

## SOUTHERN MARYLAND TOBACCO CROP CONVERSION PROGRAM

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FY 2008

#### What's New in FY 2008 (details follow):

##### **Buyout**

- *Open Forum with farms and citizens from five counties*

##### **Land Preservation**

- 22,886 total acres preserved using program and leveraged county funds.
- *Eighteen new farms under land preservation (1,766 acres) in four counties in 2008.*
- *SMADC has investigated various land preservation options, including an installment purchase agreement program.*

##### **Marketing**

- *Buy Local Challenge Week – July 2008: Statewide endeavor initiated and created by SMADC*
  - *The theme of the 2008 Buy Local Challenge was “Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet highlighting the significant role of farms in reducing state carbon foot-print, enhancing the environment with nutritious foods, cleaner water and land preservation potential.*
  - *SMADC designed a special flier for Governor O’Malley and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) using the “Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet” theme. The fliers were distributed through the MVA vehicle registration renewal notices across the state.*
- *So. Maryland, So Good (SMSG): Two hundred twenty one total farms and businesses join SMSG (21 new farms and 3 new businesses in 2008)*
  - *SMSG website average, 6,621 visits per month*
  - *3<sup>rd</sup> edition Farmers Market Brochure, listing sites and map where all SMSG products can be found*
  - *4<sup>th</sup> edition Farms for the Holidays Brochure, highlighting fall and winter products & services*
- *Southern Maryland Equine Guide, listing horse farms, equine businesses and equine support services*
- *Farm to Hospitals: With several partners, SMADC supported a grant to entice Maryland Hospitals to promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly practices in hospitals*
- *Farm to Schools: SMADC is working with partners to promote Maryland’s Farm to School week in St. Mary’s County*

##### **Agribusiness:**

- *30 new sites and Imaginative Itineraries, Partner Packages and scavenger hunt incentives are introduced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination Guidebook*
- *Growing Grapes for Wine Grants: Second round of grants offered*
- *Southern Maryland Farm Viability Grants: Impact study and 5<sup>th</sup> round of grants offered*
- *SMADC prepared a report on the challenging regulations affecting farms’ ability to diversify into new, innovative operations*
- *SMADC initiated an Acidified Foods, Better Food Process Course*

##### **Education and Outreach**

- *2<sup>nd</sup> Southern Maryland Equine and Hay Conference – 3-Day Conference*
- *Growing Grapes for Wine – 3 workshops offered*
- *SMILE: Fourth Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo for Children – added Dairy cow class*
- *Enhanced program outreach, public awareness and media coverage/relation – and over 120 independently authored articles and press releases*
- *SMSG invited to speak at over 27 events in Maryland and Pennsylvania*

## 2008 SMADC PROGRAM DETAILS

### TOBACCO BUYOUT:

- Now in our eighth year of the Tobacco Buyout, there are no new applicants, as the sign-up period ended in year five. Ninety-two percent of the 1998 eligible tobacco has been taken out of production forever for human consumption as 854 growers have taken Maryland's Tobacco Buyout. This represents 7.65 million pounds of tobacco and 83% of producers.
  - Annual affidavits are reviewed to assure compliance with each of the 854 contracts and their beneficiaries to confirm the growers have had no interest in tobacco and have met the criteria to stay in agriculture.
  - In late 2007, a survey was sent out to participants to gauge the average age of producers; how many have grown or maintained their operation; whether or not they are full-time farmers; what are they currently producing, etc. These results were summarized and made available in January (see Attachment A).
  - We have met and/or exceeded the original target goals in our number one-priority program.

### AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION:

- 22,886 acres over the seven years of the program preserved in Southern Maryland using program funds and leveraging by the counties and 184 farms.
- In FY'08, program funds enabled four counties to make additional offers for agricultural land preservation on 11 farms on 950 acres. (1 Anne Arundel, 7 Calvert, 2 Charles, 1 St. Mary's). Prince George's has several farms pending settlement.
- SMADC has investigated various land preservation options, including an installment purchase agreement program, as tools to provide Southern Maryland farms (SMD).
- Note: Acres reported at the end of each fiscal year include properties that are approved by the counties and waiting settlement, thus funds are encumbered for those specific properties and attributed to this fiscal year.

### AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT / INFRASTRUCTURE "What Next":

A market trends analysis of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Community conducted in the first year of the Buyout identified the needs and opportunities. The needs specifically included *Marketing support and Leadership development*. Among the key opportunities identified were: *green products (horticulture / nursery), livestock, produce and value-added processing, tourism, grapes/wine, hay, and the equestrian industry*. In previous years, the Commission addressed the first six identified opportunities, and in FY'07 added the hay and equine industry. The Commission's agricultural development goals broadly cover marketing, agribusiness development, and education and outreach.

### SO. MARYLAND, SO GOOD: MARKETING SOUTHERN MARYLAND

- ***So. Maryland, So Good (SMSG)*** -- This three-fold campaign seeks to 1) directly link farmers and buyers, 2) add value to local agricultural products through the use of an identifiable brand (logo), and 3) educate consumers about the benefits of buying from and supporting local farms. ***Directories and a website*** assist retail and wholesale buyers to find local products. ***Promotional materials*** help the consumer identify truly Southern Maryland products. ***A creative and assertive campaign actively advertises*** the program, and encourages and educates consumers to shop and dine at businesses, including farmers markets and farm stands that feature Southern Maryland farm products.
  - ***Direct contact facilitation*** provides direct links between farms and retail and wholesale buyers (stores, restaurants, caterers, universities and brokers).
  - ***Southern Maryland Farm Guide*** – From Arugula and Alpacas to Zinnias and beyond, this Guide, a remarkable inventory of the vibrant diversity of Southern Maryland's agricultural community,

directs customers to some of the finest and freshest farm products and services the region has to offer. The Guide, first developed in late 2002, is now in its fourth edition was fully updated in the spring of 2007 with listings valid for the period 2007 – 2008. It lists 221 farms, along with associated products, businesses and services throughout Southern Maryland, and this year a new expanded list of equine establishments. The Guide incorporates a broad range of products such as produce, meat, poultry, wine, farm services, agritourism and farm-made gifts. The Farm Guide also distinguishes SMSG participants who promote the broader Southern Maryland regional agricultural community by actively featuring the SMSG logo.

- In 2008, there are a total of 221 farms listed (Anne Arundel = 49, Calvert = 49, Charles = 40, Prince George's = 31, St. Mary's = 52).
  - The Guide continues to be widely distributed to tourist centers, farmers' markets, fairs, chambers of commerce, libraries, participating farms, and other locales, and the nearby metro areas. The Directory also includes an array of services offered by the farms, including agritourism, holiday and special events, and provides a list of restaurants and stores that buy and promote local products, as well as farm service businesses and agencies. Maps of each county are included, along with descriptions of the farms and markets where products can be found, product availability chart, as well as contact information. Farmers have expressed continued appreciation for the Directory.
  - Over 57,000 directories have been placed in the hands of consumers and buyers over the four years of the program. We are planning a new print version in 2009.
  - The interactive Farm Guide, hosted by the website, [www.somarylandsogood.com](http://www.somarylandsogood.com), connects Southern Maryland farms to a wider audience in Metro DC and well beyond our county borders, averaging 6,500 visits per month.
- **Website ([www.somarylandsogood.com](http://www.somarylandsogood.com)) – A Virtual Farmers Market**  
This website hosts an array of information, including information on SMSG, workshops, upcoming events, the Tobacco Buyout and related reports, and SMADC.
- The website attracted 80,000 nearly unique visitors between July 2007 – June 2008 with an average of over 106,561 *hits* per month, and an average of 6,621 visits per month. The interactive *Directory of farms* (see above) continues to be the #1 entry page, followed by considerable interest in *Things to do*, *What's in Season*, *Events* and continued regular activity on the *Restaurant and Store* pages. This year we saw a significant increase in searches for 'wholesale farms' and considerable international interest in the programs particularly Western Europe (Sweden) and China.
- **Wholesale Directory of SMSG producers** desiring contacts with interested buyers has been distributed to 66 commercial buyers currently purchasing from local producers, including 22 stores, 40 restaurants, 1 broker, and 3 universities in the local and DC metro area.
- **Holiday Brochure** – first published in November of 2004, this annual Holiday Brochure was created to pique public interest and demand for farm products during the late fall and holiday seasons. Now in its fourth edition, over 2,600 copies were distributed in FY 2008, this mini-guide features 100 listings of farms providing a wide variety of seasonal produce, home décor, farm gifts, flowers and plants, wine, meat, poultry, seafood, farm hosted holiday events and winter farm activities. There were over 2,000 visits to the 'online brochure' through June '08.
- **Farmer's Market Guide** – First published in May 2005 in response to requests from SMSG participant farms, the guide enables consumers to easily find farmer's markets in Southern Maryland and the metro area. The 2008 edition sports a fresh new graphic and features 21 Southern Maryland farmers markets, including 6 new markets that opened in the Spring 2008 (3 in Prince

George's County alone), two regional wholesale auctions and connects consumers to 16 regional farmer's markets that feature Southern Maryland farm products. Approximately 15,200 brochures have been distributed to date (8,200 in FY 08). The Farmer's Market Guide ranks consistently in the top five of the most popular destinations on the web site for the period, confirming a growing and consistent public interest in farmers markets.

- **Promotional materials** portraying the **SMSG** logo help consumers identify truly Southern Maryland products. The materials have been used in advertisements by farms, local grocers and restaurants throughout Southern Maryland and metro DC markets. Many local businesses are using the logo in their newspaper ads, newsletters, billboards, and menu cards. Even non-agricultural businesses have incorporated the SMSG logo into their advertisements to show their support of local farming. Sixty eight farms use SMSG promotional items to further their outreach to the consumer.
- **A creative and assertive campaign actively advertises** the program throughout the seasons and encourages and educates consumers to shop and dine at businesses that feature local products. Specially targeted ads drive the public to the SMSG Website for further information and copies of SMSG literature. In FY 2008, 26 SMSG ads were run in 11 publications in area newspapers and magazines with a combined total circulation of over 927,110 in the immediate local area, metro DC including parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware. In addition regular press releases are timed to coincide with special events, grant opportunities, and to showcase SMSG participants, products and publications. Fifty documented independently authored articles and press releases reached an audience of 1.4 million. Potential outreach through web media that cannot be measured will most likely exceed this figure [at least six websites recorded].
- **State Highway Administration Annual Earth Day Event** – SMSG presence at the SHA headquarters in Baltimore, by invitation only. The one-day event attracted over 350 visitors including several schools and highlighted need for environmental and agricultural preservation in the State of Maryland. We distributed 90 coloring books, 180 Farm Guides, 204 Trails guides and 50 Equine Guides..
- **County Fairs and other festivals** – SMSG exhibited at all five county fairs, the state fair and numerous other public events, including the Patuxent River Appreciation Days, the Sotterley Riverside Wine Fest, Destination Meade, Clearwater Nature Preserve, The Good Sam R.V Club, Maryland Republican Women's Club, Smithsonian Food Event, St. Mary's River Concert Series and more. Award winning SMSG displays maintained a striking presence, and stood out with their innovative and inviting layout and informative displays. Interaction with the public combined with 'farm trivia' games for children created opportunities for direct interface with SMSG staff, helping to build awareness of the SMSG farms and SMSG programs. Over 5,040 Farm Guides, 4,896 Trails Guides, 5,490 Coloring Books, 3,750 Farmers Market Guides, 2,450 Equine Guides placed in the hands of consumers at the county fairs alone.
- **Equine Guide – First published in 2007**, the second edition published in the spring of 2008 helps to meet the needs of the growing equine industry in Southern Maryland. The new guide lists 64 horse farms and their associated services, including 23 equine hay producing farms. The mini-guide also serves as a valuable directory for equine related agricultural support services, hay producing farms, farriers, veterinary and health care services, tack shops, feed mills, equine associations, and local riding trails. The guide is the top visited document on the website. Nearly 15,000 brochures (4,900 in FY 2008) have been distributed since the guide was first published in March 2007.

## **BUY LOCAL CHALLENGE WEEK - JULY 19 – 27, 2008: HEALTHY PLATE, HEALTHY PLANET**

Now in its second year, this exciting new initiative has expanded across the state of Maryland and into neighboring states. The Buy Local Challenge was conceived by SMADC to challenge the public during last week of July to eat something everyday from a local farm to boost the local agricultural economy at a timely juncture in the growing season when farm products are plentiful and readily available.

- The theme of the 2008 Buy Local Challenge was “Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet” tying together the benefits of supporting local farms to the environment. This environmental theme highlighted the significant role of farms in reducing state carbon footprint, enhancing the environment with nutritious foods, cleaner water and land preservation potential.
- SMADC designed a special flier for Governor O’Malley and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) using the “Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet” theme. The fliers were distributed through the MVA vehicle registration renewal notices across the state.
- The last full week of July has been designated Buy Local Challenge Week (BLC) and is intended to become an annually recurring event. Governor Martin O’Malley issued a statewide proclamation for the second consecutive year calling on Maryland residents to support state agriculture by taking the Buy Local Challenge.
- In 2007, and continuing through 2008, SMADC designed original promotional materials, including a logo, fliers, signs, decals, buttons, generic press releases, and a website, and made these available electronically to farms and agricultural marketing professionals and organizations across the entire state of Maryland at no cost. The materials highlighted the flavor, nutritional and considerable health benefits local farm products can provide. They also emphasized how and where local farm edibles can be found at farms, farm markets, as well as businesses that actively purchase farm products.
- In addition to the five southern counties, Agricultural Marketing Professionals (AMPS) from Talbot, Washington, Dorchester, Caroline, Frederick, Montgomery, Cecil, Garrett, and Howard counties actively participated in the promotion and developed special regional promotional events and promotional materials based on the templates designed and developed by SMADC.

### Notable '08 campaign highlights:

- [www.buy-local-challenge.com](http://www.buy-local-challenge.com). This website was created by SMADC as an information conduit for the promotion. The site displays a statewide map, and useful information (tips for preparation of fresh farm food, recipes, product lists, and links to participating sites) providing support for the campaign that is viable for the entire year. The site recorded 20,296 hits with 6,490 unique visits from August 2007 through July 2008.
- New double-sided flier and specially designed promotional items were widely distributed to all participating farms, farmer’s markets, farm stands, restaurants, stores, libraries, hospitals and other public venues.
- Governor O’Malley promotes Buy Local Challenge in Maryland’s Best radio advertisements.
- MVA license renewals - MDA/Maryland’s Best promotes Buy Local Challenge using SMADC design for insertion in statewide MVA license renewals – 105,000 fliers direct mailed and distributed.
- Comcast tag line - St. Mary’s County Government advertising promotes Buy Local Challenge
- Comcast cable interviews with SMADC Executive Director for Baltimore region and local area.
- Eight BLC ads in four metro DC and local zones regional newspapers reached a combined circulation of 290,934.
- Thirty-six independently authored articles / press releases in twenty-four publications reaching an estimated audience of more than 1.5 million. Total circulation of BLC media including websites is in excess of 5 million.

- Thirty-two “Dot Com” newspaper sites, independent web sites, web publications, 3 radio/TV stations and 2 cable networks promoted the challenge. (Of note: Washingtonpost.com and YouTube featured video clips from the Challenge; significant public interest spawned numerous on-line blogs to chart personal challenge progress; copy-cat Buy Local Challenge Sites including Agriculture officials in Virginia challenging all resident to eat local for a day Aug 3- 9).
- Three local Economic Development offices, Maryland Cooperative Extension and Soil Conservation newsletters and websites promoted the campaign.
- Special presentations were made to County Commissioners of four SMD counties to promote BLC to public. These were broadcast on local cable television.
- Anne Arundel County Chief Executive, Prince George’s Council Members, St. Mary’s, Calvert and Charles County Commissioners, all endorsed the BLC with Proclamations.
- Ten St. Mary’s restaurants, stores, wineries host Local Flavor, Local Flare BLC kick-off event in Leonardtown - a sold out event 265 tickets issued. Proceeds benefit a local Habitat for Humanity charity.
- Governor O’Malley hosts State House BLC “Kick-off Cook-out” and endorsed challenge with Proclamation at luncheon for over 150 local farmers, state & local officials, heads of major grocery chains and area restaurants. Menu featured products donated from local farms, dairies and fisheries. WBAL Radio and TV, WTOP (channel 7), local cable stations and newspapers covered the event.
- Agriculture Secretary Roger Richardson visits Talbot County Farmers' Markets and visits restaurants with special "Buy Local Week" menus. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Earl F. Hance visits Washington County Ag Expo Speaking about Buy Local Week.
- Special events and cooking demos by local restaurants at area markets – National Harbor, USDA, Cheverley, Westfield Annapolis, North Beach, including 6 Eastern Shore markets.
- Anne Arundel Economic Development Corp. (EDC) sponsors Buy Local Challenge Week Agricultural Education Day at Knightongale Farm; 3 local restaurants and Whole Foods prepared foods Department demonstrate farm fresh recipes - over 200 attend. WTOP (channel 7) and Gazette Newspapers cover event. SMADC participated.
- SMADC participated in a National Harbor cooking demonstration by Wolfgang Birk, covered by multiple media, in support the American Market
- Numerous restaurants feature BLC menus statewide.
- Calvert EDC sponsors ad for area restaurants to featuring BLC menus.
- 66 Southern Maryland restaurants, stores and institutions distributed BLC fliers.

**FARM TO HOSPITALS** – SMADC worked with several partners co-supporting a grant to entice Maryland Hospitals to promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly practices in hospitals in the greater Baltimore region.

- The project educated hospital food service administrators on the benefits of buying from local farms.
- In September 2008, the project will adapt SMADC’s Buy Local Challenge (BLC) to promote a “Buy Local Awareness” week and challenge hospitals and their employees to participate in the BLC July 2009.

**FARM TO SCHOOL WEEK** – SMADC has been working in partnership with MD Cooperative Extension and St. Mary’s County Economic Development to encourage St. Mary’s County Public Schools to participate in the Maryland “Farm to School” week in September 2008 (upcoming event).

- Four schools in the county were chosen.
- SMADC is designing and distributing posters using “Cornelia and the Farm Band” (see below) to educate school children on “what’s in season” and the health benefits of good nutrition, exercise, and local farm foods.
- SMADC is helping to develop curriculum, and will distribute Cornelia Coloring Books, Cornelia seed packets, and Farmer Market Brochures to each child in the schools.

- The schools plan to use SMADC's DVD "Discovering the New American Farmer", produced in 2006, and the Cornelia public service announcements and songs to educate school children about farms and local foods.

**FARMERS' MARKETS** – Program funds provide promotional advertising for 14 Farmers Markets in the five counties. Sales in 2007 from these markets averaged \$1.8 million for over 175 Southern Maryland growers.

- ***Southern Maryland Regional Farmers Wholesale Market*** – This market is one of two of the region's wholesale auction markets for Southern Maryland. The Market (Cheltenham) requested support from program funds. This wholesale market supports over 500 Southern Maryland farmers.
- ***Market Events*** – SMSG supported four market season grand opening events – Glen Burnie, South Colony and Deale in Anne Arundel County and Waldorf in Charles County.
- ***Farmers' Market Meeting*** – New in 2008, SMACD initiated a meeting to update farmers' market grant application procedures, promotional materials and upcoming SMADC initiatives (BLC, brochure, etc.) and to network with the other managers. Over 20 attended and much positive feedback was received.
- ***Assistance to Developing, New Markets*** – *This season SMSG saw unprecedented growth in that six new regional farmers' markets have opened. SMADC met with them to offer promotional items and any support and guidance they may have needed (i.e., vendor solicitation, market rules and regulations, media outreach other advice).*

## **AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

### **AGRIBUSINESS AND AGRITOURISM**

Agritourism continues to be a major opportunity for the further development and crystallization of our ongoing efforts to build a program that encourages area tourism with Agritourism at its core, offering a lucrative alternative for regional farms.

- ***Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination*** - The goal of this initiative, is "*to provide economic benefit to Southern Maryland by providing visitors attractive, unique and authentic experiences of the region's culture and living heritage facilitating innovative partnerships between farms, artists, and related heritage sites and businesses.*" Our second goal is to promote economic and community development through facilitating partnerships and cross-marketing. To this end, we host annual "Trails" networking events to encourage the development of these innovative business partnerships. A third and no less significant goal is to "educate ourselves about our own community". By appreciating what we have here in Southern Maryland, we hope that our local citizens will be more compelled to support our local farms and businesses, as well as land preservation programs that enhance the rural beauty of our region. As one local reader was overheard to say on the day of the Trails launch: "*Reading this (guide) book makes me feel like I live somewhere special.*"
- Thirty new sites are included in the Trails in FY'08 and Imaginative Itineraries, Partner Packages and scavenger hunt incentives will be introduced in the newly updated guide book (due out September 7, 2008.)
- SMADC begins to introduce incentives for local businesses not eligible to be a Trails site to sponsor the Trails book through a wine tasting offered by one of the Trails sites. About 30 local businesses attended.
- The guidebook is an informative and creative guidebook, designed to entice and educate readers about the unique features of Southern Maryland. A fold-out map orients readers. Interesting tidbits give readers a sense of culture and history, and fun facts. The Guide is widely distributed to tourist centers, participant sites, fairs, chambers of commerce, and other locales, and the nearby metro areas.

- A website, [www.somdtrails.com](http://www.somdtrails.com), explains the trails and guidebook to visitors, and provides a means of communication with trails members.
- Twenty-two ads were placed in 13 separate publications for a total circulation of 3,461,867 in FY'08.
- Press release coverage circulation totals 353,500.
- The Trails program won the Maryland Tourism Industry Council 2006 Best New Product Award.

### **AGRIBUSINESS AND VALUE-ADDED DEVELOPMENT**

#### ▪ ***Regional Livestock Slaughter / Processing***

*Southern Maryland Meats:* SMADC continues to work with a group of local livestock producers and USDA RC&D to address the need for a local slaughter and butcher facility, and/or to promote southern Maryland meat through a marketing campaign.

#### ▪ ***Regulations Impacting Farms' Ability to Diversify***

SMADC prepared a report on the challenging regulations affecting farms' ability to diversify into new, innovative operations. The report compared federal and state regulations in Maryland with those in enabling states such as New York, Vermont and other states as a means to educate the farm community and legislators. The recommendations of the report were made available to the agricultural marketing professionals across Maryland.

#### ▪ ***Acidified Foods, Better Food Process Course***

SMADC initiated and sponsored an "Acidified Foods, Better Process Course" with the FDA and College of Southern Maryland so that producers who traditionally preserve and sell products, such as pickled beets and okra, could do so legally under the new Maryland DHMH regulations. Twenty-two participants attended from several counties, many from the Amish community. The curriculum, developed by FDA was found to be appropriate at a more corporate level than most local producers, and SMADC was able to revise the teaching with FDA such that the local producers could understand and pass the course.

### **AGRIBUSINESS GRANTS AND BUSINESS PLANNING**

#### • ***Growing Grapes for Wine in Southern Maryland***

This grant program was the first of its kind in Maryland, and became a prototype for the new statewide program. Towards a goal of increasing wine grape acreage in Maryland and capitalizing on an earlier research grant to Maryland Cooperative Extension. This grant program provides matching funds for the purchase of grape vines. The program is offered with the full partnership of Cooperative Extension to provide expertise and guidance through site visits and workshops on growing grapes in Southern Maryland. Grantees are required to attend the workshop, follow accepted cultivating practices, and become members in the Maryland Grape Growers Association or Maryland Wineries Association to encourage networking and marketing potential.

- In 2008, another round of grants was offered. Thus far, a total 11 farms have been awarded grants, totaling 23 acres.

#### • ***Southern Maryland Farm Viability Enhancement Grant Program***

This program provides business planning and grant assistance to farmers to diversify their operations, add value to farm products and/or services, and gain better market access. Twenty-three farms have developed or are developing business plans. In return for grant funds, farms are required to place their land under preservation. We have received four new applications in 2008. Among the approved for business plans are the following:

- Agritourism – two farms (2008)
- Vineyard, and Bed and breakfast (2008)
- Vineyard (2008)

### **EDUCATION - ADVANCED LEVEL**

***Farmer Seminars / Workshops:*** In an effort to help farmers in the five southern Maryland counties continue to diversify and transition away from tobacco, education is an ongoing priority.

- ***Southern Maryland Equine Conference*** – Following on the success of the first Equine Conference, and in response to requests from evaluations received on areas of particular interest, the second Equine Conference continued to build Commission outreach to the growing equine industry in Southern Maryland providing support and education for equine related businesses, and identified new areas of opportunity for equine and existing agricultural farms. The conference was well received with a total of 130 people attending over the three days. Fifteen individual sessions were offered covering a wide range of subjects identified from surveys as areas of interest to the equine community.
  - Sessions featured: Hay Selection, Land Management, Farm Management, Weed Identification and Control, Broodmare and Foal Management, Horse Nutrition and Care, Business Plan Development, Regulatory Update, Equine Dentistry and Hoof Health.
  - A full-day off-site equestrian demonstration and training session at a local horse farm was designed to provide an opportunity for riders and business owners from across the many riding disciplines to share experiences and learn from internationally renowned trainers and speakers. Analysis of the evaluation forms was very encouraging with numerous compliments for the speakers (AGNR, Extension, internationally and nationally acclaimed guest speakers, panelists from the local equine and business community) who were commended for the excellent content and topicality of their presentations. Conference meals provided a showcase for winter farm products from four local farms.
- ***Grape Production Workshop*** – *In conjunction with MD Cooperative Extension*, in 2008, we once again offered this full-day workshop which presented a broad overview of commercial vineyard development from pre-plant planning into the third year including economics and marketing information, variety, clone, and rootstock choices, site selection and preparation, pre-plant decisions, equipment and supply requirements. It also covered the basics of ordering, planting, and tending the vines through the third year of growth, as well as best practices for training, canopy management, and pest management. This workshop was a good overview of what is involved with getting a commercial vineyard started in Maryland. This workshop attracted not only people from all over the state, but also one couple as far away as Texas. Feedback from participants was very favorable.

### **EDUCATION - ELEMENTARY AND TEEN EDUCATION**

- ***Kids Cook and Cornelia and the Farm Band*** – Now in its fifth year, much of the educational package is available to view and download from our website for individual classroom and home schooling venues. The evolving materials emphasize messages to children and families about health, good nutrition and exercise that come from a farm, and teach messages about the diversity of local farm products and services available in Southern Maryland. The evolving package includes curriculum for fourth grade, two coloring books and more (see below).
  - ***Cornelia and the Farm Band*** – *Four public service announcements* were created in 2006 portraying messages to children and families about health, good nutrition and exercise that come from a farm. These animation pieces were broadcast continually throughout 2006-2008 on local television stations, and are a component piece of the educational package that will be available to schools and home-schoolers. A unique jingle, “Let’s Go to a Farm” was created for the animation pieces.
  - ***Let’s Go to A Farm website*** – was created for viewers of the public service announcements, to educate and excite children and families about farms, farm products and services.

- Two coloring books have been published, initially inspired by Southern Maryland children's character designs. The second book, *Cornelia and the Farm Band* coloring book, paralleling the messages of the four public service announcements, was published in 2006 and will be used to promote Maryland's Farm to School week in SMD.
  - Over 64,500 copies have been distributed. Three entire school systems (Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's County) have requested and received copies of the coloring books for their elementary school students.
  - Fall 2008: Humorous animated farm songs from the second coloring book have been developed to accompany the curriculum materials, which will be used in school curriculum for the Farm to School week in the fall of 2008.
  - Fall 2008: Cornelia and the Farm Band characters are being used to introduce school children to "What's in Season" through a poster that will be displayed in school cafeterias during Maryland's "Farm to School" week in September 2008.
- **SMILE (Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo)** - As farms become fewer in number across the state of Maryland, it is increasingly important to find ways to educate farm children, and encourage educational networking opportunities.
  - In its fourth year, the SMILE show is now an established, and highly anticipated calendar date for area youth. Following the success of the first shows, SMADC committee sponsorship funds (pending availability) for an additional 5 years, increasing financial support by \$1000 annually. SMILE show classes featured fitting and showing, market and breeding competitions for beef, a new dairy cow class, swine, sheep, dairy goats and meat goats. The horse show in its second year provided 30 competition classes for both Western and English disciplines. SMILE continues to grow, offering new animal classes each year and education for children and youth up to the age of 21 years; a total of 128 children and youth participated from nine-counties including four Eastern Shore counties. 350 animals were registered for the events. In addition to the livestock shows, a SMILE community dinner, educational and youth development events were held to foster camaraderie and enhance participants' knowledge and appreciation for the area's agricultural heritage.
  - The show was well attended by local and elected officials, Farm Bureau representatives, County Commissioners and the St. Mary's County Fair Board, in addition to members of the general public. Local newspapers, cable and website media reported on the event.
  - Organizers committed to the longevity of the show and in 2008, filed and completed 501c3 non-profit status. The SMILE board continues to actively seek grants and donations from other organizations so that the show can eventually become self-sustaining.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH:**

- **Community Outreach:** Educating the community about the state of Southern Maryland agriculture and ways to support our local farms continues to be an important facet of our work. We spoke on behalf of the farm community at many events, including Comcast Cable Baltimore and Calvert County, Rural Summit, MadMac, SMADC Forum, Sotterley Wine Fest, Prince George's Farm Bureau, Farm Bureau Annual Dinner, Cheney Environmental Day, Governor's Buy Local Challenge Kick-off, North Beach Business Group, Breton Bay Garden Club, ASA Hagerstown, Accokeek Foundation, Nuffield Scholars Visit, Young Farmers, 2 Acidified Foods Workshops, National Harbour Wine Fest, National Harbour Market, 5 Local Commissioners hearings, Capitol for a Day/Leonardtown, Westfield Market Grand Opening, Anne Arundel Agricultural Education Day. The Buy Local Challenge Week was also conceived as a way to spotlight

farms through public outreach and education with messages such as “*Did you know that if every household in Southern Maryland spent \$12 a week for just 8 weeks, over \$54 million would be reinvested directly into our farmers’ pockets?*”

- **Discovering the New American Farmer:** Our thirty minute documentary, using local stories to tell an international message continues to be broadcast on MPTV in 2008, and nationally on RFD-TV (a national television broadcast serving rural America), and on local cable television stations. The film has also been shown and discussed at events for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the St. Mary’s County Farm Bureau, and Prince George’s County Soil Conservation Service. DVDs are available for a modest fee.
  - The film captures the beauty of Southern Maryland’s agriculture and natural resources through interview with local farmers and officials. Its purpose is to educate viewers about the modern struggles of So. Maryland farmers as the region transitions out of tobacco and the responsibilities of So. Maryland consumers as the population rapidly increases in the area. The documentary provides proactive suggestions on how to strike a balance between the sometimes opposing communities of farming and development, in order to support our agricultural economy, preserve our regions rural character and protect So. Maryland’s environmental resources. Various voices and perspectives were collected to tell the story of So. Maryland’s changing communities, including leading farmers, watermen, local legislators, and county officials.
  - In 2008, the film will be used in local schools to help educate children during Maryland’s Farm to School week.
  - The film won two national Telly awards in the categories of education and culture in the spring of 2006.

For more information regarding this program, please contact the following:

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**Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission  
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland**

**SOUTHERN MARYLAND TOBACCO CROP CONVERSION PROGRAM**

*Southern Maryland: Transitioning away from a Tobacco Heritage*

For over 360 years, Southern Maryland's agricultural economy has been dependent on tobacco production. In 1992, tobacco accounted for two-thirds of the total value of all agricultural commodities produced in the region and provided the mainstay for over 900 full/part time growers. In 2000, the state of Maryland instituted a voluntary tobacco buy-out program to transition farmers out of tobacco production forever, to be administered through the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. The result of the Buyout has been an unprecedented and significant cultural and economic shift as has not been experienced since the advent of European settlers.

According to a study conducted in 2001, the region's heavy dependence on tobacco has left other agricultural sectors poorly developed. Little non-tobacco agricultural infrastructure is currently in place in Southern Maryland. Agricultural innovation and entrepreneurship are severely lacking. Economic indicators show that agriculture in SMD does worse than in other parts of the state as well as elsewhere in the nation. The lowest net returns per acre (price per unit) are in SMD, and very little of those returns circulate through the rest of the SMD economy. All of this is coupled with statistics that show urban sprawl and land development are occurring faster on Southern Maryland's remaining 244,000 acres of farmland than anywhere else in the state. In short, agriculture and the natural resource base in Southern Maryland are in need of major help.

To address these tremendous needs, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, a non-profit, quasi-governmental body, convened the SMD Agricultural Development Commission to develop a program to stabilize the region's agricultural economy as farmers convert from tobacco to alternative crop and other agricultural enterprises. The Commission represents a cross-section of the region's community, from elected officials and local government, to representatives from higher education centers and traditional agricultural sectors, to private sector, business and finance representatives, and farmers. Together with the Council, the Commission has revised the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland Strategic Plan for Agriculture to this "Southern Maryland Tobacco Crop Conversion Program" with the following mission, vision and goals:

**MISSION**

To promote diverse, market-driven agricultural enterprises\*, which coupled with agricultural land preservation, will preserve Southern Maryland's environmental resources and rural character while keeping the region's farmland productive and the agricultural economy vibrant.

\*"Agricultural enterprises" and "natural resource based enterprises" are used interchangeably and are broadly defined as tobacco-free sustainable agriculture, and includes forestry and aquatic resources and agriculturally related activities such as agri-tourism and value-added processing.

**VISION**

A diversified, profitable Southern Maryland agricultural industry thereby enhancing the quality of life for all citizens.

The Tobacco Crop Conversion Program consists of three main components—Tobacco Buyout, Infrastructure / Agricultural Development, and Agricultural Land Preservation as follows:

**OVERARCHING GOALS**

- (1) The **Tobacco Buyout** component is a voluntary program which provides funds to a) support all eligible Maryland tobacco growers who choose to give up tobacco production forever while remaining in agricultural production and b) restrict the land from tobacco production for 10 years should the land transfer into new ownership.
- (2) The **Infrastructure / Agricultural Development Program** will foster profitable natural resource based enterprises and regional economic development for Southern Maryland by assisting farmers

and related businesses to diversify and develop and/or expand market-driven agricultural enterprises in the region through a) economic development and b) education.

- (3) The **Agricultural Land Preservation** component seeks to provide an incentive for Southern Maryland tobacco farmers to place land in agricultural preservation, to enhance participation in existing Southern Maryland agricultural land preservation programs, and to assist infrastructure needs for farmers' markets.

For more information regarding this program, please contact the following:

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**SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL for SOUTHERN MARYLAND**

**Southern Maryland Regional Strategy – Action Plan for Agriculture**

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, ACTION PLANS and MFRs  
FY 2008 (July 2007 - June 2008)**

**Goal 1. Transition Maryland growers away from tobacco production for human consumption**

<i>Objective 1.1</i>	<i>By the year 2005, 85-90% of the eligible tobacco growers in Maryland will no longer produce tobacco in Maryland for human consumption</i>
<b>Strategy 1.1.1</b>	<b>Administer the Tobacco Buyout Program for the State of Maryland which offers a monetary incentive for growers who produced tobacco in 1998 to forever cease tobacco production for human consumption</b>
Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tobacco Buyout</li> </ul>

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FY 2008 (July 2007 - June 2008)**

**Managing for Results**

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Goal	Goal
Performance Measures	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Inputs:</b>						
Number of farmers applying for the program per year	67	76	na	na	na	na
<b>Output:</b>						
Total number of applying farmers who have contractually agreed to cease tobacco production	67	76	na	na	na	na
<b>Efficiency:</b>						
Applications and contracts processed in timely manner (%)	100	100	na	na	na	na
Payment checks issued in timely manner (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Outcomes:</b>						
Cumulative number of growers out of tobacco	779	854	854	854	854	854
Cumulative pounds of eligible tobacco out of production (millions)	7.331	7.65	7.65	7.65	7.65	7.65
<b>Quality:</b>						
Percent of tobacco farmers who cease tobacco production via the program (cumulative)	76%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
Percent of tobacco pounds that are out of production via the program (cumulative)	89%	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%
Payments issued in timely manner (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Goal 2. Assist farmers and businesses to diversify and develop market-driven agricultural enterprises**

<b>Objective 2.1</b>	<b>Targeted marketing programs for Southern Maryland developed</b>
<b>Strategy 2.1.1</b>	<b>Develop and support programs for retail and/or wholesale markets for Southern Maryland agricultural products</b>
Action Plan/Step	<b><u>Marketing Southern Maryland Products (now So. Maryland, So Good (SMSG))</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a marketing program to enable Southern Maryland producers to gain access to metropolitan markets</li> </ul>
Action Plan/Step	<b><u>Southern Maryland Farm Guide (now SMSG)</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and develop Farm Product and Services Directories to promote Southern Maryland farm, store, and restaurant retail and wholesale products and services</li> </ul>
Action Plan/Step	<b><u>Farmer's Market Promotion and Development</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist counties and producers in the promotion and development of farmers' markets for local products</li> </ul>

**Managing for Results**

**Goal 2. Objective 2.1: Targeted marketing Programs for Southern Maryland developed**

Strategy 2.1.1	Develop and support projects for retail and/or wholesale markets for Southern Maryland agricultural products
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	Actual	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Goal
Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2008	2009	2010
<b>Inputs:</b>						
Number of grower applications: Farm Guide and SMSG (merged)	197	200	205	221	230	240
Number of store participants: SMSG (now including stores, restaurants, institutions )	59	62	65	66	74	78
Number of Farmers' Market applications	13	13	13	14	18	18
<b>Output:</b>						
Market trends, loan, and feasibility studies assessed	1	0	0	0	0	0
SMD Directories published (Regional, Direct-market) <sup>1</sup>	3	4	3	4	4	3
<b>Efficiency:</b>						
Directories published in timely manner	2	4	3	4	4	3
Farmer market applications and contracts processed timely	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Outcomes:</b>						
Number of growers / businesses advertising in Directory <sup>2</sup>	254	287	290	312	325	330
Number of Farmers Markets supported/promoted <sup>3</sup>	18	18	18	22	23	23
Number of Farmers' benefiting from farmers' market promotion, enhancement <sup>4</sup>	671	665	665	675	685	690
<b>Quality:</b>						
Advertising campaign – number of direct mailings, media ads <sup>5</sup>	4.4 m	3.2 m	3.2 m	5.1 m	4.0 m	4.2 m

1: Equine brochure, holiday brochure and farmers' market brochure, Trails guide

2: 221 in directory, 66 stores and restaurants and 25 implement and suppliers

3: 22 Farmers Market (retail and wholesale) in brochure

4: 175 farmers from farmers markets, 500 Cheltenham

5: Direct mailings (9,053) and 35% of combined circulation for ads and press in FY '08

**Goal 2. Objective 2.2. Farmers and agri-businesses diversified and on-farm and related income increased**

Strategy 2.2.1	Develop and implement a grant program to provide incentives and professional support for farmers to increase on-farm income and preserve the farm's environmental resources (Southern Maryland Farm Viability Enhancement Program)
Strategy 2.2.2	Develop opportunities for value-added processing
Strategy 2.2.3	Develop and support a regional agri-tourism program
Strategy 2.2.4	Promote, advertise and recruit agri-businesses into and from Southern Maryland
Strategy 2.2.5	Provide matching grant support for targeted local, state and federal agricultural grant programs

	Actual	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Goal
Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2008	2009	2010
<b>Inputs:</b>						
Number of applications for SMD Farm Viability & Grape Grants	24	24	15	7	10	12
Number of relevant local, state and/or federal grants <sup>1</sup>	0	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Output:</b>						
Cumulative number of Farm Viability Business Plans developed	14	20	21	23	26	28
Agri-tourism Brochures published <sup>2</sup>	2	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Efficiency:</b>						
Applications and plans processed timely	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grant funds processed in timely manner	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Outcomes:</b>						
Number of farms with viable business plans (cumulative) <sup>3</sup>	14	29	22	24	27	29
Business Incubator / Processing Kitchen design underway	1	0	0	0	0	0
Number of producers/business participating or enhanced in agri-tourism as a result of program <sup>4</sup>	153	191	200	209	225	225
Matching grants awarded	0	0	1	1	1	1
<b>Quality:</b>						
Advertising campaign – number of direct mailings, media ads <sup>5</sup>	4.4 m	3.2 m	3.2 m	5.1 m	4.0 m	4.2 m

1. USDA matching grant FY'07: Supplying locally produced foods to hospitals
2. Agritourism brochure has evolved into SMD Trails guidebook
3. Three business plans approved FY'08 and are being prepared
4. 209 in Trails guide (includes arts and festivals) FY'08
5. Direct mailings (9,053 ) and 35% of combined circulation for ads and press in FY'08

**Goal 2. Objective 2.3. Information and education to enable the agricultural community to diversify farm and related operations provided**

Strategy 2.3.1	Develop and/or support relevant trade fairs, conferences, workshops and seminars on select related topics
Strategy 2.3.2	Support and develop education and training opportunities in agriculture, leadership and business management
Strategy 2.3.3	Provide information through diverse media (eg: newsletter, website, resource library)

	Actual	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Goal
Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2008	2009	2010
<b>Inputs:</b>						
Funds available for Infrastructure programs	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Output:</b>						
Number of Educational Tours developed	1	1	1	1	1	1
Number of Educational Tours developed (cumulative)	9	10	11	11	12	13
Educational opportunities (fairs, conferences, courses, seminars, etc.) sponsored through program <sup>1</sup>	30	30	25	41	30	35
Educational opportunities (fairs, conferences, courses, seminars, etc.) sponsored through program (cumulative) <sup>1</sup>	116	147	172	188	218	223
Number of scholarships awarded	1	0	1	0	0	0
Number of farmers / businesses directly receiving information <sup>2</sup>	2234	3372	2300	3093	3200	3400
<b>Efficiency:</b>						
Grant or sponsoring funds processed in timely manner	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Outcomes:</b>						
Number of agri /businesses enhanced/developed as a result of tours, education, trade fairs, grants, etc. (participants in workshops, etc.) <sup>3</sup>	940	811	800	1034	1050	1100
<b>Quality:</b>						
Advertising campaign – outreach of direct mailings, media ads <sup>4</sup>	4.4 m	3.2 m	3.2 m	5.1 m	4.0 m	4.2 m

- 5 workshops, 27 community meetings and public outreach and 9 special events in 2008 totaling 41  
Cumulative: 1 (2001)+ 7 (2002)+17 (2003)+ 18 (2004)+ 43 (2005)+ 30 (2006)+ 30 (2007)+ 41 (2008)
- Mailings: 3093 = 1,708 for 2 tobacco mailings; 209 Trails mixer, 64 equine brochure, 665 for 3 SMSG farm mailings, 198 for 3 SMSG bus. mailings, 100 holiday brochure mailing, 128 SMILE, 21 farmers' market.brochure
- Grantees (23), Workshops & Special Events (1,011)
- Direct mailings (9,053) and 35% of combined circulation for ads and press in FY '08

**Goal 3. To promote and support agricultural land preservation in Southern Maryland.**

<b>Objective 3.1</b>	<b><i>Incentives for landowners to put land under state and/or local agricultural land preservation programs and to support the counties' agricultural land preservation programs provided</i></b>
Strategy 3.1.1	Provide an incentive for landowners who take the Tobacco Buyout to place their land under agricultural preservation as specified in the Tobacco Buyout Contract by receiving an additional 10% of the easement price, pending availability of funds
Strategy 3.1.2	Match State / County Easements for agricultural land easement on a one-to-one basis. First priority will be given to landowners who have committed to the Tobacco Buyout and received their first payment. Remaining funds may be used for agricultural land easements of other agricultural landowners
<b>Objective 3.2</b>	<b><i>Acquisition of County land for Farmers' markets on a one-to-one match from the County and General Market Support</i></b>
Strategy 3.2.1	Provide support and funds upon request for acquisition of land for a Farmers' Market. Acquisition may include either the purchase of land or a long-term lease agreement. Funds may also be used for general market support.

<b>FY'08 Performance Measures</b>	<b>Actual 2005</b>	<b>Actual 2006</b>	<b>Actual 2007</b>	<b>Goal 2008</b>	<b>Actual 2008</b>	<b>Goal 2009</b>	<b>Goal 2010</b>
<b>Inputs:</b>							
Funds made available to support existing county preservation program (thousands) <sup>1</sup>	1,473	1,875	2,025	1,199	1,199 <sup>2</sup>	1,441	1,441
Bonus funds available to support incentive for tobacco farmers (thousands)	378	na	389	480	480	238	238
<b>Output:</b>							
County programs strengthened	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Number of eligible Growers who place land under agricultural preservation (cumulative, inc. leveraged matching) <sup>2</sup>	92	125	164	175	184	205	225
<b>Outcomes:</b>							
Cumulative acres permanently preserved (inc. matching) <sup>2</sup>	13,593	17,166	20,556	22,500	22,886 <sup>3</sup>	25,185	27,586
Counties participating	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>Quality:</b>							
Payments issued in a timely manner	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

1. At the end of each fiscal year, unused funds are reallocated from infrastructure programs to preservation
2. Acres reported at the end of each fiscal year include properties that are approved by the counties and waiting settlement, thus funds are encumbered for those specific properties. Sometimes these properties drop out and the funds are used to support the next easement offer. This FY2008 report reflects all the adjustments to date since the beginning of this program.
3. The Maryland Board of Public Works reduced the approved SMADC budget by 8% in June 2007 (MDA and DBM reported that all Maryland programs funded by the Maryland Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF) were equally cut by 8% budget in June '07). This number reflects that budget reduction.

For more information regarding this program, please contact the following:

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**Attachment A**  
**2007 Tobacco Buyout Survey Summary (conducted Oct.-Dec. 2007)**

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission sent out a voluntary survey along with the 2007 Buyout Annual Renewal Form. The survey was sent to all of the living Tobacco Buyout participants. There are 854 Maryland Tobacco Buyout original contracts and 468 responded to the survey. Not every question received responses. Responses came from Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties.

**Summary of the Fall 2007 survey:**

- The survey results are encouraging.
- Increased transitions are occurring into new and profitable agricultural enterprises, such as:
  - Nurseries/greenhouses,
  - Cattle/livestock, and
  - grapes for wine, and
- These results, combined with the statistics, show
  - a majority of farms are maintaining their operations in So. Maryland
  - and reinforce our strategic programs in marketing, agribusiness and education, protecting farm assets and estate planning.

**Summary of the 2007 Survey Questions and Responses:**

**Before the Buyout**

The majority of growers were part-time farmers. Results show that approximately 60% of the respondents identified themselves as part-time growers before the buyout, and 40% identified themselves as full-time farmers. This is consistent with last year's results.

**After the Buyout**

Approximately 65% of the respondents consider themselves as part-time growers and close to 22% as full-time. This represents, more or less a 5% shift in more part-time growers from 2006 and the year before.

**Age**

Of the 466 responses, 69% are 50 years of age or older, and 50% are 60 or older.

**Farm Operation**

A total of 75% of respondents have maintained or grown their farm operation, a 5% increase from last year's survey. Approximately 25% have downsized their operation, a 5% decrease from last year's results. This is very encouraging as the buyout program was envisioned to help the Southern Maryland tobacco farmer stay in agriculture by providing the annual funds and tools such as land preservation, grant and marketing programs for the grower to help find an alternative crop or market-driven agribusiness. Thirty (6%) have downsized their operation.

**What do You Currently Grow/Raise and Will You Diversify?**

Traditional crops remain the top products with respondents. Grains, hay, vegetables and livestock are and remain the top choices.

This year we asked participants if they anticipate diversifying into anything new within the next 1-5 year period. Only slightly more than half of the respondents answered the question, and of those, an astounding 85% do not foresee they will diversify. Of the ones that do plan to diversify, some of their ideas are cattle/livestock, nurseries/greenhouses, grapes for wine, Christmas tree farms, hay, different vegetables, organic vegetables and cut flowers.

## **Land Ownership**

We asked participants if they were land owners and if so, who farms the land. Of the 445 responses, approximately 76% are land owners, and of those 83% farm the land themselves or with family members.

Several indicated interest in finding more land, or leasing their land to other farmers.

## **Employing Outside Workers**

This year we asked whether participants employ outside workers to work on the farm. Of the 395 responses, over 85% do not employ outside workers. Of the few who did employ outside workers (53 responses), the majority (38) did not have difficulty in hiring outside workers.

## **Workshops**

We asked for suggestions of specific workshops that SMADC could offer. We received a wealth of suggestions, some of those include farm management, new trends in agriculture, grape growing, how to start a nursery, generational issues, estate planning, equine opportunities, alternative crops, and workshops for non-farmers.

Please note:

### **Growing Grapes for Wine workshop**

SMADC co-hosted a full day workshop with Cooperative Extension on Growing Grapes for Wine on February 13 in the SMECO complex in Hughesville, MD.

### **Equine and Hay Workshop**

SMADC offered a three - day Equine Conference April 3-5, with information on hay, stabling businesses, horse care, and an on-farm horse demo in Lexington Park, MD.

### **Other Workshops and Opportunities**

We also are planning a workshop on Estate Planning for farmers in the near future, and a workshop on Community Supported Agriculture. Cooperative Extension offers vegetable growing conferences throughout multiple counties and classes on pesticides, safety on the farm and other topics.

## **Challenges**

We asked which challenges facing farmers we, SMADC, could help with. Although we only received 48 responses, the majority of the responses were about high prices of seeds, fuel and fertilizer. Land prices are high, and due to development pressures, there is a lack of land available. High tax assessments and insurance of certain crops/businesses like pumpkins and corn mazes also hurt area farms.

Please note:

### **Regulations Study**

SMADC completed, and made available, a study on the regulations that impact the farms in our area and compares these regulations with those in other states.