



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Preserving Our Agricultural Heritage
Connecting Our Past...With Our Future

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices

Montgomery County's agricultural reserve is an important environmental resource for future farm enterprises. A strong agricultural heritage provides a diverse business community and a strong economic base. Combining these strengths with the commitment for farmland preservation makes Montgomery County an attractive place to live and work.

Agricultural activities occupy about one-third of Montgomery County's land area. Over three quarters of the 93,000-acre agriculture reserve is preserved through transfer of development rights or easement purchase initiatives. The County's diverse agricultural industry – 540 farms and 350 horticultural enterprises – produce millions of dollars in economic contribution from farm products and operations. The majority of Montgomery County farms are family-run operations, many reaching back several generations, which employ more than 10,000 residents. The County has 540 farms, of which 42 percent are farmed as a primary occupation. Cash grain farms are the predominant agricultural use in the County covering over 45,000 acres and farms. There are 219 farms or 40 percent that produce table food crops-products for direct human consumption.

Horticulture

During the past 25 years, the Horticultural Sector has grown dramatically. The 350 horticultural businesses employ more than 7,000 of the people working in agriculture. Horticulture is one of the largest sectors in agriculture and includes nurseries and landscaping companies, arborists, sod farms and lawn care firms, and green house businesses.

Twenty percent of the horticultural industry in Maryland is in the County and Montgomery County ranks second in the State in total number of horticultural firms.

Equine Industry

Horses have become a major component of the agricultural industry numbering almost 10,000 horses. Horses represent a tremendous opportunity for farmers in terms of the supplies, services and products needed to support the horse population which exceeds the population of cows. The growing hay industry in Montgomery County is directly proportional to the growing number of horses. High quality veterinarians that provide services to horses are now available for other livestock operations in the County.

Agriculture for the Future

Montgomery County is committed to sustaining a viable agricultural industry. The Agriculture Reserve established in 1981 by the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan, provides 93,000 acres for farming. A variety of private organizations assist farmers to prosper in Montgomery County: Montgomery County Farm Bureau, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board and Montgomery County Farmers Markets work together with the University of Md Extension, Soil Conservation District, and Farm Service Agency.

Farmland Preservation

	Acres Protected
Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)	8,382
Montgomery County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	49,245
Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)	2,086
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)	4,746
Rural Legacy Program (RLP)	4,875
Building Lot Termination Program (BLT) 718 Public BLT + 263 Private BLT =	<u>981</u>
	70,315

Economic Contribution to County's Economy

Over 157 County farms have annual sales of \$10,000 or more. The average farm size is 118 acres and 33 percent of the farms are greater than 50 acres in size. The County has experienced 2.7 increase in farms from 1 to 9 acres in size.

Traditional Agriculture	\$ 48,341,000
Horticultural Industry	\$154,378,185
Equine Industry	<u>\$ 84,855,896</u>
Total	\$287,575,081

Montgomery County Statistics

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices

Total Land in Montgomery County	316,800 acres
Agriculturally Assessed Lands	77,892 acres
Land in Farms	63,493 acres
Percent of Land in Farms	21.3 %
Number of Farms	540 farms
Number of Horticultural Business	350
Average Farm Size	118 acres
Average Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold per Farm	\$89,520 dollars
Total Cropland	45,557 acres
Harvested Crop Land	40,459 acres
Field Seed, Grass, Hay, and Forage Land	8,385 acres
Woodland-(Public 31,513 and Private 57,487)	89,000 acres
Average Age of Operator	60.6 years
Percentage of Principal Occupation Farms	42 %
Publicly Owned Lands (Federal, State, County, WSSC)	58,500 acres

Farms by Type of Enterprise

Type of Farm	Number of Farms	Production
Beef	70	1,205 Cows
Horse	783	10,000 Horses
Dairy	4	656 Cows
Sheep	45	667 Sheep
Goats-Milk and Meat	56	732 Goats
Hogs & Pigs	16	192 Hogs & Pigs
Poultry	98	4,063 Chickens
Corn for Grain	37	1.51 Million Bushels
Corn for Silage	5	6,758 Tons
Wheat	29	324,324 Bushels
Soybeans	31	760,727 Bushels
Forage-Hay	163	21,158 Tons
Sod	3	---- Acres
Vegetables, fruits, nuts	51	692 Acres
Christmas Trees	14	
Greenhouse, Nursery, and Floriculture Production	58	
Landscape, Arborist, Lawn Care	150 businesses	

Statistics provided by Ag Census 2007/2012 United States, Department of Agriculture, USDA-NASS, University of Maryland Extension-2012

Prepared by: Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
Agricultural Services Division 301-590-2823

July 2014

E:\Publications\agfactsheet2014doc (pub/pres)

