

Four Recommendation Areas

1. Regulation & Policy
2. Market Development
3. Business Development
4. Economic Development

Note: *This document is intended for internal use only for the TDR Workgroup. It highlights accomplishments thus far and incorporates future considerations for each focus area.*

FOCUS AREA 1: REGULATIONS & POLICY

Recommendation 1: Support Farm Friendly Land use Policies & Programs

- Right-to-Farm Legislation and Amendment (CB-86-2010, CB-6-2012)
- Ag Resources Preservation/Ag Resources Advisory Committee (ARAC) Legislation (CB-7-2012)
- Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program/Purchase of Development Rights (HARPP/PDR)
- Ag Preservation Workgroup Legislation (CR-107-2010)
- Urban Ag Legislation (CB-76-2013)
- Farm Winery Legislation (CB-36-2009)
- Agriculture, Agritourism, Equine Activities & Equine Facility (CB-92-2010)
- Southern MD Ag Development Commission's (SMADC) MD FarmLINK program
- Ag Marketing Specialist (AMS) has attended and presented at various PGC Farm Bureau and Soil Conservation District (SCD) dinners where local elected officials were in attendance. AMS has also attended/presented at several community meetings in the Ag community to discuss the changing market and regulatory conditions and shares information with interested farmers regarding any upcoming regulations on the county, state and federal levels.

Considerations:

- Need to check in with Planning and SCD regarding improved planning efforts, buffers and other infrastructure to support agriculture.
- This may be a good time for the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Team to review zoning around animal processing/slaughterhouse facilities.
- AMS is working on a farm tour for County Council with help from Yates Claggett, however, it's been challenging to get a date confirmed.
- I'm not aware of a "state of agriculture" report or a virtual Ag policy book. Both require further discussion

Recommendation 2: Support State Level Changes to Health Policy and Programs

- Many food safety courses are held in PGC. In addition, the AMS has hosted UMD Extension's 'Food for Profit' classes for a variety of audiences that include farmers looking to expand on-farm processing/value-added products.
- As of the spring of 2015, there is a farmers market sampling permit (\$25) through the PGC Health Department for farmers wishing to sample cut fruit and vegetables.
- PGC Health Department has also created a chart of permits and fees for farmers market vendors.
- AMS sits on the PGC Food Equity Council (FEC) & SMADC board. Both organizations are working on Policy issues on both the state and county levels.
- P.A. Bowen Farmstead is the County's first dairy and offers artisan raw milk cheeses.
- MD Department of Ag (MDA) has instituted 'Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week' which may be expanded to 2 weeks this coming school year. AMS will work with nutrition educators and farmers to expand this program.
- Councilwoman Lehman introduced CB-37-2014 (SNAP to Health) to support farmers markets who want to administer SNAP at the market level. FEC and AMS continue to work with CW Lehman to find funding and partners, and with UME educators involved with SNAP-Ed to develop a "wrap around" SNAP program opportunity.

Considerations:

- Should FEC and partners work through the upcoming MD Food Policy Council to address MD's current local preference purchasing legislation?
- What other policies should the FEC focus on in the next 5 years?
- What is the demand from institutions for local products compared to what PGC or Southern MD producers can provide? Are prices affordable for institutions and worthwhile for farmers?

Recommendation 3: Support State and County Level Changes to Transportation Policy and Programs

- I don't have enough information to give an educated update.
- How do we proceed and who champions this recommendation?

Recommendation 4: Support State Level Changes to Tax Policy

- Class 1 Distillery License and Class 9 Limited Craft Distillery License (Worcester County)
- AMS communicates with both the Maryland and PGC Farm Bureaus and passes along action required by constituents as appropriate.
- SMADC Hub & Spoke tax credit was passed earlier this year which gives farmers tax credits for donating produce to emergency food agencies.

Considerations:

- Need to review recommendations regarding allocation of slots revenue to equine breeder programs, statewide forest land tax exemption, elimination of property tax on Ag infrastructure on eased properties and higher estate tax exemptions.
- Who would champion these proposed tax policies?

FOCUS AREA 2: MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 1: Improve Regional Market Access at Wholesale and Regional Levels

- 'So. Maryland, So Good' regional branding (SMADC efforts) including guides for farmers markets, wine trail, equine, Christmas trees, etc.
- SMADC is in the process of creating a 'Farm to Table' directory for restaurants and retailers carrying So. MD products.
- Several virtual markets are in existence including 'Farm Match,' 'Relay Foods,' and 'From the Farmer.'
- Recreational activities include the 'Crop Hop,' wine festivals, farm to table dinners, and walking and riding trails on farms. There are also a variety of Agritourism events held at Montpelier.
- AMS created a 'Fresh. Local. Fun.' brochure (with map) and website to promote farm destinations and farmers markets.
- PGC Visitors' Bureau has a link promoting the 'Fresh. Local. Fun.' website (pgcountyfarmfun.com).
- AMS shares information regarding retailer networking events such as MDA's Buyer-Grower Expo and SMADC's 'Scaling-Up' workshop/networking event.
- AMS hosts winter PGC farmers market manager meetings to discuss changes in regulation along with marketing opportunities. AMS also contacts farmers and market managers regularly to cross-promote marketing and partnership opportunities.
- AMS promotes opportunities as they arise through social media outlets and the PGC 'Farms & Food' newsletter.
- Through listening sessions conducted by the AMS and the FEC, it was determined that processing facilities are needed. Access to commercial kitchen space can be a challenge in addition to access to a nearby slaughter facility. The Guiding Knife is looking to open a commercial kitchen facility in Lanham once funding is in place.

Considerations:

- Why does the report mention avoiding nonduplicative initiatives such as SMADC's 'So. Maryland, So. Good' brand?
- Is geocaching still popular? What other recreational activities are relevant?

- Should the AMS reprint the 'Fresh. Local. Fun.' brochure or continue to focus on the web-based version? AMS could print inexpensive postcards to distribute and drive people to the website.
- Is there still interest in completing a local cook book? If so, who might be appropriate partners?

Recommendation 2: Support Public/Private Development of an Agritourism, Retail, and Culinary Arts Center.

- SMADC is working towards an Ag and Food Innovation Center for the five So. MD counties.

Considerations:

- Do we think the County can sustain a center for its own Ag and value-added products or would it be more feasible to support a center highlighting So. Maryland products?

Recommendation 3: Create Retailer-Supported Marketing System

- SMADC is in the process of creating a 'Farm to Table' directory.

Considerations:

- Would a 'Farm to Table' directory specific to PGC be beneficial?
- A listening session with farmers would be helpful in determining the needs, opportunities and challenges to facilitating business with local restaurants and retailers.
- AMS could research a variety of marketing campaigns geared towards 'eat local' in PGC and coordinate marketing strategy with partners.
- Should AMS host workshops to educate local chefs on the value of purchasing and using the whole animal in menus?

Recommendation 4: Improve Long-Term Functionality of Cheltenham Farmers Market

- Various individuals and organizations have approached the Southern MD Regional Farmers Market in Cheltenham over the years with little success in terms of initiating change.
- The volunteer board appears tied and admits the market/auction is run inefficiently.

Considerations:

- Is this something to pursue at this time or table for a later date? What are the political winds?
- Should multiple partners collaborate on a strategy to initiate a more successful dialogue with MDA and the board?

Recommendation 5: Leverage the Southern Maryland Trails Tourism Board

- Prince George's County farms and farmers markets have taken advantage of SMADC's various marketing campaigns and trails guides.

- MDA has both a farmers market and Agritourism signage program for farmers and farmers markets to take advantage of including a subsidy from SMADC for Agritourism signs. We need a few farmers to apply for the Agritourism signs (5 have expressed interest and have been given the application). A couple of farmers markets in the County are a part of the farmers market signage program.
- SCD, FEC and UME plan to meet with DPIE to discuss Agritourism. They have already spoken with DPIE about an Ag/Farmers Market liaison to assist with permitting questions and to streamline resources for farmers market managers.

Considerations:

- How can we elevate our status as the 'gateway' to Ag in So. Maryland?
- How can we improve signage opportunities for Ag in PGC?

Recommendation 6: Create an Outreach and Public Relations Program

- There have been several wine tasting and farm dinner events in PGC.
- Ag is being integrated into the public school system through 4-H, SNAP-Ed programs, the Curriculum for Ag Science Education (CASE), MD Ag Education Foundation's (MAEF) mobile lab and other initiatives lead by the PGC Public School System's Environmental Studies Academy.
- There is existing public outreach in PGC through the PGC Farm Bureau that the AMS and other partners can build upon.

Considerations:

- How would this committee on outreach differ from or compliment the ARAC mediation committee?
- Should we leverage MDA's existing Ag Conflict Resolution Service?
- Does the word 'industrial' conjure up a factory farm image?

FOCUS AREA 3: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 1: Create a Small Farm Research and Training Board

- Currently, UME Extension (Beginning Farmer Success Program, UMES Small Farm Outreach, Annie's Project), SMADC (Maryland FarmLINK Mentor Match) and Future Harvest CASA (Beginning Farmer Training, Field School) and Prince George's Community College (Urban Ag program with ECO City Farms) have programs to train new farmers. AMS makes farmers aware of these opportunities.
- The UME Extension Central MD Research and Education Center (CMREC) facility in Upper Marlboro provides tours and access to information concerning research on specialty crops suitable for this area.

- PGCFB has provided scholarships for PGCPs teachers to attend MAEF's 'Ag in the Classroom' training.

Considerations:

- Is there a need to collaborate with USDA's Beltsville Ag Research Center (BARC) or University of the District of Columbia's (UDC) Ag Experiment Station in Beltsville? If so, what types of collaborations would be most useful to the PGC Ag community?
- In light of the programs mentioned above, do we feel it's still important to develop an Ag training board for PGC? If so, would the make-up of the Board change from what's outlined in the strategic plan?

Recommendation 2: Support Entrepreneurship and On-Farm Skills Development

- The AMS, in collaboration with a UMES faculty member, has hosted Annie's Project in the Southern MD region to discuss business development, marketing and transitioning to new farm enterprises.
- Reference new farmer training programs listed above in 'Recommendation 1.'
- AMS (local and state personnel) available to meet one-on-one with farmers regarding marketing and business plans.

Considerations:

- Review the suggestion to conduct quarterly brown bag lunches for farmers for the purpose of networking and discussing pertinent issues. Is this realistic?
- Review the status of improving non-farm income through sources such as hunting licenses and woodlot management.

Recommendation 3: Facilitate Integration of Agriculture within Broader Capital Markets

- Romano received a Maryland Ag & Resource-Based Industry Development Corp. (MARBIDCO) grant to start its winery.
- The AMS makes farmers aware of a variety of grant resources, loans and cost-share opportunities through partners such as MARBIDCO, SCD, SMADC, USDA NCRS (Natural Resource Conservation Service), USDA Rural Development, Farm Credit and others.
- UMD Extension offers workshops on estate planning and farm transition.
- SCD assists farmers with a variety of environmental technologies while UMD Extension assists with crop development (i.e. wine varieties, hops)

Considerations:

- Would it be helpful to request a position within Economic Development Commission (EDC) to focus on food and Ag business development opportunities?
- Should we examine the feasibility of an 'Angel' network?
- Are there any funds specifically for programs to support intergenerational farm transition?

Recommendation 4: Develop a Farmer Recruitment Program

- Reference new farmer training programs listed above in 'Recommendation 1.' Maryland FarmLINK has a Mentor Match program.
- FarmLINK has a property exchange forum.
- SMADC's Food and Ag Innovation Center could also serve as a recruitment tool for PGC.
- The AMS passes along state and federal funding opportunities but those within the County seem somewhat limited for Ag.

Considerations:

- Yates Clagett and I spoke about creating a 'Why Farm in Prince George's' campaign. Would it be worthwhile to approach SMADC about creating a 'Why Farm in So. MD' campaign similar to what the Eastern Shore has done (marylandfarming.com) to attract farmers to the Shore?

Recommendation 5: Support Agribusiness Concept and Incubation and Technology Transfer

- I don't have enough information to give an educated update other than UMD AGNR works with farmers through UMD Extension (AGNR's outreach arm) and farmers have access to UMD's research through the newsletters, 'Vegetable & Fruit Headlines' and 'Agronomy News.'
- Further exploration and discussion is needed regarding current partnerships with BARC, NASA Goddard and TEDCO.

Considerations:

- Explore how these entities may serve our farmers and would farmers use these resources?
- Survey farmers about current technological needs.

FOCUS AREA 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 1: Support Agribusiness Cluster Development

- Reference 'Focus Area 2: Recommendation 1' regarding direct marketing opportunities through a virtual interface.
- Some efforts have come to fruition regarding cluster development by industry (i.e. Southern MD Meats program) but this needs further exploration.
- 'Fresh. Fun. Local.' website links consumers to Agritourism farms in PGC. SMADC has a similar guide for the So. MD region.

Considerations:

- Explore collaboration with EDC.
- Research existing cluster development efforts (i.e. strategies, successes).

- Need to explore the most effective internet-based advertising programs based on the industry and target market. Google Ads are referenced but there are a variety of social media options available as well.

Recommendation 2: Develop an Agribusiness Retention, Expansion, and Attraction Plan

- I don't have enough information to give an educated update. It requires further exploration.

Considerations:

- Begin conversations with the PGC EDC, Chamber of Commerce and other key partners mentioned regarding the recommendations in the strategic plan.

Recommendation 3: Enhance Labor Force Conditions

- I don't have enough information to give an educated update. It requires further exploration.
- A variety of farms (both rural and urban) offer internship and apprenticeship opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Support Agricultural Leadership Development

- There are a variety of Ag leadership development opportunities on a statewide level such as LEAD Maryland, Future Harvest CASA, Maryland FarmLINK Mentor Match, MD Farm Bureau, 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA).
- On a local level, many farmers have the opportunity to take on Ag leadership development roles through the Prince George's County Farm Bureau, Prince George's County Young Farmers, and local 4-H and FFA chapters (youth leadership development).

Considerations:

- Do these programs address all audiences effectively? What audiences are we not targeting?

Recommendation 5: Create an Alternative Energy Development Program

- I don't have enough information to give an educated update. It requires further exploration.
- Several organizations offer resources and grants for alternative energy technologies including Maryland Energy Administration, Maryland Alternative Energy, USDA Rural Development and MARBIDCO. The AMS passes this information along to PGC farmers as it becomes available.

Considerations:

- What technical resources exist for farmers who want to implement alternative energy practices on farms?
- Is there a way to make it easier for farmers to access existing programs?