

For Immediate Release: July 20, 2015

**Montgomery County's 26th Annual Farm Tour & Harvest Sale Expands,
Welcomes New Participants**

Across the Agricultural Reserve, Montgomery County's farmers are preparing for the annual Farm Tour and Harvest Sale, which will be held on July 25 and 26, rain or shine. This year's event is slated to be one of the biggest, and most diverse, in the tour's 26-year history.

While many farm tour participants have been in business for multiple generations, (such as Lewis Orchards, founded in 1888), this year's Farm Tour and Harvest Sale will also feature some newer farms, like Soleado, the only lavender farm in the County, and Madison Fields, a 400+ acre enterprise that uses equine therapy and farming to help children and adults with autism and other special needs.

"This is a very unique event for a county located in such close proximity to a major city like Washington, D.C.," said County Executive Isiah Leggett. "The farm tour is a great way for residents to meet growers, contribute to the local economy, protect the environment and support a secure food system. The eat-local movement is alive and well in Montgomery County."

Montgomery County started the Farm Tour & Harvest Sale 26 years ago to help consumers get to know their farmers. The event coincides with the state's annual Buy Local Challenge, which takes place the last full week of July. The Buy Local Challenge was conceived and launched in 2007 by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) to highlight the economic and environmental benefits of eating locally grown food.

The Agricultural Reserve was created in 1980 and encompasses more than one-third of the County or 93,000 acres ensuring that agriculture and farming remains part of the history and heritage of the County and creating a resource for future food and fiber production.

"The farm tour is a unique opportunity for people to experience the Agricultural Reserve as a center of commerce that provides us with healthful food and fantastic educational opportunities," said Sally Sternbach, acting director of Montgomery County's Department of Economic Development.

"We have 19 farms participating this year, which represents the highest level of participation since 1990," said Agricultural Services Division Chief Jeremy Criss. "This is a reflection of the strong state of the County's agriculture community. People in our region are very curious about working farms, and they ask great questions. Some of these farms are normally closed to the public, but our farmers like to open up each July for the tour as it allows them to build a direct connection with their customers."

As always, this year's farm tour will feature tractor rides, pony rides, pick-your-own produce, music, picnic areas and food booths.

Check the [brochure](#) for the time that each farm will open and close.

#

Media Contacts: Jeremy Criss, 301-590-2830 or
Susan Prince: 240-777-2048