wine production. The Finger Lakes region in Western New York is especially suited for growing high yield, hybrids and Alsatian and German grape varietals. New York is the third largest wine producing state in the U.S., behind California and Washington. It has 212 wineries and produces \$6 billion in economic impact for the state. The Finger Lakes have 67 wineries and 315 farms growing grapes. Constellation Brands, the largest wine producer and marketing company in the world, is based in the Finger Lakes, as are some of its largest wine brands held under the Centerra Wine Company, which is based in Canandaigua, in the heart of the Finger Lakes region.

There are 288,695 residents of the Finger Lakes. Average household income is \$50,944, relatively average when compared to the State of New York and to the nation. Per capita income is \$25,603, just above the national average. Forty-one percent have college degrees.

The Finger Lakes region is also a key element of New York's local food movement. This region is the home to the Wegmans supermarket chain, which operates 71 stores in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia. The chain has long had a policy of support for local food sources and currently has more than 800 local suppliers. It has recently begun operations on a 50-acre experimental organic farm in Canandaigua, from which it sources heirloom tomatoes, potatoes, and green beans. It will also serve as an educational center for Wegmans employees and suppliers, as well as children, to learn about the source of "real food." The company hopes to expand the farm to incorporate honey production, tree fruit, and asparagus.

Cornell University operates an Agriculture Experiment Station and an Agricultural and Food Technology Park in Geneva, New York. The Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, is one of the premier horticulture research and extension institutes in the world. The Experiment Station is the largest wine grape research center east of California and an integral part of the industry's success.

## *New York Wine and Grape Foundation*

The centerpiece of agricultural and food industry development in the region is the New York Wine and Grape Foundation (NYWGF). The NYWGF runs the New York Wine and Food Education Center, the premier food and wine showcase in the northeast. The NYWGF is a nonprofit organization that focuses on the promotion of the New York wine industry and conducts research programs to support the New York wine and grape industry. The organization was created by the New York State legislature in 1985. The organization's overall strategic goal is to have the New York grape and wine industry recognized as a world leader in quality and social responsibility.



## Funding, Programs and Initiatives:

The NYWGF receives funding from both public (state and federal grants) and private sources. For the past three years, the foundation has received funding of \$3 million from these sources for its promotion and research activities. Promotion activities are focused on: (1) extensive public relations and marketing; (2) winery tourism promotion; and (3) culinary and hospitality industry educational support. Research activities are focused in three areas: grape growing, winemaking, and wine and health. In a typical year, grape growing represents the majority (60 percent) of research spending. Funding decisions are made by the Board of Directors in conjunction with academic and industry-related organizations that provide review support to the foundation.

The foundation does not conduct any direct lobbying activities due to constraints of its original state mandate and the conditions of its federal and state grants. However, it does work closely with advocacy organizations such as the Farm Bureau.

Finger Lakes Wine Region	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
Cash receipts from marketings (\$000)	78,405	120,592	193,312	167,512	202,402	263,026	260,200	293,845
Cash receipts: livestock and products	48,429	72,381	117,053	109,319	133,621	184,490	176,343	180,167
Cash receipts: crops	29,976	48,211	76,259	58,193	68,781	78,536	83,857	113,678
Other income	4,876	4,748	7,761	18,366	13,603	11,597	22,301	21,707
Government payments	2,788	564	919	11,469	6,167	4,806	12,060	10,844
Imputed and miscellaneous income received 1/	2,088	4,184	6,842	6,897	7,436	6,791	10,241	10,863
Total production expenses	64,059	110,564	189,829	163,083	192,892	239,499	263,686	275,525
Feed purchased	10,262	17,661	23,566	18,589	23,689	25,267	25,251	25,982
Livestock purchased	4,200	6,005	8,948	5,267	9,968	19,750	24,416	28,153
Seed purchased	1,691	3,701	5,602	4,760	7,329	9,975	11,545	12,613
Fertilizer and lime (incl. ag. chemicals 1978-fwd.)	5,623	10,836	19,024	14,786	17,500	18,990	20,382	21,790
Petroleum products purchased	2,488	5,772	11,773	7,210	7,889	9,140	9,322	13,999
Hired farm labor expenses 2/	9,399	16,061	20,315	19,860	27,595	35,895	39,390	35,382
All other production expenses 3/	30,396	50,528	100,601	92,611	98,922	120,482	133,380	137,606
Value of inventory change	189	-1,702	6,069	-1,773	-2,662	3,010	1,948	2,841
Value of inventory change: livestock	-203	-1,063	4,801	-2,439	50	1,334	443	2,450
Value of inventory change: crops	474	-606	1,268	650	-2,240	-352	2,732	95
Value of inventory change: materials and supplies	0	0	0	0	-469	2,038	-1,283	227
Total cash receipts and other income	83,281	125,340	201,073	185,878	216,005	274,623	282,501	315,552
less: Total production expenses	64,059	110,564	189,829	163,083	192,892	239,499	263,686	275,525
Realized net income	19,222	14,776	11,244	22,795	23,113	35,124	18,815	40,027
plus: Value of inventory change	189	-1,702	6,069	-1,773	-2,662	3,010	1,948	2,841
Total net income including corporate farms	19,411	13,074	17,313	21,022	20,451	38,134	20,763	42,868
less: Net income of corporate farms	382	569	852	1,008	1,385	7,976	3,164	12,924
plus: Statistical adjustment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total net farm proprietors' income	19,029	12,505	16,461	20,014	19,066	30,158	17,599	29,944
plus: Farm wages and perquisites	7,557	13,423	17,574	15,212	19,328	24,930	28,528	27,250
plus: Farm supplements to wages and salaries	839	1,960	2,308	2,015	3,823	4,906	6,388	4,975
Total farm labor and proprietors' income	27,425	27,888	36,343	37,241	42,217	59,994	52,515	62,169

1. Consists of the value of home consumption and other farm related income components, such as machine hire and custom work income and income from forest

2. Consists of hired workers' cash pay and perquisites, employers' contributions for social security and medicare, and payments for contract labor, machine hire, and

3. Consists of repair and operation of machinery; depreciation, interest, rent and taxes; and other miscellaneous expenses including agricultural chemicals (1969-77).

## Strategic Planning Activities:

The foundation's overall strategic goal is to have New York recognized as the world leader in wine and grape quality and productivity. The foundation also has a comprehensive set of specific strategic goals. They are: (1) to secure \$2 million in funding on an annual basis; (2) to establish a lobbying function; (3) to identify, develop, and communicate the responsible production, marketing, and consumption of wine and food products; (4) to develop a communication strategy for food and wine; (5) to review existing promotion programs; (6) to establish a quality control program that the foundation would support and promote; (7) to form strategic alliances; (8) to maintain and improve the relationships with Cornell and other universities.

# Catskill/Delaware Watershed

## Background

The nine million residents of New York City rely on a series of reservoirs in upstate New York as the source of their drinking water. New York City owns less than 10 percent of this watershed, which covers approximately 2,000 square miles. The Catskill/Delaware watershed has a year-round population of around 77,000, as well as a significant number of summer residents. Dairy farms comprise a majority of the 350 farms there.

For many decades, relations between New York City and the watershed communities were marked by controversy and conflict, focused on the City's past acquisitions of reservoir lands and the use of regulatory and management authority in the watershed. In 1989, the Environmental



Protection Agency (EPA) required filtration of all surface water supplies to protect against contamination of the drinking water. In 1993, the EPA issued New York City a waiver of the filtration requirement on the condition that the City would take numerous steps to maintain and protect the watershed's water quality. The EPA then urged the New York State to convene a group representing New York City, the State and watershed communities to negotiate an effective and equitable watershed program to enable the city to meet the waiver conditions, protect the city's water supply and avoid cost of a filtration plant, and address the concerns and goals of residents in the upstate counties.

The negotiations produced a landmark agreement which successfully resolved long-standing controversies and set forth responsibilities and benefits for all the major parties. The Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) was created out of this process in 1993.

Most WAC programs only apply to the watershed area; however a far larger Catskill/Delaware region is affected by land use and agricultural practices within the watershed. This region includes the Counties of Ulster, Sullivan, Delaware, and Greene, and stretches from the Hudson River to the Delaware River, containing all of the Catskill Park and most of the Catskill Mountain Range. This four county region contains over 365,000 people and has more than \$170 million in annual farm income, according the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The region is demographically disparate due in a large part to the isolation caused by the mountainous terrain. Much of the region is comprised of rural poor. In the lower lying areas closer to the Hudson River and New York City, the economy is more diverse and affluent, especially due to wealthy weekend residents. These residents are often not counted in demographic indexes, although in some towns, they may represent a significant percentage of the summertime population and economic activity. As a whole, the region has a per capita income of \$25,360 and a median household income of \$49,709. Twenty three percent of the households make under \$25,000 per year, and 30 percent of adults twenty-five and older have a college degree. Of significant interest for the region is the fact that only 54 percent of housing units are owner occupied and 25 percent are considered vacant (which includes temporarily occupied), further showing the influence of summer tourists on the region.

As of the last Census of Agriculture in 2002, there were 2,043 farms and nearly 400,000 acres in farmland in the four county region. Eighty-seven percent of the farms produce crops, although the majority of these farms grow hay and silage for the 763 dairy and beef farms in the counties. Sixty-seven percent of sales were of livestock, accounting for \$92 million in annual sales.

## WAC Organizational Mandate

The WAC consists of a 16-member Council representing farm and forestry landowners in the New York City watershed counties of New York State, which oversees the programs and implementation by field and headquarter staff.

## Funding, Programs and Initiatives

The WAC is funded predominantly by New York City's Department of Environmental Protection. In 2007, the WAC was funded at the level of \$12.9 million. Additional funding of \$1.2 million was provided by federal and private grants. The WAC's programs are focused on four areas: Clean Water, Land Stewardship, Economic Initiatives and Education Programs. WAC's programs which are of greatest interest to this case study are the WAC's land preservation programs, in particular the conservation easements, the Farm economic development programs, as well as the extensive education and research programs.

Catskill/ Delaware Watershed	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
Cash receipts from marketings (\$000)	84,435	121,651	184,972	151,310	149,901	142,414	147,578	170,021
Cash receipts: livestock and products	67,487	95,910	144,881	115,796	99,076	92,418	95,229	104,999
Cash receipts: crops	16,948	25,741	40,091	35,514	50,825	49,996	52,349	65,022
Other income	1,891	2,970	4,543	7,161	4,460	5,554	11,883	10,066
Government payments	317	252	522	2,540	1,000	1,687	5,723	3,545
Imputed and miscellaneous income received 1/	1,530	2,689	4,021	4,621	3,460	3,867	6,160	6,521
Total production expenses	73,065	113,064	179,010	135,543	133,339	130,168	138,042	151,632
Feed purchased	24,110	38,842	52,227	33,150	27,186	20,717	20,476	23,413
Livestock purchased	6,805	6,865	10,759	5,812	5,703	6,679	10,802	14,646
Seed purchased	632	1,207	1,771	1,330	1,951	2,135	2,279	2,480
Fertilizer and lime (incl. ag. chemicals 1978-fwd.)	2,530	4,136	7,018	5,723	7,080	5,825	5,414	5,715
Petroleum products purchased	1,769	4,033	8,921	4,456	4,508	4,589	4,407	6,707
Hired farm labor expenses 2/	9,753	13,525	17,415	17,082	20,065	21,542	20,961	20,144
All other production expenses 3/	27,466	44,456	80,899	67,990	66,846	68,681	73,703	78,527
Value of inventory change	-158	-662	2,173	-2,856	-16	1,366	1,030	1,822
Value of inventory change: livestock	-336	-1,341	5,081	-3,264	203	617	156	1,105
Value of inventory change: crops	216	679	-2,908	391	134	-537	1,563	559
Value of inventory change: materials and supplies	0	0	0	0	-398	1,184	-687	63
Total cash receipts and other income	86,326	124,621	189,515	158,471	154,361	147,968	159,461	180,087
less: Total production expenses	73,065	113,064	179,010	135,543	133,339	130,168	138,042	151,632
Realized net income	13,261	11,557	10,505	22,928	21,022	17,800	21,419	28,455
plus: Value of inventory change	-158	-662	2,173	-2,856	-16	1,366	1,030	1,822
Total net income including corporate farms	13,103	10,895	12,678	20,072	21,006	19,166	22,449	30,277
less: Net income of corporate farms	491	552	855	1,202	3,362	6,115	5,586	11,340
plus: Statistical adjustment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total net farm proprietors' income	12,612	10,343	11,823	18,870	17,644	13,051	16,863	18,937
plus: Farm wages and perquisites	8,819	12,641	15,284	13,942	16,634	15,715	16,594	15,850
plus: Farm supplements to wages and salaries	1,003	1,850	1,985	1,853	3,419	3,282	3,985	3,149
Total farm labor and proprietors' income	22,434	24,834	29,092	34,665	37,697	32,048	37,442	37,936

1. Consists of the value of home consumption and other farm related income components, such as machine hire and custom work income and income from forest products

2. Consists of hired workers' cash pay and perquisites, employers' contributions for social security and medicare, and payments for contract labor, machine hire, and custom

3. Consists of repair and operation of machinery; depreciation, interest, rent and taxes; and other miscellaneous expenses including agricultural chemicals (1969-77).

Farm support initiatives include a buy local Pure Catskills program, where for a \$25 annual membership fee, farms have access to Point-of-purchase display items and promotional giveaways, a free listing on the [purecatskills.com](http://purecatskills.com) website, a free listing in printed the Guide, with over 30,000 copies distributed throughout the Catskill region, scholarships to educational seminars and workshops, producer groups and networking opportunities with like-minded farmers, and access to the Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAE) awards, an annual grants programs supplying \$50,000 to member-community collaborations hosting local events highlighting clean water, good food, agriculture and the watershed region's rural heritage.

The Farm Beautification Program facilitates Agri-tourism and increased farm sales by providing funds to maintain and preserve the aesthetics of Dairy Farms, attracting visitors to view implementation of whole farm plans for water quality protection. Other Agri-tourism activities include, old-fashioned railroad rides, on-farm visits to meet farmers and their animals firsthand, maple sugar tour days, and the wholesale and direct marketing of livestock, vegetables, wool, meat and eggs. These efforts seek to connect consumers, many of whom are served by the New York City water supply, with the people and places at the source who are conserving the land that produces and protects their food and water. Beautification projects include attractive new farms signs, decorative wooden fences, landscaping of the farmstead, and most importantly, the restoration of historic barns and outbuildings to serve as retail space on the farm.

Farm to Market programs provide educational and marketing resources to farmers in the Catskill region. The Market Development Initiative helps farmers with packaging and product development financing, marketing, distribution, and trade show promotions, and apply to farms in a much larger, seven county region. Workshops in direct marketing, adding value to products and business planning, along with tours to innovative farms, are some examples of the Initiative's hands-on learning opportunities for farmers.

# *Recommendations*

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The following recommendations are offered to improve the integration of Prince George's County agriculture into the greater Washington marketplace while creating a more favorable service and support environment. Many of the recommendations highlight the need to support small and transitional farms whose survival depends on high-intensity, urban fringe production.

The 20 recommendations incorporated in this document fall within four broad categories or focus areas. The focus areas are largely independent with some level of interactivity. The focus areas are briefly described below:

- 1. Regulation and Policy**—Activities in this focus area are dedicated to land use and environmental policy support needs that are intended to bring local conditions in line with regional counties. By example, this may include modifying or extending watershed and agricultural land preservation programming to support both agricultural business opportunities and resource protection activities as is done in the Catskill region of New York to protect New York City's watershed.
- 2. Market Development**—These recommendations target improvements in access to local and regional markets at both the wholesale and retail levels. Market development activities look to expand the capability of individual farms to integrate retailing and agritourism activities while developing a positive brand image for Prince George's agricultural products much as the Finger Lakes region has done for the producers in Western New York.
- 3. Business Development**—This focus area concentrates on improving the capability of individual operations to effectuate strategic and operational changes on the farm. Business development support includes counseling, concept development, land access, and financing support with the intent to support growth and transition in the agricultural economy. Proactive business development support, such as Lancaster County offers to agritourism venues, will facilitate new entrants to farming in Prince George's County.
- 4. Economic Development**—This focus area distinguishes itself from business development in that it focuses on policy and infrastructure development to support industry sector growth rather than independent enterprise development. In this regard, economic development projects generally have the largest fiscal participation from government and non-governmental organizations. Similarly, active policy support of development initiatives is often required.

Successful implementation of these recommendations will involve a multidisciplinary effort supported by private industry and agricultural operations as well as state and local agencies. The partnerships necessary will be driven by the specific implementation needs of each recommendation. Funding support for each respective recommendation must also be built independently on the merits of the recommendation and evidenced needs.

Recommendations are presented and described on the following pages.

# *Focus Area 1: Regulations And Policy*

*The agricultural industry faces a complicated regulatory environment at all levels of industry activity. In many cases this regulatory environment is particular to agriculture, as is the case with labor law, but in others, the regulations are often complicated and even convoluted based on the broad nature of the regulations. Such cases would include zoning, where agricultural and residential land use controls are often mixed and contradictory, or health and transportation, where regulations in nearby states can affect the competitiveness of local farm operations.*

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## *Recommendation 1*

### *Support Farm Friendly Land Use Policies and Programs*

Traditionally, land use policy has treated agriculture as a holding pattern for residential development. This frequently encourages the commingling of residences with this important economic use. Often the residential uses prove to be incompatible and the resulting change in regulations is frequently counter to the economic interests of agriculture. In fact, the long-term survival of agriculture may hinge on managing this interrelationship as growth pressure mounts in Prince George's County.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Strengthen right-to-farm protections with the creation of a mediation board to review, as a requirement, agricultural nuisance claims to include representatives from the Maryland Cooperative Extension, the farm community, community at large, planning officials, and others as necessary.
- Improve planning efforts to avoid unintended cross-jurisdictional effects such as development spillover, orphaned water and sewer improvements, etc.
- Pursue coordination in the development of regionally significant infrastructure improvements and review compatibility of current infrastructure plans in relation to their potential impact on the agricultural industry.
- Improve land preservation programming to include:
  - Countywide priority preservation area to meet state land preservation program certification requirements.
  - Dedicated funding of a county purchase of development rights program to maintain the balance of protected farmland within core production areas.
  - A "critical farm" program modeled after Carroll County Maryland.
- Expand the allowed agricultural uses throughout the Rural Tier to include agritourism, retailing, and processing uses.
- Develop a performance-based definition of agriculture to facilitate agricultural marketing and production activities, including high-intensity agriculture, based on models such as those in Suffolk County, NY, and Baltimore County, MD.
  - Support cooperative marketing and value-added activities.
  - Support high-intensity agricultural production activities such as greenhouse operations.
- Conduct landowner outreach as a means to enhance the statewide "Farm Link" program to reflect regionally significant trends such as the entry of nontraditional populations into farming.
- Require buffers and other site design measures as strategies for reducing farmer/nonfarm neighbor conflicts.
- Conduct regularly scheduled workshops with elected officials and the public to communicate changing market and regulatory conditions.

- Prepare an annual “state of agriculture” report.
- Develop a response system to manage farmer interests in proposed regulatory changes.
- Develop a virtual agricultural policy book to keep farmers informed of land-use related development requirements.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Soil Conservation District, Farm Bureau, Maryland Cooperative Extension, and county staff.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation will require a limited administrative budget and staff allocation.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a high-priority issue.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** No additional funding resources are required.

## *Recommendation 2*

### *Support State Level Changes to Health Policy and Programs*

As farmers become more highly integrated in the food supply chain, they must adapt and comply with new state health standards regarding processing and marketing. Many of these standards apply across the board to retailers and distributors in a one-size-fits-all manner. However, these same standards are not uniformly applied in neighboring states, causing a competitive imbalance between Prince George’s County producers and those in Virginia and Pennsylvania. A balancing of standards, therefore, is critical to the long-term success of agriculture.



#### *ACTIONS*

- Enhance on-farm processing capacity by offering required food safety and food handling courses in Prince George’s County pursuant to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene requirements.
- Advocate for raising the sales limit for on-farm processed goods (COMAR 10.15.04.19) to \$80,000 to encourage scale appropriate business growth.
- Develop a farmers market exemption as it applies to the sampling of whole fruits and vegetables under COMAR 10.15.03.14.
- Encourage the development of voluntary, scale-appropriate traceability standards to foster greater consumer confidence (See Focus Area 4).
- Expand the existing “raw milk” cheese processing pilot program, currently underway in Talbot County, to include producers in Prince George’s County.
- Create a local food purchasing preference standard for public institutions based on the Woodbury County, Iowa, model.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Farm Bureau, others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation will require a limited administrative budget and staff allocation.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a top priority issue and should be implemented within 12-18 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** No additional funding resources are required.

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## *Recommendation 3*

### *Support State- and County-Level Changes to Transportation Policy and Programs*

As with health and land use regulations, farmers and agribusinesses in Prince George's County face myriad, and sometimes conflicting, transportation policies and regulations. This situation is complicated by inconsistencies in cross (state) border regulations relating to signage and truck licensing, which are believed to have significant competitive effects on discrete agricultural industry sectors.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Create a committee of farmers, agribusinesses, loggers, and community members to review the impact of local and interstate transportation regulations, such as:
  - Local—Impact of road design/road improvements on agricultural vehicle movements.
  - Interstate—Impact of farm tag, farm truck inspection, off-road diesel allowances, and overweight limits on the competitiveness of Prince George's County farmers, forest product operators, and agribusinesses.
- Support the statewide expansion of overweight allowances for agricultural logging trucks to match neighboring states.
- Develop an agricultural and forestry-related transportation policy handbook encompassing local, state, and federal policies for trucking, signage, access and right-of-way use, weight standards by highway class, and other key issues. A policy manual should identify regulatory agencies with the proper authority in each topic area and jurisdiction.
- Develop a web-based system to simplify the road signage application process in conjunction with state and local highway officials.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Farm Bureau, industry associations, others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation will require a limited administrative budget and staff allocation. A policy manual will require a research and publication budget of \$6,000 to \$12,000.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a moderate priority issue and should be implemented within 24 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Industry associations and state agencies should be approached to underwrite the development of the policy manual.

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## *Recommendation 4*

### *Support State-Level Changes to Tax Policy*

Among the up-and-coming agricultural sectors in Prince George's County are the equine and winery sectors. Growth in these sectors can be significantly affected by tax policy. In addition, the effectiveness of agricultural land preservation programs is influenced by tax policies such as property and inheritance taxes.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Advocate for the expansion of the Class 4 winery license to allow for a broader base of distilled products using Maryland agricultural products. Allow on-site sales.
- Advocate for proper allocation of slots revenue to equine breeder programs. Seek expansion of uses to a broader base of equine breeders based on the Kentucky Breeder Incentive Program.
- Explore elimination of property taxes on agricultural infrastructure on eased properties. Include a tax credit for full value of installed best management practices.
- Advocate for the adoption of a statewide forest land tax exemption based on the Delaware Commercial Forest Plantation Act.
  - Managed forests of at least ten acres.
  - Temporary (30-year) easement.
- Support intergenerational farmland transfer by advocating for higher estate tax exemptions on agricultural properties to offset effects of high regional agricultural land values.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Soil Conservation District, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Farm Bureau, Maryland Horse Council, Maryland Wineries Association, and others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation will require a limited administrative budget and staff allocation.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a moderate-priority issue and should be implemented within the first 24 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** No additional funding resources are required.

## *Focus Area 2: Market Development*

*These solutions are based on currently defined needs to improve farmer access to the broader region's vast consumer markets. Within this focus area the intent is to shorten the supply chain, thereby generating a higher return for local producers. Recommendations seek to open new market opportunities in cuisine and agriculturally based tourism and similar niche markets.*

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### *Recommendation 1*

#### *Improve Regional Market Access at Wholesale and Retail Levels*

Prince George's County sits at the center of one of the largest consolidated food markets in the United States, yet farmers indicate that accessing markets is a challenge at all levels of the food system. Improving market access is therefore critical to agricultural development efforts.

##### *ACTIONS*

- Develop a brand image that can be leveraged by local producers to enhance the market presence of both large and small farms such as Suffolk County's "Grown on Long Island" program.
  - Ensure the program is adaptable across industry sectors.
  - Ensure the program is nonduplicative of other initiatives such as "So. Maryland, So Good."
  - Design a program with retailers and farmers to ensure viability in both wholesale and retail outlets.
- Create a virtual market interface to facilitate brand development.
  - Provide a consumer interface to link farmers with direct market/agritourism consumers, such as Fresh Fork from Cleveland, OH. Growers input the data into the Fresh Fork system, where consumers place orders. Fresh Fork takes delivery from farmers, and consumers pick up the produce at the Fresh Fork facility.
  - Create an internet-based advertising program leveraging low-cost consumer outreach methods such as Google ads.
  - Support individual farm efforts to develop a web presence through packaged, brand-oriented services.
- Expand the retail farmers market system with natural partnerships such as retail mall developers, mass merchandisers, and municipalities.
- Improve food marketing information available to farmers and retailers.
  - Link local farms to the D.C. area's "FRESHFARM Markets" virtual marketing program.
  - Support winter marketing meetings.
  - Enhance the integration of farmers and retailers in the "So. Maryland, So Good" programming.
- Develop consumer literature to improve sales of local agricultural products.
  - Produce a brochure listing on-farm retail opportunities and supporting farmers markets and restaurants selling local food products.
  - Produce a local cookbook in collaboration with art guilds and tourism.
- Develop a farm tour to introduce residents to local farms with on-farm retailing and entertainment opportunities.
  - Create a formal referral program through the tourism office.

- Produce a consumer-oriented farm retail and agricultural entertainment map.
- Examine opportunities to leverage recreational activities, such as geocaching, as a means to increase on farm retail traffic. (Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunt using GPS devices to locate hidden caches.) Howard County's Department of Tourism uses information on its website to link tourists to geocaching sites in rural parts of the county, bringing tourists into agricultural areas for recreational activities.
- Assess the accessibility of processing facilities to agricultural producers.



**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, Farm Bureau, Maryland Cooperative Extension, agricultural industry groups, and others as necessary.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation will require significant staff allocation.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a top priority issue that should be implemented immediately.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** County funding should be used to leverage grant opportunities through USDA, foundations, and Economic Development Administration (EDA).

## *Recommendation 2*

### *Support Public/Private Development of an Agritourism, Retail, and Culinary Arts Center.*

Prince George's County offers tremendous opportunity for retail and tourism market development given the rapid changes in demographic characteristics (e.g., high average household income and high educational attainment) of both the county and the region. In addition, the nearly \$260 million retail leakage in the food sector indicates the potential to create a profitable operating business under the proper conditions. The New York Wine and Food Education Center provides a model for successful development.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Identify private sector partners.
- Conduct a retail opportunity study, to include:
  - Feasibility analysis
  - Leakage surplus analysis (see page 11)
  - Site location analysis
  - Product and services list development
  - Design analysis
  - Financial analysis
- Identify grant support resources.
  - Market development

- Farmer support/supply
- Assist development of farmer marketing relationship to assure profit margins at all levels of the local marketing system.
- Support value-added and wholesale marketing opportunities.
- Integrate with existing marketing activities in Southern Maryland.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), and a private developer/entrepreneur.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Depending on the interests of the entrepreneur, assistance through various federal, state, and local programs may be required to facilitate start-up operations. Grant support will be required for examination of market opportunity analysis.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a top priority issue that should be implemented immediately.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Numerous grant programs are available to leverage the proposed project such as EDA, HUD, USDA-Rural Development, and MARBIDCO.

## *Recommendation 3*

### *Create Retailer-Supported Marketing System*

With the rapid expansion of local food programs at the retail and institutional level, Prince George's County producers would be well-served by the creation of a centrally managed, retailer-driven marketing system. Successful models of such systems can be found throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. One example is the local food brokerage system run by Clyde's Restaurants in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, which works with a group of 20 farmers in Maryland and Virginia to develop an electronic data interchange for chefs and farmers. This takes the distribution burden away from farmers and allows chefs to focus their menus around local foods. Additionally, the nonprofit Maryland Hospital Association has been working with its members to integrate local food into their food distribution systems. Finally, the Baltimore City School System, through their new executive chef, has set up a local foods menu and distribution system. Students create the menu and, therefore, learn about agriculture and nutrition while sourcing local foods. Recent expansion of the Wegmans grocery chain into the market area opens additional opportunities to piggyback development with a well-known and well-established supporter of local food projects.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Identify a core group of local restaurants and retailers with an expressed interest in providing year-round local products to customers.
  - Develop a list of key target products
  - Create a marketing information system, such as:
    - ~ Virtual marketplace
    - ~ Directory of participants
  - Identify/assess delivery standards and methods
- Recruit farmer participants and integrate with marketing information system.
- Develop a consumer marketing and outreach program, to include:
  - Brochures

- Window stickers
- Web site
- Public relations packaging
- Advertising
- Conduct an annual fundraising event to support program promotion and financing needs.
- Encourage use of cost plus marketing relationships to assure profit margins at all levels of the local marketing system.

**Implementation Partnerships:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Restaurant Association of Maryland, Chamber of Commerce, Maryland Cooperative Extension, and others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Grant support of approximately \$10,000 will be required for program establishment, after which user fees and fundraising events should be utilized to ensure operational continuity.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a high-priority issue that should be implemented within the first 12 to 18 months of program implementation.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Numerous grant programs are available to leverage the proposed project such as philanthropic foundations, federal/state marketing improvement grants, USDA-Rural Development, and MARBIDCO.

## *Recommendation 4*

### *Improve Long-Term Functionality of Cheltenham Farmers Market*

The Cheltenham Farmers Market functions as an important market outlet for Southern Maryland produce, but is considered by many local farmers to be a market of last resort. Improved functionality of the market to match the operational characteristics of Southeastern Pennsylvania's markets may help to expand the opportunity for produce, hay, and horticultural product growers by creating greater market liquidity. The market is currently owned by the Department of Agriculture and managed by a volunteer board without a long- term development plan.



#### *ACTIONS*

- Open a dialogue with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the volunteer board to encourage the development of a long term strategy for Cheltenham.
  - Identify key audiences/stakeholder groups that impact agriculture.
  - Assess infrastructure needs to include storage and processing requirements.
  - Profile current and potential buyers.
  - Examine product mix and seasonality.
- Tour successful auction models such as the Buffalo Valley and Leola Markets in Pennsylvania.
- Identify planning requirements and responsibilities.
- Collaboratively develop a scope of work with the Department of Agriculture and the volunteer board.
- Encourage agribusiness to participate in cooperative advertising and marketing campaigns.

**Implementation Partnerships:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Cheltenham Farmers Market Board, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, industry associations, Maryland Cooperative Extension, and others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Significant funding and staff commitment will be required. Based on the experience of communities such as Lancaster County, a budget of \$50,000 to \$100,000 would be required to initiate a new program.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a moderate priority issue that should be implemented in the first 18 to 36 months of program implementation.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Few grant resources are available to support such an effort; therefore, county funding is expected to be the primary financing method.

## *Recommendation 5*

### *Leverage the Southern Maryland Trails Tourism Brand*

The Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission and select Southern Maryland tourism offices have cooperated to develop a well-recognized tourism brand built around historic, agricultural, and cultural trails. Given the county's proximity to major markets, it should serve as the entry point to the trail system and leverage the asset of proximity for the benefit of agriculture.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Cooperate with government and industry partners to develop a tourism brand.
  - Identify key audiences/stakeholder groups that impact agriculture.
  - Develop important message statements to deliver to the above audiences.
  - Produce collateral material and programming to outreach to various audiences, such as:
    - ~ Print material
    - ~ Media kit
    - ~ Television and radio programming
    - ~ Web site
    - ~ Road signage
    - ~ Special events
  - Update marketing efforts on a regular basis.
- Package and, where necessary, support development of tourism assets, such as:
  - Equine trails
  - Beer/winery trails
  - Agricultural heritage areas



- Fairs and seasonal tours
- Historic trails
- Wildlife and environmental areas
- Direct market and on-farm tourism opportunities (e.g., corn mazes)
- Ensure that regulations are in place to support agritourism development to include:
  - Zoning
  - Road signage
  - Health
- Encourage agribusinesses to participate in cooperative advertising and marketing campaigns.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission, Office of Tourism, Maryland Cooperative Extension, and others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Significant funding and staff commitment may be required to expand the regional tourism brand. Based on the experience of communities such as Lancaster County, the Catskills, New York's Finger Lakes region, and Suffolk County, New York, a budget of \$50,000 to \$100,000 would be required to expand program options.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a high-priority issue that should be implemented in the first 18 months of program implementation.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Grant resources may be available through sources such as MARBIDCO, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, and Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission, but must be matched by county funding.

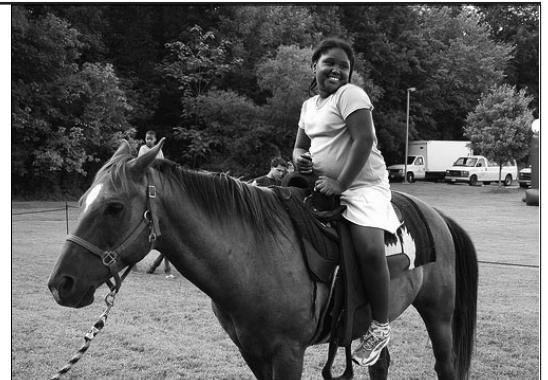
## *Recommendation 6*

### *Create an Outreach and Public Relations Program*

An informed citizenry that understands and accepts the industrial nature of agriculture will make better neighbors and better consumers.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Develop a farmer-based committee to coordinate outreach and serve as a first line of response in neighbor/industrial conflict.
  - Identify key audiences/stakeholder groups that impact agriculture.
  - Develop important message statements to deliver to targetted audiences.
  - Produce collateral material and programming to outreach to various audiences such as:
    - ~ Print material
    - ~ Media kit
    - ~ Television and radio programming
    - ~ Web site



- ~ Special events
- Hold quarterly meetings with editorial boards of local papers.
- Create an agricultural speakers' bureau to carry the "message" to important community and civic groups through periodic, public speaking engagements.
- Sponsor "Farm-City" tours and dinners.
- Work with the public school system and youth programs such as 4-H and youth equine activities to integrate the message of agriculture within the primary school system and youth training events.
- Enhance the public relations network and partnerships with other agencies that have an active public outreach program such as the Farm Bureau.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Action items under this recommendation require significant interagency cooperation with a range of potential task leaders. It is expected that overall leadership will be provided by the new Agricultural Marketing Specialist with support from the Farm Bureau, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Cooperative Extension, agricultural industry associations, and other agencies.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Much of the workload encompassed within this recommendation will require dedicated staff time with a limited annual program budget of \$5,000 to facilitate specific task/program development. Specific project budgets will vary annually and may qualify for grant funding.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a high-priority issue that should initiate within 12 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** County funding should be allocated to cover basic program costs. Additional funding support should be sought from private sector sources such as Farm Credit, industry associations, Farm Bureau, and foundations. Grant funding for specific programs may be available, but program priorities for many funding agencies changes from year to year.

# *Focus Area 3: Business Development*

*The strength of Prince George's County agriculture is the strength of individual farm operations rather than the strength of industrial sectors. Because of this, agribusiness development support activities are key to future success, particularly as the region continues its transition from a tobacco production base. Many elements of a business development strategy are already in play in the region through organizations like the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, and the Small Business Development Center, but need to be adapted for agricultural operations.*

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## *Recommendation 1*

### *Create a Small Farm Research and Training Board*

Agricultural operations in Prince George's County (and indeed all of Southern Maryland) are predominately small farms that have found a means to survive in the urban and suburban environments of Prince George's County. In order to continue to grow and thrive in such an environment, it would be beneficial for these farms to have resources dedicated to their unique needs for support, training, and research, much as Suffolk County has managed through the Cornell Cooperative Extension Research Center. Currently no such organization exists in Central or Southern Maryland that is dedicated to the needs of small farm industry sectors.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Form an exploratory committee made up of a representative base of farmers, educators, landowners, and researchers to include:
  - Prince George's farmers from all industry sectors
  - Organic industry representatives
  - Equine operations
  - Wineries
  - University of Maryland, College of Agriculture
  - Maryland Cooperative Extension
  - Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission
  - Prince George's County Community College
  - Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
- Develop a mission statement and program of work centered on local and regional issues to include:
  - Establishing and maintaining relationships with local and regional research and development centers, both private and public.
  - Developing relationships with extraterritorial organizations such the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute, the Penn State's Small Farm Program, and the Rodale Institute for organic agriculture.
  - Creating long-term strategies for linking the area's basic research infrastructure at federal labs to agricultural cluster development (See Recommendation 5).

- Work with educational institutions at the post-secondary and continuing education level to develop flexible training modules for use by agricultural operations:
  - Language training for managers and workers
  - Advanced farm management training
  - Other issue-based training as necessary
- Develop incentives to encourage participation of local teachers in accredited agriculturally based continuing education training as offered through the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation (MAEF).

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Action items under this recommendation require significant interagency cooperation with a range of potential task leaders. It is expected that overall leadership will be provided by the Agricultural Marketing Specialist with support provided by the Maryland Cooperative Extension, USDA–Agricultural Research Service, Farm Bureau, MAEF, agricultural industry associations, Prince George’s County Community College, University of Maryland, as well as other agencies.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Much of the workload encompassed within this recommendation will require dedicated staff time with an annual program budget of \$25,000 to \$30,000 to facilitate specific task/program development. On-going programs and events should be conducted on a cost recovery basis. Development of a specific curriculum at the college and continuing education level must be evaluated with specific service providers.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** Elements of this task represent long-term, ongoing efforts that will become more necessary as farm conversion continues. Therefore, this is a high-priority issue that should initiate within the first 12 months of program adoption.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Funding for this recommendation will require outside funding support from agencies such as Maryland TEDCO, USDA’s SARE program, and MARBIDCO. The Foundation Center should be consulted for specific private funding options.

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## *Recommendation 2*

### *Support Entrepreneurship and On-Farm Skills Development*

The success of any industry is incumbent on the success of the businesses and entrepreneurs that control the assets, take the risks, and make the markets. Agriculture in Prince George’s County is no exception and its long-term success will have as much to do with the savvy and skills of its agricultural entrepreneurs and farm managers as it does with market fundamentals. Enhancing the skills and business networks of these and future entrepreneurs will have a significant positive impact on the future of agriculture.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Develop a pilot program to package a professional and technical service network made up of private sector expertise and built on the model of a virtual business incubator, such as the Enterprise Network in Palo Alto, CA, or the Golden Capital Network in Sacramento, CA.
- Implement, in cooperation with regional partners and Maryland Cooperative Extension, the NxLevel agricultural entrepreneurship or similar program.
- Develop a service corps of mentors and counselors with specific professional or technical expertise to provide direct support to agricultural entrepreneurs and to work with the county’s SBDC and SCORE programs (See Recommendation 4).
- Facilitate the development of formal “masterminding” roundtables of farmers, agribusinesses, and other related industries that may benefit from periodic meetings to discuss business and management issues, market development, and other relevant topics.

- Conduct quarterly brown bag lunches for farmers that focus on networking and the topical discussion of important issues such as farm management, farm transition planning, marketing, timber management, real estate, policy/regulations, and other relevant topics.
- Work with farmers to improve non-farm income sources such as hunting leases and woodlot management.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, and Maryland Cooperative Extension with assistance from industry associations, private businesses, higher education institutions, Farm Bureau, and other agencies as necessary.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation, exclusive of the pilot professional/technical service recommendation, will require a limited administrative budget and staff allocation. All events should be held on a cost recovery basis.

Designing and implementing a well-qualified service network may take significantly more resources and is best integrated with Focus Area 3. Approximately \$25,000 should be allocated for the first program year followed by approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 thereafter to operate and maintain the network.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a high-priority issue that should be implemented within 12-18 months. Development of the service network, however, is likely to take a significant time commitment, which may delay its implementation until sufficient staff time can be devoted to this project.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** County funding should be allocated to cover basic program costs. On-going programs, such as brown bag lunches, should be conducted on a cost recovery basis. Development of the pilot services network may be an attractive project for national or regional foundations.

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## *Recommendation 3*

### *Facilitate Integration of Agriculture within Broader Capital Markets*

Access to capital, and the attendant technical and professional networks that accompany it, are essential to the growth and development of an entrepreneurial community. The agricultural industry is no exception. Despite the active entrepreneurship evident in the agricultural industry, and the presence of wealthy individuals throughout the region, there is a shortage of risk capital available to the industry.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Assist farmers with matching funding requirements for agribusiness development, value-added, and innovation-oriented grants.
- Expand existing incentive and lending programs, such as loan guarantee and linked deposit, to include agriculture.
- Examine feasibility of creating an agricultural “Angel” network that bridges the gap between the region’s high-wealth individuals and farmers/agribusinesses to improve access to needed risk capital.
- Review existing successful models to expand finance opportunities targeting cost reduction and environmental technologies such as:
  - Biomass combined cycle power generation
  - Manure digestion
  - New production technologies
- Expand land-use financing alternatives by exploring development of long-term leases modeled after winery leaseholds.
  - Develop a model long-term lease specific to pilot industries.

- Examine inclusion of environmental management and other nonagricultural factors.
- Encourage greater estate planning.
  - Conduct estate planning workshops.
  - Means test and cost share estate planning for critical farms.
  - Integrate this recommendation with other business development recommendations.
- Increase funding levels in agricultural and environmental protection programs to support intergenerational farm transition.
- Explore the addition of an option to purchase at agriculture value in the county's easement program to encourage the sale of eased farms at agricultural value.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (or a newly created agricultural finance program) with support from Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission, MARBIDCO, and other agencies as necessary.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation run a wide gamut of budget needs ranging from staff participation in regional planning efforts and network development to financing program development and operations.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a moderate priority issue that should be implemented within 24 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Funding should be sought from MARBIDCO, Maryland Pension Fund, tax shelter motivated investors, USDA Rural Development, and others.

## *Recommendation 4*

### *Develop a Farmer Recruitment Program*

The majority of farm owners in the region are over 55 years old and in many cases the next generation is not going to take over the farming business. Because of this, a greater level of transition support should be made available to new farmers including those that are noncareer farmers and new Americans who may have special business development needs.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Support development of a multiyear pilot program that creates individualized new/young farmer training programs to include:
  - Identification of feeder sources for interns and participant screening criteria.
  - Creation of a training program tailored to individual farm and intern needs.
  - Development of a formal mentor program targeting:
    - ~ Newly graduating interns
    - ~ Other prequalified new or beginning farmers
  - Evening farm start-up and management classes modeled after Frederick County's beginning farmer classes, and



- Assessment of the need for an agricultural academy modeled after the Central Carolina Community College as a long-term objective.
- Conduct landowner meetings to assess the availability of land and agricultural infrastructure.
- Develop an outreach program to attract interested new and beginning farmers to the county and link them to land resources.
- Create a mentor program to link new farmers to experienced agribusiness owners.
- Collaborate with county and state efforts to develop new sources of capital dedicated to first-time farmers.
- Develop an ongoing financial literacy training program for young and upstart farmers.
- Create partnerships with Farm Credit and statewide industry associations as an attraction tool.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, with support from MARBIDCO, Farm Credit, Maryland Cooperative Extension, and other agencies as necessary.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation can be implemented with limited budget expenditures of \$5,000 or less.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a high-priority issue that should be implemented within 12 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Funding should be sought from MARBIDCO, industry associations, Farm Bureau, USDA Rural Development, and others.

## *Recommendation 5*

### *Support Agribusiness Concept Incubation and Technology Transfer*

Prince George's County is in the enviable position of housing significant research and development assets, including the nation's premier agricultural research facility, the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC). Additional assets include the University of Maryland's (UMD) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and its attendant research facilities in Prince George's County as well as additional federal laboratories with life science and agriculturally relevant research activities such as the Goddard Space Flight Center. The presence of the centers is unique and offers tremendous access to human and technological resources that has never been fully explored for the benefit of local and regional agriculture.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Develop a working partnership with Maryland TEDCO, the UMD College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and BARC to:
  - Enhance university spin-offs from research and development as well as entrepreneurial programming that focuses on applied uses of technology.
  - Create a business development office to leverage intellectual property creation and internally generated cluster development opportunities in agriculture and related life science fields.



- Support integration of BARC into the agricultural community through the formation of commercialization and workforce training partnerships (See Recommendation 1).
- Examine the feasibility of creating a food and agriculturally focused life science incubator to leverage federal laboratory and university technical, human, and scientific resources.
  - Link efforts of other life science incubators in Maryland.
  - Attract innovative agricultural companies to Prince George's County.
  - Improve markets for agricultural commodities.
  - Provide flex-oriented real estate solutions for pilot scale manufacturing.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, with support from BARC, Maryland TEDCO, UMD, Prince George's Economic Development Corporation, UMD Biotechnology Institute, Maryland Food Center, Maryland Cooperative Extension, and other agencies as necessary.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation require significant budgetary resources to include at least \$75,000 to support broadening technology linkages with producers of intellectual property and \$60,000 to support a feasibility analysis of technology and food-related business incubation.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a high-priority issue that should be implemented within 12 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Funding should be sought from Maryland TEDCO, USDA-CSREES, BARC, MARBIDCO, industry associations, Kaufman Foundation, Maryland Legislature, Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission, and others.

# *Focus Area 4: Economic Development*

*The economic development recommendations address critical structural and industrywide concerns that impact the long-term viability of agriculture in Prince George's County. These solutions are based on current economic needs and opportunities and seek outcomes that have a direct benefit to the community through such effects as industry stabilization, job creation, enhanced tax base, and improved quality of life.*

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## *Recommendation 1*

### *Support Agribusiness Cluster Development*

Farmer and retailer interviews indicate the need for dedicated economic and business development programming to focus on the development of specific industry clusters. Such services may be made available through existing economic development programs or may require the dedicated services of an independent development corporation focused specifically on agricultural and food industries.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Support cluster development through private and private/public partnerships in the following sectors:
  - Livestock
    - ~ Support development of necessary services such as livestock aggregate, genetics services, and processing.
    - ~ Create or expand technical assistance programs to enhance grassland management.
  - Equine
    - ~ Expand recreational activities.
    - ~ Recruit trainers, events, and support services.
    - ~ Conduct equine market research.
  - Minor crops and cropping systems support and field service
    - ~ Organic production systems.
    - ~ Wine grapes.
    - ~ Energy cropping systems.
    - ~ Fruit and vegetable field service.
- Improved farmer access to retail and processing markets through direct real estate support such as:
  - Shared bottling and ageing (wine industry).
  - Local food brokerage system.
  - Cold storage and commissary facilities.
- Develop a farm and agribusiness recruitment program.
- Create an incubator services package to assist farm transition.
- Enhance retailer participation in direct agricultural marketing by creating a virtual market interface.

- Develop a pilot project to test electronic brokerage of agricultural commodities in cooperation with local farmers and retailers.
- Provide a consumer interface to link farmers with direct market/agritourism consumers.
- Create an internet-based advertising program leveraging low-cost consumer outreach methods such as Google ads.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Prince George's Economic Development Corporation, Maryland Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Development of the aforementioned programs will require significant development capital over three to four years. Given the experience of other programs and operations (private or public), approximately \$75,000 will be required annually.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This recommendation is of top priority due to the continuing need to support cluster development as the regional agricultural economy transitions from a tobacco basis. It should be implemented within a year to 18 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Funding for this recommendation will likely require direct county allocation as a match for grants from various federal and state programs such as USDA's Business and Industry Program, Kaufman Foundation, MARBIDCO, TEDCO, and others.

## *Recommendation 2*

### *Develop an Agribusiness Retention, Expansion, and Attraction Plan*

Prince George's County is in a unique position to lead the region in the development of agribusiness input/output infrastructure. Based on current market conditions such as workforce composition, industrial development patterns, and access to primary interstate systems, the county is ideally situated to develop value-added and distribution-related agribusiness industry clusters. Such development is already evident in communities around the Beltway and along the I-95 corridor, but it is not integrated with the production agriculture sector. One of the primary impediments to developing such opportunities is the lack of a coordinated, interagency effort to retain, attract, expand, and develop such clusters.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Develop a targeted marketing plan focusing on strategic advantages of Prince George's County:
  - Existing core of transportation and logistics businesses
  - Accessible infrastructure
  - Positive environmental assets
  - Available and qualified workforce
  - A supportive public sector
- Assess existing incentives, economic development programs, and real estate suitability for sectors outlined for recruitment and development.
- Identify key marketing partners and conduct outreach with generators of the agribusiness deal flow:
  - Site location consultants and real estate brokers
  - Business park developers

- MARBIDCO
- Department of Agriculture/Cheltenham Market
- Trade associations
- Agricultural industry associations
- Prepare marketing collateral and disseminate critical decision making information through direct mail, industry “ambassador” programs, brokers tours, etc.
- Develop a pilot program for streamlining and/or fast-tracking agribusiness development projects within the key transportation corridors or around key environmental assets.
- Integrate the Agribusiness Retention, Expansion, and Attraction Plan within broader economic development initiatives at the county and state levels.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist with assistance from industry associations, Maryland Cooperative Extension, Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation, Maryland Department of Agriculture, and the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** The county may consider allocating \$25,000 to engage an economic development or site location consultant to complete a target market study.<sup>1</sup> Information from the study will be used to identify key prospects as well as an information packet to be distributed to site location firms, industry executives, economic development officials, commercial/industrial property owners, and real-estate brokers. As a follow-on to this study, the Agricultural Marketing Specialist and Economic Development Corporation may conduct a brokers’ tour, visit key site location consultants, or conduct a direct mail campaign that would require out-year budget allocations.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This recommendation is of moderate priority with the current state of commercial and industrial development within the area as well as recent trends in food business relocations and expansion. This recommendation should be implemented in 18-36 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Funding for this recommendation will likely require direct county allocation. Matching grants from various federal and state programs may be available such as USDA’s Federal State Market Improvement Program, the Economic Development Administration, and USDA Rural Development may be appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> This study may also be completed by in-house staff and would require an allocation of 150–200 hours.

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## *Recommendation 3*

### *Enhance Labor Force Conditions*

Prince George's County's labor force has undergone a long transition to professional services, government, and retail leaving a shallow labor market for farmers. This is exacerbated by the declining number of farmers and a low retention of next-generation farmers. The resulting labor shortage may restrict future development of the industry.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Improve labor housing conditions through capital programs so that good choices are available to those of modest means who are critical to the growth of this industry.
- Improve accessibility of unskilled labor:
  - Create linkages with urban labor centers that house an agriculturally focused labor force.
  - Develop on-site job training programs for laborers and managers.
    - ~ Life skills
    - ~ Language skills
  - Explore labor pooling options in collaboration with workforce improvement partners to include:
    - ~ Electronic work center
    - ~ Labor screening system
    - ~ Transportation provision
- Improve accessibility of skilled labor:
  - Develop labor training programs at secondary and post secondary institutions.
  - Develop a recruitment program focusing on high-demand skills.
  - Explore labor management and labor sharing arrangements.
  - Develop an internship program in cooperation with the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission focused on farmer retraining, the new or beginning farmer, and labor retention.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist with support from industry associations, Farm Bureau, and Maryland Cooperative Extension.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation will require significant program and administrative budget and staff allocation particularly for capital projects. Examination of similar programs should be undertaken before further budget guidance is offered.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a moderate-priority issue that should be implemented in the next 24 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Grant funding through USDA and HUD should be sought to support development opportunities particularly in labor force transition areas. Area foundations may be sources of support, particularly if labor demands can be met through underserved communities.

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## *Recommendation 4*

### *Support Regional Agricultural Leadership Development*

The long-term success of agriculture within Prince George's County and the region is directly impacted by the quality of the industry's existing and emerging leadership. Specifically, the development of new leadership to set the vision for the future of agriculture is critical to the success of the industry over the long-term.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Encourage greater farmer participation in local, regional, and statewide leadership development programs with a focus on:
  - Young and beginning farmers
  - Emerging sectors
  - Related industries
  - Related research and education
- Introduce board and leadership training to existing agricultural organizations and agencies to enhance organizational efficiency.
- Enhance inter-industry communications through formal networking events between farmers and agribusinesses:
  - Food safety/traceability conferences
  - Labor development and management seminars
  - Technology updates
- Develop an open format leadership training program with a focus on broadening producer exposure to all elements of the agricultural industry as well as government, politics, and input/output industries.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Maryland Cooperative Extension, Office of Economic Development, and other agencies as necessary.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Action items within this recommendation will require a limited administrative budget and staff allocation. Additional budgeting will be required to provide funding assistance to LEAD MD candidates in the way of a modest \$1,000 per year stipend. Leadership training at the county level can be integrated within existing programs, or modules can be developed through foundation support.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a moderate priority issue that should be implemented within 24 to 36 months.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** County funding should be allocated to cover basic program costs. Development of leadership training modules can be supported through foundation funds.

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## *Recommendation 5*

### *Create an Alternative Energy Development Program*

In much the same way that local production has become the driving force in the food industry, alternative energy production is driving change in both the agricultural and energy sectors. Development of a program to support alternative energy crops and distributed energy production in the community may prove beneficial to both agricultural and general audiences. The large forested area of Prince George's County further enhances the bio-energy possibilities.

#### *ACTIONS*

- Conduct an alternative energy conference in conjunction with the bio-energy industry, USDA Rural Development, and the Maryland Energy Administration to highlight emerging technologies, technical support services, and financing opportunities.
- Provide grant support for applied research and education related to the utilization of appropriately scaled alternative energy and energy conservation practices, such as:
  - Energy audits
  - Wind
  - Biomass (fuel and combined heat and power)
  - Solar
  - Others as appropriate
- Conduct consumer and industry outreach to include:
  - Tours
  - Web sites
  - Fair demonstrations and expositions
  - Alternative energy trade shows
- Provide or support access to technical resources for those exploring the application of alternative energy and energy conservation practices on farms.

**IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS:** Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Maryland Energy Administration, USDA–Rural Development, Industry Associations, Maryland Cooperative Extension, others as appropriate.

**BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:** Assist program participants with grant writing and grant matching as necessary. Provide up to \$2,000 for support with energy audits as well as outreach and reporting of applied research results.

**ISSUE PRIORITY:** This is a top-priority issue that should be implemented within the first 12 months of program implementation.

**FUNDING RESOURCES:** Numerous grant programs are available to leverage the proposed project such as philanthropic foundations, Maryland Energy Administration, US Department of Energy, USDA–Rural Development, and MARBIDCO.