



## **END OF YEAR REPORT – FY'18 (SMADC Fiscal Year: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) is to support farms and the future of agriculture in Southern Maryland. We are committed to expanding and promoting a viable and profitable agricultural farming community in Southern Maryland, and while the primary focus is on the five southern counties of Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's, many of our initiatives do reach statewide.

SMADC provides vision, support, grants, and marketing and promotion to area farmers. As new farm economies are being formed, SMADC helps to streamline regulations and reduce obstacles.

At SMADC, we are assisting farmers in creating a profitable farming future and educating the public on the importance of local farms to our overall economy. To achieve that goal, we are committed to helping connect local farmers to their consumers, as well as to protecting area farmland through local land preservation.

SMADC has completed the disbursement of tobacco buyout funds to all buyout participants, developed a regional strategic plan for diversification, and continues to provide agricultural grants, training, and funding for land preservation as it is available.

We have worked to increase the awareness of farm products available to regional consumers, while enhancing farmers' profitability. We created a farm equipment rental program to increase accessibility of equipment to farmers and developed a Maryland FarmLINK program to foster new and beginning farmers and raise awareness of available farmland for sale or lease in the state. Our efforts in streamlining regulations have helped farms to add value to their products by extending the life of farm foods through on-farm processing, meat and dairy processing, and more.

Simultaneously, SMADC launched promotional campaigns to the public to alert consumers and buyers to the availability of Southern Maryland's diverse farm foods, innovative on-farm services, and "legacy" programs. SMADC looks forward to continuing our work to provide the resources and infrastructure needed for market-driven farms to thrive and be profitable, to expand the region's overall agricultural economic development, to preserve Southern Maryland farmland, to connect consumers to their farmers, and to assure the long-term viability of the regional agricultural economy in Southern Maryland. To aid in the continuance of this mission, SMADC will be releasing its updated Strategic Plan in FY'19.

The SMADC staff is a dedicated and driven group of individuals who are passionate about furthering SMADC's mission. In pursuit of that mission, staff has collaborated with the following agricultural groups across the state to host and/or attend meetings and events in FY'18:

- College of Southern Maryland
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- F3 Tech Accelerator Program
- Future Harvest – Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (FH CASA)
- Grow & Fortify
- Maryland Agricultural and Resourced-Based Industry Development Corp. (MARBIDCO)
- Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation
- Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Maryland Department of Commerce
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Farm Bureau
- Maryland Pork Producers
- Maryland Soybean Board
- Patuxent Environmental & Aquatic Research Laboratory (PEARL)
- Rural Maryland Council
- Southern Maryland Economic Development Offices
- Southern Maryland Soil Conservation Districts
- University of Maryland Extension (UME)
- University of Maryland's Institute of Applied Agriculture

### **SMADC HIRES NEW STAFF**

2018 brought the addition of more talented and dedicated staff to SMADC, and SMADC couldn't manage or offer all of our programs without them.

**Karyn Owens** – Karyn first joined SMADC in 2015 as an Intern, while a student at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) at the University of Maryland, obtaining a degree in Plant Sciences. Once graduated, Karyn joined SMADC again in December 2016 as a permanent part-time employee to assist with Commission meetings, as well as SMADC workshops and events. Now Karyn is a permanent full-time addition as of December 2017 as SMADC's Program Specialist, managing Maryland FarmLINK and a number of other programs. She is a current fellow in LEAD Maryland Class X and participated in the Future Harvest CASA's Beginning Farmer Training Program in 2016.





**Craig Sewell** – Craig joined SMADC in January, 2018 as the new Livestock and Marketing Specialist for Southern Maryland Meats, a marketing program created to support the region’s livestock producers. He is the former owner of A Cooks Café, which for 15 years has been at the forefront of the ‘Buy Local’ movement in Annapolis as one of the first restaurants in the area to source locally raised products and develop a conduit for customers to buy local produce and meats through the restaurant’s CSA and Market Basket program. A graduate of Harvard University with a BA in economics, his professional career has focused on his passion for local agriculture and the sustainability of local business. He served as founding president of the Annapolis Sustainable Business Alliance (a group of independent, local businesses with a mission to supporting locally owned businesses) and as Executive Director of both the National Trade and National Utility Locating Contractors Associations and is a Master Gardener.



**Jean Burke** – Jean joined SMADC in early April, 2018 as the new part-time Grant Coordinator, to assist in identifying viable funding opportunities including federal, state, foundation and local grants. She comes to us with about ten years of freelance writing and grant writing experience. Prior to that, Jean was the Theater Manager at the College of Southern Maryland. She is a graduate of St. Mary's College of Maryland with a BA in Art History.

### **SMADC APPOINTS NEW CHAIRMAN, EDDIE BOWLING**



**Eddie Bowling** was nominated the SMADC Chairman effective April 1, 2018. He is a member of the board as the Charles County farmer seat, a 4-year term. He also served as Chair of SMADC’s Southern Maryland Meats Steering Committee. Now retired from a career with the USDA, Eddie is currently a full-time farmer in Charles County and has brought valuable insight to SMADC over the years through his involvement with the local farming community, including the Charles County Farm Bureau. He is also enthusiastic to engage more youth and new farmers in livestock production and helped to launch the Southern Maryland Meats Junior Livestock program. Eddie owns and operates River Creek Farm where he raises Angus beef and sells his meats to consumers.

### **MEAT CENTER**

Feedback from public forums and surveys, particularly during FY’15, identified a meat processing facility as the top priority for the region.

The objective of the TCCSMD and SMADC board is to create a Request for Proposal (RFP) that allows a public-private partnership to develop, manage and operate a meat processing facility located within the five counties of Southern Maryland (under current structural organization the TCCSMD and SMADC cannot hold title to property). The meat processing facility is intended to provide a suite of multi-species meat processing services adhering to USDA certification (slaughter, cut, process and wrap). Ideally, a single award will be made to an entity which can provide all of the services through sub-contractors and a lease or purchase of property. The contract to be awarded will be for a term of up to 9 years.

In FY’16, SMADC set aside funds to support the development/construction of the meat processing facility. Maryland Agricultural Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) agreed to assist with the financial component of the RFP development and administer SMADC funds through a

low-interest loan which may be converted to a grant, conditional upon certain benchmarks being achieved. The total maximum amount available is \$1 million, of which \$500,000 is available as a loan which can be converted to a grant and the remaining \$500,000 is available as a loan only.

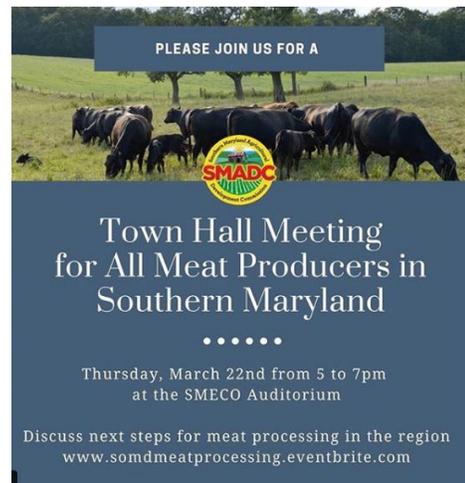
The RFP was issued on November 28, 2016 on eMaryland Market Place and promoted statewide through media press-releases, paid advertisements and SMADC social media platforms. No proposals were received by the due date, January 27, 2017.

SMADC and TCCSMD subsequently appointed a committee to review the RFP and address issues that may have inhibited potential bidders. A revised RFP was issued on September 27, 2017. The proposal invited innovative solutions and portions of the process to take place in more than one location/facility. In addition to press releases and local media alerts, the RFP announcement was sent to over 13 national meat/cattlemen's/butchers' associations, plus national meat and processing publications and established Maryland meat processing plants. Only one bid was received by the deadline of February 8, 2018 which was subsequently rejected by the Review Committee, as the bid did not meet minimum qualifications or demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. In the interim, members of the Amish community in St. Mary's county confirmed their intention to build a slaughter facility which they plan to be USDA certified and in operation by the Fall of 2018.

**Town Hall Meetings:** In the Spring of 2018, the Southern Maryland Meats program of SMADC hosted two Town Hall Meetings to inform livestock producers on the outcome of the RFP and engage the stakeholder community in the 'meat center' project going forward. At the meetings, SMADC discussed the potential offered by the Amish slaughter facility and also options for livestock producers to form a cooperative venture to own and operate a regionally located slaughter and/or finer meats processing center, with the rationale to meet the specific needs of the region's producers and reinforce the SMM brand identity in the market place. Plans are in development to initiate small group committees to investigate options and develop a feasibility study.

**Highlights:**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> RFP launched September 27, 2017
- 2 Town Hall Meetings engage over 40 producers



## SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:

### PROVIDING FARMERS RESOURCES TO BE PROFITABLE

#### Regional Agriculture Projects (RAP)

This initiative was conceived by SMADC to further its mission to support farms and farmers in order to sustain the future of agriculture in Southern Maryland. All five Southern Maryland counties collaborated with their county Farm Bureaus, Soil Conservation Districts and Economic Development/county governments, to identify much needed enhancements for their agricultural communities. **Every county will provide matching funds to their projects for a total regional investment of \$980,000.** Projects and partnerships offer potential to boost economic viability for all types of farming enterprise and strengthen cross-county relationships.

**Awards – Four projects were awarded totaling \$100,000.** Projects (expected to begin in 2018 and completed within three years) address specific issues or needs expressed by the counties, include:

- The restoration of an historic dairy barn in Anne Arundel County for agriculture education programs and meeting space
- An online infrastructure and content management system for Calvert County to provide opportunity for all producers to have a presence on the internet
- A soil health demonstration project for Prince George's County to help educate the farming community on best management practices that improve soil health
- A new enclosed farmers market building for St. Mary's County that provides utility services to allow the expanded sale of refrigerated value-added products.

*Charles County is supporting the St. Mary's County market project with their share of RAP funds as the market offers opportunity for vendors/farms from both counties.*



**Pictured on previous page from Left to Right – Dec. 2017 Group Presentation All Counties:**

**Kim Rush-Lynch**, Agriculture Marketing Consultant, Prince George's County University of Maryland Extension

**Steve Darcy**, District Manager, Prince George's County Soil Conservation District

**Lisa Barge**, Agricultural Marketing & Development Manager, Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation

**Shelby Watson-Hampton**, Director, SMADC

**Donna Sasscer**, Manager Agriculture & Seafood, St. Mary's County Government

**Senator 'Mac' Middleton**, Board Member SMADC, Senator Charles County

**Eddie Bowling**, Board member, SMADC

**Willie Goddard**, Board member, SMADC

**Martin Proulx**, Agriculture Specialist, Charles County Economic Development

**Jennifer Pettko**, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Calvert County Economic Development

**Yates Clagett**, Chairman, SMADC

**Southern Maryland Agricultural Farmer Mini-Grant Program**

The Farmer Mini-Grant Program is open to applicants age 16 and older, residing and farming in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's or St. Mary's counties. Grant awards will be made up to \$2,000 per applicant, as a one-to-one match and can be used for a variety of projects. The Mini-Grant program designed to assist new and beginning farmers with small start-up projects and assist existing farmers looking to diversify or expand a current agriculture project. Projects must be completed within one year.

**In FY'18, SMADC offered two rounds of mini-grants. A total of 24 grants were awarded totaling \$37,815.**

- **804 Cattle Company** (\$2,000) – Cattle Corrals in Prince George's County
- **Anderson's Farm** (\$1,660) – Heritage Sheep Fencing & Egg Production in St. Mary's County
- **Jacob Bowen** (\$200) – Livestock Scale in Calvert County
- **Bowling Farm** (\$1,875) – Livestock Fencing in Charles County
- **Dicot Farm** (\$2,000) – Scaling Up Salad Greens Productions in Charles County
- **Fields of Valor Farm** (\$940) – Hoop House in Prince George's County
- **Floating Lotus Farmstand** (\$1,575) – Season Extension with Hoop Houses in Anne Arundel County
- **David Wood of Forrest Hall Farm** (\$1,000) – Addition of Hoop House in St. Mary's County
- **Kayla Griffith of Griffith Family Produce** (\$250) – Family Produce Revitalization: Marketing in Anne Arundel County
- **Heart Barn Farms** (\$2,000) – Perimeter Fence in Anne Arundel County
- **Hereonthere Farm** (\$715) – Deer Exclusion Fencing in Prince George's County
- **Holiday Memories Farm, LLC** (\$2,000) – Pick Your Own Blueberries in Anne Arundel County
- **Honey Cove Farm** (\$2,000) – Cattle AI Equipment in Calvert County
- **Horsmon Farm** (\$2,000) – Hay Accumagrapple Project in Calvert County
- **Indian Summers Farm** (\$2,000) – Perimeter Fence in Charles County
- **Loblolly Farm** (\$1,000) – Transplant Nursery in Charles County
- **March Meadows** (\$2,000) – Goat Fencing in St. Mary's County
- **Matthew Mudd** (\$2,000) – Livestock Fencing and Waterline in Charles County
- **Owl's Nest Farm** (\$1,600) – Rainwater Catchment System for winter high tunnel production in Prince George's County
- **Pale Blue Dot Farm** (\$2,000) – Enhanced Food Safety and Product Marketability Through Installation of a Farm Cooler in Prince George's County
- **Terra Alta Farm** (\$2,000) – Cattle establishment in St. Mary's County
- **Tobacco Barn Distillery** (\$1,000) – Whiskey Mash Dewatering System in St. Mary's County

- **Trossbach Produce** (\$2,000) – High Tunnel Greenhouse for vegetable production in St. Mary's County
- **Wyoming Farm** (\$2,000) – Orchard Establishment in Prince George's County

**Featured below are examples of funded projects:**

**Owl's Nest Farm – Rainwater Catchment System for winter high tunnel production in Prince George's County**

Owl's Nest Farm is a diversified vegetable farm on four acres in Prince George's County, just twenty miles from Washington, D.C. Established in 2016, the farm is Certified Naturally Grown and they currently sell their products through a CSA, Farmer's Market, and Restaurants. They applied for the SMADC Agricultural Mini-Grant in July 2017 to build a rainwater catchment system for their high tunnel to ensure reliable water access during the winter months. This allows the farm to expand and continue to meet the demand for fresh, local produce to restaurant customers as well as stabilize cash flow by adding income during December and January.

The total cost of the project (including construction labor, hardware, lumber, and misc. supplies) was just over \$3,000. The rainwater catchment system was designed and constructed by Earth-Bound Building, Farm and Forestry based out of Cambridge on the Eastern Shore.

The project is already having a significant impact on the business by allowing them to maintain strong relationships with key contacts. *"With fresh greens as the anchor, we're already thinking about how we might expand winter sales in 2018. For example, this year, we harvested and stored root crops like watermelon radishes and hakurei turnips to sell to restaurants in addition to the greens and in 2018, we're planning to expand production of these root crops that we can harvest and store throughout the winter,"* said Liz Whitehurst, owner and operator of Owl's Nest Farm; she added, *"If we can continue to increase winter income, we may be able to offer winter hours to our seasonal staff, which will help with employee management and turnover."*



### **Trossbach Produce – High Tunnel Greenhouse for vegetable production in St. Mary's County**



Trossbach Produce is a family-owned and operated farm located just north of Point Lookout State Park in St. Mary's County. The farm sells peaches and berries as well as a variety of fresh vegetables, jams, and baked goods. As Trossbach Produce transitions from one generation to the next, they applied for the SMADC Agricultural Mini-Grant in July 2017 to support the construction of a 4,080 square foot high tunnel to extend their growing season

and to better facilitate current and future market needs. This allows the farm to start growing crops earlier, such as tomatoes, and diversify to build a larger customer base.

The total cost of the project (including high tunnel kit, lumber, hardware, and labor) was just over \$12,000. The Natural Resources Conservation Service's EQIP program provided funds in addition to SMADC additional matching funds.

### **804 Cattle Company – Cattle Corrals in Prince George's County**

804 applied for the SMADC Agricultural Mini-Grant in July 2017 to facilitate building a corral and chute system on their 33-acre farm. The purpose of the corrals and chute system allows them to effectively and safely handle their cattle in order to perform preventative care, wean calves, perform pregnancy and health examinations and to artificially inseminate.



804 was awarded the grant in September 2017 and has already completed the project. They reported that having the corral and chute system allowed them to administer vaccinations and deworm cattle in accordance with Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) standards.

During Fall, all their cows, steers and calves were dewormed, vaccinated and given a mineral injection which would not have been possible without a functioning corral and chute system. All their non-

pregnant animals had their estrous cycles synched and were artificially inseminated during November, and will be checked the first week of December. During calves were weaned using the corrals and a process called “fence-line weaning”, which greatly decreases the amount of stress for the calf and dam as it allows them to see each other and touch noses but prevents nursing. The total cost of the project (panels, gates and accessories for the corrals) was \$5,359.80 (does not include cost of chute or palpation cage). 804 applied for, and received, \$2,000 in funding from SMADC. 804 provided the remainder in matching funds.

### **Equity Incentive Matching Fund**

A joint partnership with MARBIDCO designed to incentivize loan requests from Southern Maryland farmers and to help them meet certain down-payment (equity) requirements, in order to help improve the credit quality of their applications. Each established MARBIDCO program has its own eligibility criteria and application/approval process. Southern Maryland applicants simply follow the regular application process, and meet the rigors of MARBIDCO’s underwriting criteria for each loan program.

In FY’18 four applicants used this program. The four applicants were approved for \$20,000 each, toward MARBIDCO’s Maryland Resource-Based Industry Financing Fund Loan (MRBIFF) Program. Each applicant purchased farms for agricultural use. **\$80,000 has been utilized for this program.**

### **Southern Maryland Revolving Loan Fund**

A loan program was designed by MARBIDCO exclusively for Southern Maryland applicants to assist with purchases and upgrades.

Under this program, only the activities of agricultural businesses located in the five Southern Maryland counties are eligible for farm business financing. Loan amounts may range between \$10,000 to \$20,000, with no collateral security pledge required. Only the personal guarantees of all the borrowers will be needed. MARBIDCO administers the loan program on behalf of SMADC. Borrowers that pay on time will receive approximately 20-25% loan forgiveness at the end of the loan term.

Loan funds may be requested for the following types of projects:

- Purchase livestock and/or enhance existing herds and flocks.
- Incubate the production of small fruits and hops and increase acreage by existing small fruit/hops growers.
- Upgrade for the safe growing, harvesting, packing and holding of produce in line with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).
- Shellfish Aquaculture foundation development.

**In FY’18, three applicants were approved for loans for fencing (two) and aquaculture (one). To date, \$58,000 has been utilized for this program.**

## **SMADC Scholarships**

SMADC recognizes the importance of educational and networking opportunities for farmers and for young adults (high school and above) that promote and support agriculture, stimulate interest in careers in agriculture and grow a new generation of farmers. To address this need, SMADC offers both sponsorships and scholarships to residents in Southern Maryland.

In FY'18, three students received scholarships totaling \$3,225. Additionally, to complement the college-level courses offered in Southern Maryland through the University of Maryland's Institute of Applied Agriculture (IAA), the SMADC board approved scholarships. **Eight students received scholarships totaling \$6,500 for the SMADC IAA partnership classes.** The scholarships helped to attract students to this new educational opportunity in Southern Maryland. (See 'Education and Workshops' for a detailed summary).

## **SMADC Sponsorships**

SMADC continues to support workshops, conferences and continuing education opportunities for farmers. **In FY'18, we sponsored nine events (listed below) for a total of \$4,560.**

- 2017 Southern Maryland Crops Conference & Dinner (UM Extension) \$100
- 2018 Farm Succession Workshop (UMD's Dept. of Ag. & Resource Economics) \$375
- 2018 So. Md. Vegetable & Fruit Production Meeting (UMD) \$85
- 2018 Maryland 4-H Horse Jamboree (UM Extension) \$1,000
- The Maryland (Ag) Day Livestock Show, Block & Bridle Club of UMD \$150
- 20th Anniversary Gala, LEAD MD Class X \$1,000
- Bounty of the County (Farm to Table event), Charles Co. Chamber of Commerce \$1,000
- Agricultural Marketing Professionals (AMPs) Tour in October 2018 \$500
- 2018 Maryland Commodity Classic (MD Grain Producers) \$350

## **SOUTHERN MARYLAND MEAT INDUSTRY**

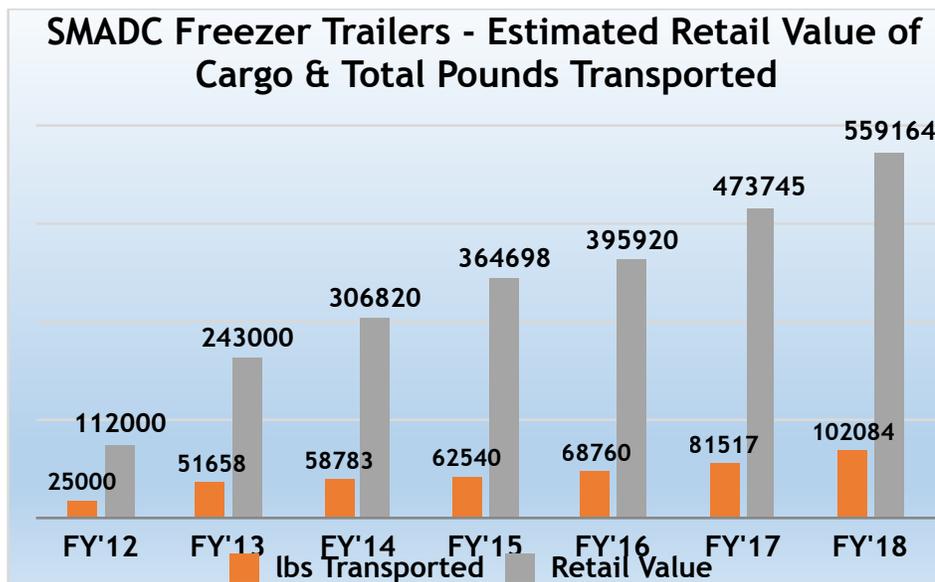
### **Southern Maryland Meats (SMM)**

During the last 8 years, SMADC has undertaken the challenge of building the local meat industry. The Southern Maryland Meats marketing program was developed in response to high consumer demand for local, farm-raised meats. The program provides education, marketing support and infrastructure for livestock producers and others exploring the opportunity to diversify with livestock production. Producers may take advantage of the value-added potential for profit offered by SMM trailers and rental farm equipment provided by SMADC grants. Cumulative trailer use since the inception of the Southern Maryland Meats (SMM) program in 2010 demonstrates the industry is solidly established and continues to grow annually.



**Southern Maryland Meats - Freezer Trailers**

In 2011, SMADC provided funds to St. Mary's and Prince George's county Farm Bureaus to purchase two freezer trailers to transport farmers' meat products from USDA processing plants to the farms for sale. In FY'15, funds were approved for a third trailer for Calvert County Farm Bureau. All three trailers are available to rent by any Southern Maryland meat producer. In FY'16, Prince George's and St.



Mary's counties received funding to purchase new trailers. Both counties auctioned their old trailers; sale proceeds were returned to SMADC to establish a trailer and display case maintenance fund. **In FY'18, a combined total of 102,084 lbs of processed meat was transported with an estimated retail value of \$559,164.00 (an increase of 25% from FY'17).**

**Promotion and Marketing**

A program priority is to build awareness for SMM meats. The “*Southern Maryland Meats*” brand and logo (co-created by SMADC and producers) assures transparency and product authenticity to consumers. Participating farms’ raising practices are ‘juried’ to assure the quality and integrity of the SMM brand is maintained. **In FY'18, the SMM logo was updated to conform to the new SMADC logo/marketing identity.**

**New SMM Marketing and Livestock Specialist** – In the Fall of 2017, the Southern Maryland Meats Steering Committee determined that the SMM required a dedicated full time staff to administer the program, re-direct goals and develop initiatives to enhance outreach and revitalize program effectiveness in line with stakeholder needs. A new Marketing and Livestock Specialist, Craig Sewell, was appointed in January 2018. Key tasks will be increased marketing efforts to re-inforce brand recognition for SMM producers, promotion of individual farms, explore options for value-added meat processing, the establishment of a locally situated slaughter facility, and the development of SMM branded meat products. In FY'18, the SMM specialist conducted a full review and update of all SMM participants and met individually with current and pending SMM members to assess needs going forward. **In FY'18, 40 producers confirmed active participation in the program (4 new in FY'18) and an addition 7 are pending approval in FY'19.**

**Town Hall Meetings** – SMM coordinated two Town Hall Meetings in the Spring of 2018 to engage regional livestock producers in the on-going research and development of a Southern Maryland-based slaughter/process facility. The first meeting, on March 22, provided a forum to discuss meat processing options and other concerns impacting the livestock community including mitigating transportation costs, quality assurance/branding, fine meat processing and traceability issues. **Over 40 producers attended.** The second meeting on April 16, focused on potential consolidation of livestock at a centralized location for transportation to an existing slaughter facility and the return/delivery of cut and wrapped aged product as well as value-added commodities back to the centralized location. In attendance were representatives



of existing slaughter/process facilities to discuss potential for a regionally located value-added processing facility to make products such as sausages, charcuterie, beef jerky and hotdogs. **Over 30 attended.**



**Slaughter Facility Regulatory Assistance** – SMADC staff provide assistance to So.MD livestock producers requesting marketing and regulatory guidance (licensing and permits). Members of the St. Mary's county Amish community requested assistance with the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and USDA inspection specifications for a slaughter facility, currently under construction. Staff is facilitating communications with state USDA/FSIS and local inspection agencies and assisting the development of HACCP, SOP and facility plans, similar to help provided to the Clover Hill Cheese Dairy.

**SMM Social Media and Website** – The SMM website is the main public portal for the SMM program providing consumers with clear information about the raising, processing and labelling standards of the brand, and listings of brand participants and venues (stores, markets, farm stands and butcher shops) where SMM products are sold. The website also features marketing and processing resources for producers including downloadable promotional materials, regional rental equipment inventories, regulatory guides and tutorials. In FY'19 the website will be redesigned to enhance promotion of individual SMM farms and broaden consumer outreach. **The SMM website averages 1,800 unique visits a month.** The SMM Facebook page offers an additional conduit for retail partners and producers to connect directly with consumers and 'post' availability of product for sale, upcoming events and other updates.

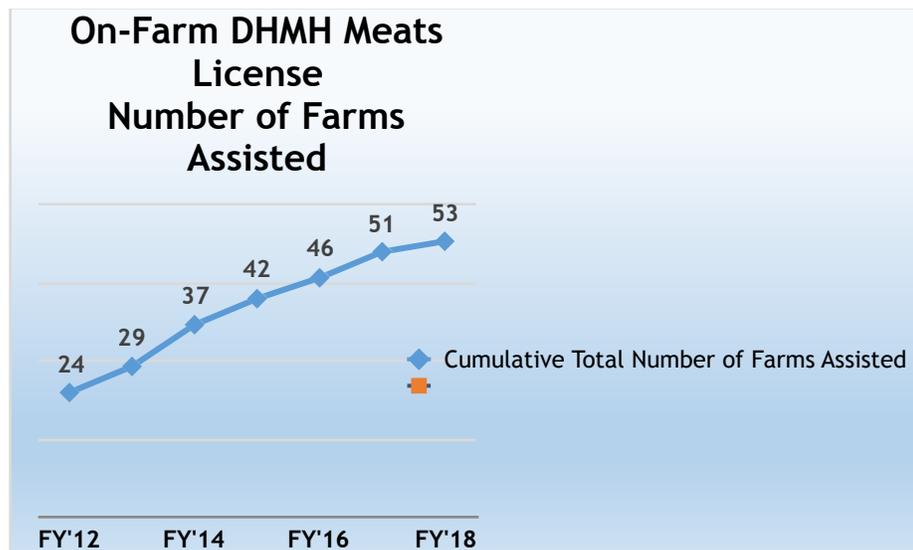
### **Education**

**Livestock Enhancement Project** – Five livestock workshops (3 Small Ruminant, 2 Beef) were developed during FY'18, funded in part by a grant awarded by the *Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Grant (RMPIF)* program. The goal of the workshops is to enhance the livestock genetic base in Southern Maryland in order to help meet the increased demand from consumers for high quality meat products. University of Maryland Extension educators partnered with SMADC to assist with the presentation of the workshops. **107 producers/farmers participated in at least one or more (total of 5) workshops.** (See 'Education and Workshops' for detailed summary).

**SMM Junior Promotion** – In FY'17, SMM launched the Junior Promotion program. The Junior Program seeks to inform a new generation of young/beginning farmers about SMM program livestock quality and raising standards, and ultimately grow participation in the SMM program. Participants received free promotional materials, including a stall card and t-shirt, to promote their animals during the fall fair livestock auctions. At the conclusion of the promotion and successful sale of their animals, applicants submitted a one-page essay about raising and selling their livestock to program standards. Successful program completers received an award of \$100 to help finance on-going livestock projects and a certificate signed by SMM Chairman and the SMADC Director. **15 youth participated in the SMM Junior Program in FY'17. A total of \$1,500.00 was awarded.**

In FY '18, the SMADC board approved funding to continue the SMM Junior Promotion. **32 youth signed up for the program in the Spring of 2018 and will complete their projects in the fall. (22 new participants in FY'18/19).**

*“At first glance the Southern Maryland Meats program seemed like just another project that anyone could join. But through research I found out it was much more. My interest peaked when I found out excellent care standards for all livestock where enforced to participate. Being an avid showman, I want to make sure my animals and my products are top quality and knowing that this program followed my ethics I was quick to sign up. Another reason I was determined to join was to better my ties to the agricultural community so I may continue to learn from and even teach others about the benefits of raising quality animals and products, ensuring a bright future for all generations to come.” – Savannah Bell-Bussler, SMM Jr. Member.*



**"TJ" Ireland - FY'17/18 Jr. Promotion**

**Highlights:**

- 40 producers participate in SMM Program (4 new in FY'18, 7 pending for FY'19).
- 15 successful SMM Jr. Promotion completers in FY'17/18 – \$1,500 total funds awarded
- 32 youth sign up for FY'18/19 SMM Junior Promotion (22 new)
- 102,084 lbs processed meat transported by SMM Trailers/estimated retail value \$559,164.00 (25% increase in FY'18).
- 5 SMM workshops attract 107 producers.

**REGULATORY ASSISTANCE/ SMADC OMBUDSMAN**

SMADC’s regional and statewide programs strive to create economic opportunities for farmers and provide the research and resources for existing and new farm entrepreneurs to be successful. SMADC works cooperatively with farms and state and local agencies to facilitate a vital regulatory information conduit for the farming community by providing workshops for regulatory updates, staff expertise and support for ongoing record keeping, process reviews, and license applications as needed.

**How SMADC Helps** – An ever growing inventory of value-added on-farm products (fermented foods, dairy, acidified, meats, etc.) coupled with innovative on-farm agritourism activities are dramatically changing the profile of farming; health and permit inspectors struggle to interpret current guidance and regulation to accommodate new agri-business models. As a result, SMADC staff is frequently sought out regionally and statewide as a knowledgeable resource to help producers navigate the complex regulatory requirements of multiple federal, state and local agencies (FDA, USDA, FSIS, DHMH, SHA) which oversee food production and farm enterprise.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), has intensified regulatory oversight for food production, as focus shifts to heightened preventative controls. As anticipated, almost all farming enterprises are affected by the new regulations. SMADC places great importance on continuing training for SMADC staff in food safety protocols to enhance SMADC’s ability to provide informed ongoing regulatory assistance to regional value-added farm enterprises engaged in value-added production.

Additionally, SMADC provides assistance to farms experiencing zoning, permit and other land use issues as they expand their revenue options with on-farm activities and services (agritourism). SMADC

capitalizes on its knowledge in regulations and partnerships with state and local organizations to leverage positive outcomes.

SMADC's online tools, tutorials and template resources continue to provide easily accessible (local and state) regulatory compliance guidelines for Acidified Foods and DHMH On-Farm Processor/Meats License applications; both tutorials are endorsed by Maryland DHMH and remain top visited pages on the SMADC website.

**Examples of SMADC regulatory outreach in FY'18 include:**

- **Slaughter Facility** – Staff is assisting Westham slaughter facility with the development of Standard Operating Procedures, HACCP plans, facility construction protocols and other mandated regulatory requirements for USDA inspection.
- **Butcher Shop** – Staff is assisting Knott Family Farm with USDA re-certification of an on-farm butcher shop/meat processing facility.
- **Value-added Food Processing** – SMADC staff with State DHMH coordinated annual on-farm Acidified Foods processor reviews (4 farms). One new recipe for tomato salsa (Fisher Farm, Mechanicsville) registered with DHMH Office of Food Protection.
- **On-Farm Processor Meats License** – 7 new on-farm processor meat licenses facilitated.
- **Dairy SOP's and Approvals** – Staff is assisting Clover Hill cheese dairy with the development of Standard Operating Procedures for a new 2,000 sq. ft. production room expansion. 7 cheese recipes/SOP's approved in joint meetings with Division of Milk Control.
- **Food Safety Workshop** - SMADC with Center for Milk and Dairy Product Safety and State DHMH coordinated a Food Safety Training Workshop for Clover Hill cheese dairy. Attendees participated in food safety demonstrations and presentations including identification and prevention of production area bio-hazards and worker hygiene protocols.

**Highlights FY'18:**

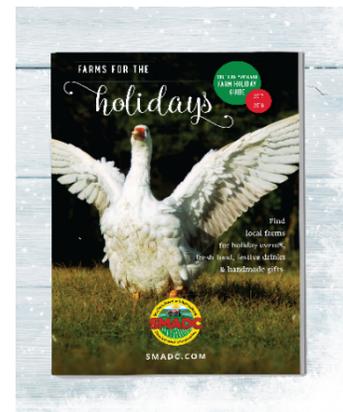
- 4 on-farm acidified foods - DHMH annual process reviews facilitated.
- 7 new on-farm processor meat licenses facilitated.
- 2 meat processing facilities SOP/HACCP plans in development
- 1 dairy food safety workshop facilitated.

## **SMADC MARKETING AND OUTREACH**

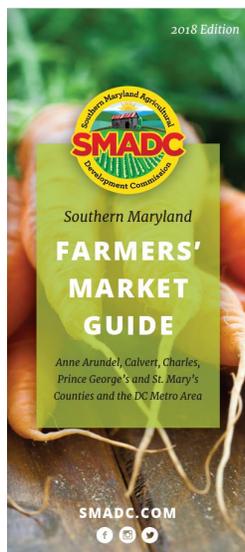
Commencing in FY'17 the key elements of *So. Maryland, So Good* program were absorbed into SMADC's new marketing strategy and corporate identity templates. In FY'18, all program literature, guides, websites and social media platforms now conform to the new marketing guidelines. Outreach and marketing efforts (newsletters, social media, blogs and forums) in combination with grant opportunities, workshops, tutorials, utilization of staff expertise and other **SMADC resources have actively engaged and benefitted over 280 Southern Maryland farms. (59 new farms/ag. businesses in FY'18).**

**SMADC Guides** SMADC guides are available to view or download at SMADC.com. Initial publications/print runs are distributed free to the general public (while stocks last) at regional libraries, welcome centers and participating farms and businesses by request.

**2017/18 Farms for the Holidays Guide** – The newly designed full color mini-brochure Farms for the Holidays showcases 71 (22 new in FY'18) Southern Maryland farms, wineries and other agriculture-related businesses offering farm products, tastings, tours, events and more for the holidays. Regional stores and restaurants that source from local farms and watermen are also featured. **5,000 guides printed and distributed in FY'18.**



**2018 Farmers Market Guide** – In FY'18 the Farmers' Market guide was redesigned and updated in line with the new SMADC logo/corporate identity. The guide features 32 Southern Maryland markets and 10 additional



markets in Metro DC and Virginia that host Southern MD farm vendors. Listings include Southern Maryland markets by county with days/hours of operation, market locations and addresses, websites, market contact information, plus a regional market locator map. **7,500 guides printed and distributed in FY'18.**

**Southern Maryland Trails** – A powerful economic development tool for the region, the online guide celebrates everything handmade, homegrown and locally harvested in Southern Maryland including local farms, art galleries and studios, wineries, lodgings, natural areas, restaurants that serve locally grown food and natural areas and parks that highlight the region's heritage and beauty.

**Southern Maryland Historic Horse Trail & Equine Guide** – One of a network of self-guided trails in development around the state with the support of the Maryland Horse Industry Board, the online Southern Maryland Historic Horse Trail encompasses Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties and highlights documented equine-related sites and educational opportunities in the region that are part of a state-wide historical archive of the role of horses in Maryland's history. SMADC's Southern Maryland Equine Guide, lists 63 local stables, horse farms and other equine resources in the five southern counties.

**Southern Maryland Oyster Trail** In the Spring of 2018, SMADC adopted the Southern Maryland Oyster Trail, formerly developed and administered by Morgan State University and PEARL Oyster Lab in conjunction with St. Mary's and Calvert County Economic and Tourism Departments. SMADC plans to update and expand the Southern Maryland Oyster Trail website and companion brochure beyond the two counties currently showcased, to be fully inclusive and representative of Southern Maryland's oyster industry. The guide will also feature affiliated regional businesses such as restaurants, museums, oyster research organizations and other associations and institutions connected with oyster production in Southern Maryland. SMADC expects to relaunch this Trail in the Spring of 2019.

**Maryland Farm and Harvest** SMADC sponsored the popular Maryland Public Television show “Farm and Harvest”. SMADC’s 15 second spot (delivered to over 60,000 households) will air at the beginning or end of each episode of MPT’s Season 6 Farm and Harvest Series. The visuals, in combination with audio script, emphasize SMADC’s support for farms and for providing consumers with the resources they need to find farm products: *“The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission supports farms and the future of agriculture – with marketing programs, grant opportunities and education for farmers, as well as guides, and events to connect consumers with local farms. Learn more at SMADC.com.”*



**SMADC News and Social Media Platforms** The SMADC News and Subscription portal at SMADC.com invites the agricultural community and general public to engage in SMADC’s direction and outreach with suggestions, tips, comments, or ideas to assist in the development of SMADC’s programs, resources and support.

**SMADC Facebook** – SMADC’s Facebook page/account is designed to be an interactive interface for the farming community and further enhance engagement with consumers. **SMADC’s Facebook account registered 1,559 followers (537 new) in FY’18.**

**SMADC Instagram Account** – SMADC created an Instagram account to connect with farms in a more dynamic and pictorial way and, in particular, to further engage the younger members of the farming community. The trending social media ‘app’ provides a photo-sharing option and instant graphic news feed for mobile devices, which is popular with new and beginning farmers. To see SMADC on Instagram search:

**@southern\_maryland\_ag. 705 Instagram followers (53 new posts) in FY’18.**



**SMADC Twitter Account** – SMADC utilizes Twitter as an additional information conduit for specific subject updates and to alert/broadcast quickly ‘calls to action’ and other information of importance and/or of general interest to regional farm businesses. **704 Twitter Followers with a total of 30,922 Tweet Impressions registered in FY’18.**

**SMADC’s “Farm Focus” Online Newsletter** – SMADC’s monthly newsletter features information on SMADC, featured farms, recipes, ag news, upcoming events, and more. The newsletter is intended to be informational for board members, farmers, ag. organizations, and interested consumers. The newsletter is available on the SMADC website and social media channels. Consumers and farmers can read the editions and subscribe by email on [www.smadc.com](http://www.smadc.com), under “What’s New”. **527 individual subscribers registered in FY’18.**



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission • May Edition, 2017



**SMADC Websites** In FY’18 SMADC/TCC migrated all web platforms to a new IT Management and Server. In transfer, cumulative analytics data collection was suspended for most SMADC hosted websites (SMADC.com, SOMDTrails.com, Southernmarylandmeats.com, Maryland FarmLINK.com, Somdhorsetrails.smadc.com). **In FY’18,**



**Buylocalchallenge.com was updated and redesigned;**  
Southernmarylandmeats.com is currently undergoing reconstruction.

In order to establish the approximate FY'18 web activity for SMADC.com the 'unique visit's over a 3-year period (FY'15 – 17), were averaged to achieve monthly estimated totals. SMADC data collection will be resumed as each website is updated and/or reconstructed. In previous year end reports SMADC measured using the total number of visits, not accounting for multiple visits by individuals.

**SMADC Guest Speakers** SMADC continues to seek and maintain vital connections with stakeholders and with other organizations, educational institutions and businesses that interact with the regional farming community. Guest speakers are invited to present at the monthly SMADC board meetings.

**13 speakers (representing 12 organizations) presented in FY'18:**

- Amber DeMarr – Morgan State University Patuxent Environmental and Aquatic Research (PEARL)
- Pat Hudson – True Oyster Restoration Initiative (TORI)
- Bob Parkinson – Moonstruck Oysters, LLC



- Chris Seubert – University of Maryland Extension
- Mark Powell – Maryland Dept. of Agriculture

- Robert Hahn, Jackie Miller – End Hunger in Calvert/Chesapeake Church
- Eric Steenstra – Vote Hemp
- Josh Hastings, Rob Etgen – Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC)
- Robert McCord – Maryland Department Dept. of Planning
- Julie Oberg – Maryland Dept. of Agriculture
- Wendi Peters – Smart Growth
- Cindy Beuchert, Doug Hill – Southern Maryland Meats Steering Committee
- Saul Kinter, James Fotouhi – DC Water

**Highlights FY'18:**

- 281 farms (59 new in FY'18), listed throughout all SMADC websites, guides and contacts.
- 32 So. MD and 10 additional regional markets listed 2018/19 Farmers' Market Guide
- 71 agricultural businesses (22 new) listed – 2017/18 Farms for the Holiday's Guide in FY'18.
- SMADC adopts Southern Maryland Oyster Trail
- SMADC website averages over 3,000 unique visitors per month
- 1,559 (537 new) followers – SMADC's Facebook account in FY'18.

**MARYLAND BUY LOCAL CHALLENGE**

SMADC created the Buy Local Challenge (BLC) in 2007 to educate the public about the benefits of supporting local farms with the goal to incentivize and increase purchases of Maryland farm foods year-round. Through promotions like the BLC, public awareness and preference for locally raised/produced products has increased demand for locally sourced foods and has incentivized distributors, food service directors and large grocery chains to connect with local growers.

**Buy Local Challenge Week Take the Pledge Promotion** – This year marks the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BLC first conceived by SMADC as a regional promotion and subsequently endorsed by the state and is now jointly promoted statewide in partnership with Maryland Department of Agriculture.

**BLC Media Campaign** – The BLC campaign is self-propelling (borne out by the activity on Facebook,



Instagram, Twitter and the BLC website) as more consumers connect with “the Challenge” and are incentivized to create their own BLC week events and commit to the challenge annually.



Advertisements drive consumers to the BLC website to ‘take the pledge’ to buy local and discover state wide resources on where to buy Maryland grown farm products. Throughout the BLC week, the Governor’s Office, MDA, SMADC, numerous independent media (ABC News, Capital Gazette, CBS, Baltimore Sun and others), county agencies, local townships and governments promoted the BLC on social media and on their websites.

To incentivize pledging and gauge response to the BLC, the general public were also invited to share their BLC experiences for a chance to win prizes by registering their BLC pledge to ‘eat local’, or by posting photos of their ‘buy local’ shopping spree to Facebook or Instagram. Winners received a choice of SMADC T-shirts or insulated shopping bags. 10 winners were randomly selected, from close to 300 entries. During the campaign, the BLC Facebook page registered ‘lifetime post total impressions’ of over 17,000 and 840 Twitter Followers. The BLC website registered 2,539 users (from May 9 - July 31), of which over 1,371 were new users. SMADC supported the BLC with digital advertisements geo-targeted to Southern Maryland. The WashingtonPost.com advertisement employed content and behavioral targeting across all platforms (desktop, mobile and pads). **Ads were delivered to an audience of over 879,000 consumers.**

**Buy Local Challenge Website Redesigned** – In June 2018, SMADC debuted the re-designed BLC website, [www.buylocalchallenge.com](http://www.buylocalchallenge.com). A fresh new look dominates the pages with user-friendly navigation tools to help consumers find statewide resources for Maryland farm products, enter BLC contests, take the BLC pledge, and more.

**The Governor’s Buy Local Cookout** – SMADC staff participated in Governor Larry Hogan’s ‘Buy Local Cookout’, which traditionally kicks off Maryland’s Buy Local Challenge Week. Held at Government House in Annapolis, the ‘invitation only event’ was attended by over 500 statewide agriculture representatives; business owners, organizations and institutions throughout the food industry, store buyers and restaurateurs. Teams of local chefs and producers were invited to submit original recipes that highlight the diversity of Maryland products. Recipes are paired with Maryland produced beer, wine or distilled spirits. The Southern Maryland Meats Program submitted one recipe (of 16 featured) which was prepared with meat raised by Southern Maryland Meats producers and vegetables

provided by regional farms. The SMADC team booth later appeared in the Governor's Twitter Feed. **A total of 5 Southern Maryland farms/producers featured in recipe selections.**

**Buy Local Challenge Celebration Event**

In FY'17, SMADC marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the BLC with a celebration of farms and food promotional event featuring Maryland farm products at Robin Hill Farm and Vineyards in Prince George's County. The Buy Local Challenge Celebration Event was enthusiastically received by farms and consumers, and as a result the SMADC board voted to continue the "BLC Celebration" as an annual recurring event to be held on a rotating basis at agritourism venues in the 5 Southern Maryland counties. Eligible agritourism venues were invited to submit proposals to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Celebration. Proposals were reviewed by the SMADC Board. **Greenstreet Gardens in Anne Arundel County, was selected as the host site for the 2018 Celebration.**

**The BLC Celebration evening event was set up farmers' market style with 45 vendors offering tastings and sales of Maryland grown and produced products (meats, produce, dairy and value-added) as well as wineries, breweries, distilleries, local artisans and crafters and representatives of agricultural organizations. Food trucks catered the event and featured at least one locally sourced product in their menus. The admission fee included an insulated shopping bag to keep purchases fresh, musical entertainment, carriage rides, various fun activities for children and the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation trailer. Over 600 people attended, (177 tickets were sold at the door).**



**Event VIP's** – Governor Hogan addressed attendees and presented host Ray Greenstreet and SMADC Director Shelby Watson-Hampton with the 'Governor's Citation' acknowledging *"The increasingly popular and important Southern Maryland Buy Local Challenge Celebration."* An Executive Citation was presented on behalf of Anne Arundel County Executive Steven R. Schuh. Also in attendance were Agriculture Secretary Bartenfelder and Deputy Secretary Oberg.

**Event Sponsors** – The Celebration was sponsored in part by 10 organizations including, MARBIDCO, Anne Arundel Waterman's Association, Rural Maryland Council, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Maryland Farm Bureau, Arundel Ag, Reilly

Benefits, Sandy Spring Bank, Grow and Fortify, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. **Sponsors received 50 specially designed 'Buy Local' tote bag giveaways (featuring sponsor logos) as an 'appreciation bonus'.**

### Highlights:

- 60,000 SMADC/BLC fliers distributed statewide.
- Governor Hogan and Agriculture Secretary endorse BLC Week.
- 600 attend the SMADC/BLC Event.
- 45 farm vendors featured at SMADC/Event.
- 10 BLC SMADC/Event Sponsors
- Numerous independent articles, press notices, TV, radio and SMADC ads, Social Media platforms reached a combined audience over 1 million people.

## **FARM EQUIPMENT RENTAL PROGRAM**

SMADC continues to fund and support a regional farm equipment rental program in the region. Through the years, SMADC has invited agricultural entities to identify farm equipment needs to be shared and rented by farmers across Southern Maryland. Funds have been made available to purchase the equipment. In addition to popular pieces of equipment, priority was placed on equipment that promoted long-term environmental benefit to the Chesapeake Bay and/or supported new farm initiatives.

The equipment is managed by local agricultural entities. Rental fees are expected to cover routine maintenance and other costs of the program, such as insurance. The equipment is listed on the “Farmer Resources” page of the SMADC website, and on the websites of the managing entities.

### **Highlights FY'18:**

- In FY'18, the St. Mary's Farm Bureau Board of Directors made the decision not to manage the rental equipment program and transferred ownership to the Homegrown Farm Market, LLC, which stepped forward to take on the equipment and rental program. *“The Homegrown Farm Market, LLC, believes this equipment should continue to be made available to the farmers of the Southern Maryland farming community.”* The market board confirmed they will manage the equipment for as long as is needed, as well as provide education and outreach to encourage more farmers to take advantage of the rental program.
- The SMADC Board approved funds for new equipment purchases. At the end of the fiscal year, a notice to agricultural entities was made inviting them to make requests. SMADC Staff will report on the new equipment in the FY 2019 report.
- To date, 36 pieces of equipment are in inventory and are available for farmers to rent across the region.
- 1,610 acres positively impacted by conservation tillage across the five counties.

## **LAND PRESERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP**

### **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

The land preservation component of the Tobacco Buyout should not be understated. While the buyout of individual farmers radically changed the *culture* of agriculture in the five-county region, investment in land preservation has made a significant impact on the region's agricultural industry. Land preservation efforts have slowed the development of prime agricultural land, helped to stabilize farming operations and foster renewed enthusiasm for agriculture in Southern Maryland.

Land preservation is a high priority for SMADC, as Southern Maryland has been one of the fastest growing areas in the state. The average age of the tobacco farmer is now well into their 70's. These funds assure that farmland will persist not just for today, but for farmers and food production into the future.

**Highlights FY'18 – SMADC funds:**

- 635 acres (4 farms) directly preserved in four counties (1 Anne Arundel, 1 Charles, 1 Prince George's and 1 St. Mary's).
- Resulting in 17,631 cumulative acres over the 16 years of program funding.

**SMADC funds, plus leveraged County and State program funds:**

- 40,357 acres (357 farms) cumulatively preserved in the five counties.
- SMADC funds represent approximately **44%** of acres preserved with leveraged County and State programs.

**FOOD, FARMS AND COMMUNITIES**

**SOUTHERN MARYLAND FARMERS' MARKETS**

Farmers' markets continue to be popular for a number of reasons: more informed consumers, desire to support the local growers and the economy, and want to know where their food comes from. Markets can also be a means to boosting income for farmers.

**SMADC Support**

SMADC assists farmers' markets in the five counties through education, promotion, advice for start-up, and acting as a conduit of information about regulations and other pertinent information.

SMADC provides promotional assistance grants, ranging from \$500 – \$2,000, directly to farmers' markets where the majority of farm vendors are from Southern Maryland. Since 2003, over \$290,300 has been awarded to eligible farmers' markets for promotion. In 2017, gross revenue from these farmers' markets was approximately \$3.3 million, from 232 Southern Maryland vendors. Over the years that SMADC has worked with markets, a cumulative estimate of over \$34 million has been earned through the markets; which amounts to a \$64 million impact on the local economy, as farms and their employees reinvest their earnings in the community. For a relatively small amount of SMADC grant funds, the overall return on investment in the farmers' markets has been significant.

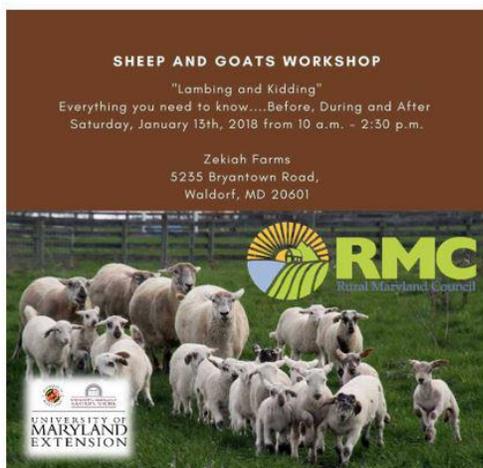
<b>Year (Previous Market Year)</b>	<b>Total Markets</b>	<b>Total Vendors</b>	<b>So. Md. Vendors</b>	<b>SMADC Mkt. Grant</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Market impact with multiplier* (1.86)</b>
2003 - 2010	117	1655	222	156,250	15,687,450	29,178,657
2011	19	239	217	25,000	2,312,498	4,301,246
2012	16	291	252	22,450	2,667,252	4,961,089
2013	17	353	314	22,650	2,647,760	4,924,834
2014	14	279	266	16,500	2,460,386	4,576,318
2015	11	288	266	16,500	2,583,000	4,804,380
2016	11	273	243	17,500	3,129,770	5,821,372
2017	11	341	232	13,500	3,195,440	5,943,518

<b>TOTAL</b>				290,350	34,684,556	64,511,414
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**EDUCATION AND WORKSHOPS**

For FY'18, the State budgeted General Funds for the Regional Council portion of the *Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Grant (RMPIF)* program. Each regional council, (Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland is considered a regional council of which SMADC is a division) is eligible to receive funding for rural regional planning and development assistance. The SMADC was awarded a RMPIF grant for \$80,000 in early September 2017; SMADC matched the grant with \$38,765. Additionally, SMADC was awarded \$30,000 from the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant to offer a new series of workshops – Ready to Take Root: Getting Started with Small Fruits and Hops. **A total of 12 educational workshops/classes were funded in part by the RMPIF program. 20 SMADC sponsored/funded workshops engaged a total of 216 individuals in FY'18.**

**Livestock Enhancement Workshops**



**Five livestock workshops (3 Small Ruminant, 2 Beef)** were developed during FY'18 in partnership with University of Maryland Extension educators. The goal of the workshops is to enhance the livestock genetic base in Southern Maryland in order to help meet the increased demand from consumers for high quality meat products and increase potential for profit for livestock farms. Three sessions for Sheep and Goat producers provided for the needs of experienced and beginner producers (including Southern Maryland Meats Junior members) as well as those exploring opportunity for meat production. Two Beef producer workshops were developed to incentivize enhanced genetic selection for increased productivity and improved meat quality. *“Thanks so much for putting together today’s workshop. I found it informative and entertaining so it kept my interest. I’ve been to a number of these things over the*

*years - my family raised tobacco, Christmas trees and now sheep - and they are not always so professionally run.”*

**Nutrition and More** – focused on the nutrient requirements, the evaluation of nutritive quality of feedstuff and hay quality, balancing rations, and use of body condition scoring to evaluate flock status and nutrition programs. **26 farmers/producers attended.**

**Lambing and Kidding** – featured preparation, nutrition and care of ewes/does through gestation to birthing, aftercare of newborn lambs/kids, health issues, appropriate facilities and related equipment. Life-size animal models were used to guide participants through normal and difficult births. **53 farmers/producers attended.**

**Marketing Sheep and Goats** – addressed options for marketing animals and associated value-added products and hands on market readiness training. A panel session led by experienced producers explored the logistics and legalities of on-farm processing regulations, marketing, labelling and sales. **18 farmers/producers attended.**

**Beef Producer’s Genetics, Estrus Synchrony and Artificial**



**Insemination (AI)** – presented education for increased pregnancy success rates and quality meat production, as well as AI practice sessions using a dissected reproductive tract, chute-side protocols and hands-on body condition scoring demonstrations. Farmers elected to join a synchronized 'group' breeding season and benefit from AI semen/services from a leading genetic company. Producers were reimbursed for semen, arm service, hormone costs and other expenses up to \$500 per producer. To further incentivize participation in the AI implementation, a full refund of the workshop registration fee (\$100) applied to farmers completing the breeding series. *"I want to let you know that Racheal Slattery (UME staff) came to our farm today to assist us with the AI of our black Angus cows. Everything went brilliantly and we look forward to seeing the results. Thanks again for putting on the class."* – Boothe Farm. **21 producers attended the workshop. 7 producers completed the full AI course. A total of 84 beef cattle were professionally inseminated with the producer's choice of sire/bull.**

**Beef Short Course** – SMADC co-opted with an existing UME beef program to meet the needs of the broader regional beef producers (experienced, beginners and those exploring potential for beef production). The two-day course featured presentations, networking and field tours at two St. Mary's county farms. Topics included economics of production, EPD's (Expected Progeny Differences), nutrition, nutrient management and pasture development. Field tours focused on facilities, herd health and management, grazing, pasture management, evaluating market readiness and value-added marketing. *"The beef producer's course you just put on was very informative and helpful to me, it was excellent."* – Donohue Downs Farm. **13 farmers/producers attended.**

### **Small Fruits and Hops Market Enhancement Workshops**

**Five workshops were developed** in partnership with University of Maryland Extension (UME) to



encourage the increase of entrepreneurial activity, and assist in the retention of valuable farm land for productive use by present and future generations. The 'Ready to Take Root: Getting Started with Small Fruit' series explored different production styles and techniques as well as research and marketing for various fruit crops specific to Southern Maryland's growing region, including blueberries and brambles, hops, strawberries, and alternative and niche small fruit. A portion of the RMPIF grant funds were also used to support variety trials at the University of Maryland's Upper Marlboro Research Station. This research will help UME to determine suitable small fruit varieties and growing practices best suited for the Southern Maryland region. An advanced workshop series is in development for spring 2019. In addition to RMPIF, this initiative is also funded by the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. *"The presenters and staff have done an amazing job*

*with the series. They are an asset to the ag community."* – Workshop participant. **61 individuals participated (inclusive of 14 unique small businesses/farm operations).**

**Blueberries and Brambles** – topics included industry and marketing overview, site preparation, soil testing and nematology, bramble/blueberry variety suitability, establishment and trellising methods, bird predation control. **32 farmers/producers attended.**

**Hops** – presentations featured industry overview and market status, site selection and soil preparation, trellis design, hop varieties, establishment, harvest and processing, weed and pest management. **35 farmers/producers attended.**

**Strawberries** – topics featured industry overview and marketing opportunities, site preparation including testing and identification of soil borne disease and pest management. Selection/suitability of varieties and establishment for plasticulture and matted row production. **11 farmers/producers attended.**

**Alternative and Niche Small Fruit** – included production techniques and marketing opportunities for Aronia, Beach Plum, Cherry, Ground Cherry, Goldenberry, Table Grapes, Figs and Hardy Kiwi. **12 farmers/producers attended.**

**Marketing Small Fruits** – the series concluded with a workshop focused on marketing small fruits. Topics addressed diversified marketing strategies including online marketing tools/options, marketing and business development planning. Post workshop surveys targeted key areas of concern which will be addressed one on one specific to the producer's knowledge and variety of fruit/hops to be marketed. **11 farmers/producers attended.**

### **Expanding Access to Agriculture Education**

**In partnership with the University of Maryland's Institute of Applied Agriculture (IAA), SMADC offered two classes in Southern Maryland online and through monthly in-person classes held in Southern Maryland.** INAG 205: Analyzing Alternative Agricultural Enterprises and INAG 132: Agricultural Leadership and Communications. The goal of the classes is to provide access to college level agriculture education to Southern Maryland farmers in order to expand general exposure to a wide variety of career and business opportunities in agriculture, and to assist in developing leaders in Southern Maryland's agriculture community. SMADC used matching funds to offer scholarships for students from Southern Maryland who enrolled in the Fall classes to assist with tuition costs. A portion of the RMPPIF grant funds will be used to create a free 'lending library' of books in all areas of agriculture to be housed at the SMADC offices. *"As a graduating senior at the University of Maryland during the spring 2018 semester, I've taken many classes through various colleges. In my opinion, the classes offered through the Institute of Applied Agriculture (IAA), including the two offered by SMADC, are some of the most beneficial."* – Workshop participant.



*"This course was different because I got to meet other agriculturally-minded individuals from Southern Maryland. This is a huge benefit because most of us will likely remain in the area for a long time and having those connections could be important in the future, both as friends and colleagues."* – Workshop participant. **A total of 9 students enrolled.**

### **Pork Producers Workshop**

The Maryland Pork Producers Association held an informational session presentation covering advertising, market development and on-farm research. **7 local producers attended.**

### **American Planning Association Conference**

SMADC participated in the presentation hosted at Serenity Farms with Farming 4 Hunger. The presentation reviewed the role that planning has played in preserving farm land and the many ways that planning needs to support agriculture to allow for expansion of farming practices as well as protect the safety and welfare of the public as new farm business models continue to evolve. **Approximately 45 individuals attended.**

### **Get the Job Done – Farm Labor Workshop**

Speakers from the Maryland Department of Labor covered what's involved in hiring skilled labor for farms with the H-2A and H-2B programs. Topics included application for foreign labor, visas, housing and transportation, work hours, wage rates and record-keeping. **18 farmers attended.**

### **Food Products and Agritourism Law and Liability Workshop**

Workshop attendees heard from representatives from insurance companies, UME legal specialist and the Maryland Farmers' Market Association on how to manage legal and insurance risks on their farms including sales of farm made foods, hosting farm events and agritourism related activities (weddings, wineries) and more. Two experienced agritourism farms shared their insights. Topics also included insurance for off-farm events such as festivals and liability issues for farmers' markets. **22 farmers/producers attended.**

### **Farm Succession Workshop**

SMADC and the Maryland Farm Bureau jointly sponsored the workshop presented by The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland Extension, The Agriculture Law Education Initiative, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, and Nationwide Insurance. As the farm succession process can be challenging, due to differing family opinions on the future of the farm and other factors, the workshop focused on the succession process, including communication tactics, business planning, estate planning and tax basics. Participants heard from legal, insurance and other experts on what is needed to develop a robust farm succession plan and prepare the next generation to keep the farming operation successful. **12 families attended.**

### **Dig It! An Introduction to Farming in Southern Maryland Workshop**

SMADC held a free workshop for those that are completely new to farming, or considering farming. The workshop was designed to give participants an inventory of the tools and must-have resources to begin their farming journey from the ground up. Attendees heard from beginning farmers who have recently started their farm operations. Representatives and literature from various agricultural support and funding agencies were at the workshop to meet with participants – University of Maryland Extension, Farm Service Agency, Maryland Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation District. **35 attended.**



### **Common Market Meeting**

SMADC facilitated a meeting with area farmers who are interested in learning how to sell their produce through a distributor. Attendees learned how to prepare their produce business to become wholesale ready. The Common Market Mid-Atlantic is a mission-driven distributor of sustainable, local farm foods connection with institutions and communities from over 200 producers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. **9 farmers/producers attended (4 via WebEX).**



### **Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo**

SMADC has sponsored the SMILE show for 13 consecutive years. The SMADC board places great importance on providing support for educational and networking opportunities for farm and community youth to stimulate interest in agricultural careers and incentivize a new generation of farmers. The SMILE livestock show offers a unique combination of education, competition and fun for youth (ages 6 – 21 years) involved in raising livestock and provides an opportunity for them to meet and socialize with regional youth involved in farming. **The SMILE Novice Class engaged 10 participants (6 and 7 years old).**



SMILE's informal show format has attracted hundreds of kids from all over Southern Maryland to

compete with their animals in fitting and showmanship and breed competitions for beef and dairy cows, pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits and guinea pigs. Rabbit and Cavy classes offer urban youth and others who may not have the land and facilities to raise large livestock. The show also includes special presentations, organized games, and group activities. **A total of 111 youth participated in FY'18, representing 5 counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, Montgomery, Queen Anne's and Talbot). 394 animals were shown.**



*"We want kids to learn and enjoy themselves at the same time. The show ring is informal and the judges take the time to give advice and plenty of encouragement." – Jay Farrell, SMILE Chairman*

### **Highlights:**

- 12 RMPPIF/SMADC funded workshops
- 8 SMADC sponsored workshops
- SMADC sponsored/funded workshops engaged a total of 216 individuals
- 111 youth participated in SMILE Livestock Expo

## MARYLAND FARMLINK



The Maryland FarmLINK program and website is designed to help farmers locate farmland for lease and purchase, featuring an interactive Farm Forum for members to exchange ag-related information, find mentors and business partners, find equipment for rent, workshops and educational opportunities happening around the state. The website also hosts a 'Property Exchange' that provides a two-fold service approach: helping land owners keep their farmland in production and helping farmers (many young and beginning farmers) find farmland for sale or lease. **Over 35 new farm properties were listed for sale or lease on the FarmLINK website in FY'18.**

**Visits to the FarmLINK website increased during FY'18, attracting 350 new members.** FarmLINK maintains a current calendar of upcoming workshops, events, and other educational opportunities around the state, averaging 20-30 listings at any time. FarmLINK also maintains an 'Everything Ag' page on the website that provides additional resources such as where to rent equipment around the state, soil mapping information and guides and tutorials for farmers and realtors selling farmland. **The FarmLINK "Weekly Roundup" newsletter was delivered by email to 2,400 subscribers; the newsletter features new listings, posts, and upcoming workshops and events posted to the FarmLINK website.**

The Maryland FarmLINK program is a benchmark model for others around the state and SMADC is happy to continue to share information and resources, and to partner with other organizations.

**New Initiatives** – In Spring of 2018, SMADC explored a joint venture with the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy to expand the FarmLINK Property Exchange and Mentor Match program. The initiative was approved by the commission in June of 2018 and SMADC looks forward to working with ESLC to further Maryland FarmLINK's reach across the state.



SMADC was also approved for additional grant funding for FY'19 through the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) to support a complete redesign of the Maryland FarmLINK website and creation of new marketing materials.

## MENTOR MATCH: TRAINING FOR BEGINNING FARMERS

A major component of FarmLINK is the Mentor Match program which pairs experienced farmers (mentors) with new or transitioning farm owners/operators (mentees) for one-on-one training, advice and interaction. The program also hosts workshops, farm tours and educational meetings based on the needs of the mentees.



**During FY'18, there were a total of four mentees in the Mentor Match Program.** Mentors have specific experience with Southern Maryland climate/soils, where to locate resources and farm supplies, and pest and disease issues specific to the region. Mentors commented that they have been able to provide guidance primarily on proper equipment, planting schedules and varieties for those starting or diversifying their operations. A mentee from Anne Arundel County said this about her mentor during the program, *"Thank you again for pairing me up with Dicot Farm. I visited their farm again on Friday and stayed for an awesome dinner. Their high tunnel tomatoes are well underway right now and it was really great seeing their system in person."*

Mentor Match is currently only offered to residents of Southern Maryland. Subsequent to the Mentor Match no longer being offered state-wide in 2016,

Future Harvest CASA expanded their Beginning Farmer Training program to offer Level 3 training in 2017, which expanded Mentor Match again to be a state-wide program. SMADC believes it is a worthwhile program and is enthusiastic that regional partners are able to continue this important resource to farmers state-wide.

SMADC also hosted a 'Dig It! Introduction to Farming in Southern Maryland' workshop in February of 2018 that was open to the public and mentees in both Mentor Match programs. The free workshop was designed to give participants an inventory of the tools and must-have resources to begin their farming journey. **35 attended, including several FarmLINK mentees.**

**Highlights:**

- New Partnership with Eastern Shore Land Conservancy launched
- Approved FY'19 funding through the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund
- Over 350 new members signed-up for the FarmLINK website and the "Weekly Roundup"
- 52 Maryland FarmLINK "Weekly Roundup" newsletters delivered to 2,400 subscribers
- 13 blog posts published
- 4 Mentor/Match farm enterprises facilitated
- 1 workshop for the Mentor Match program hosted
- 35 new/beginning farmers engaged – FarmLINK "Dig It" Introduction to Farming Workshop



**SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Strategy 2012—2020**

**MEASURING FOR RESULTS FY'18**

**GOAL 1: THRIVING, MARKET-DRIVEN FARMS THAT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO BE PROFITABLE**

**Resources for Profitability**

Southern Maryland Meats (SMM):

- 102,084 lbs processed meat transported estimated retail value \$559,164.
- 40 producers participate in SMM (4 new in FY'18).
- 32 youth sign up for FY'18/19 SMM Junior Promotion. (21 new)
- 5 SMM workshops attract 107 producers.

Value Added Agriculture:

- 7 new on-farm processor meat licenses facilitated.
- 4 on-farm acidified foods annual process reviews facilitated.
- 2 meat slaughter/process facilities SOP/HACCP plans in development
- 1 dairy food safety workshop facilitated.

Maryland Buy Local Challenge (BLC):

- 60,000 SMADC/BLC fliers distributed statewide.
- 600 attend the SMADC/BLC Event.
- 45 farm vendors featured at SMADC/Event.
- SMADC Social Media platforms and ADs reached a combined audience over 1 million people.

**GOAL 2: FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

**Increased acres under farmland preservation**

Agricultural Land Preservation:

- Four farms totaling 635 acres have been directly preserved by the program in four counties of Southern Maryland in FY'18, resulting in 17,631 acres cumulative over the 16 years of program funding (with only SMADC program funds).
- 357 farms containing 40,357 acres have been cumulatively preserved in Southern Maryland (SMADC and leveraged funds by the counties).

Farm Share Equipment:

- In FY '18, 1,610 acres positively impacted by conservation tillage across the five counties.
- 36 pieces of equipment are in inventory and available for farmers to rent across the region.

**GOAL 3: A FUTURE WHERE PROFITABLE FARMS PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN OUR COMMUNITY (FARMS, FOOD, COMMUNITY)**

**Enhanced awareness of the beneficial role farms provide**

*Measurement: Track the number of children that participate in SMILE*

**SMILE:**

- 111 youth participated from 7 counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, Montgomery, Queen Anne and Talbot).

**Increase the number of new farmer enterprises**

- 4 Mentor/Match farm enterprises facilitated in FY'18
- 7 new on-farm processor meat licenses facilitated.
- 71 agricultural businesses (5 new in FY'18) listed in 2017/18 Farms or the Holidays Guide.
- 281 farms including equine/horse businesses (59 new in FY'18) engaged through SMADC websites, guides, programs, promotions and services.

**Maryland FarmLINK:**

- Over 350 new members signed-up for the FarmLINK website and Weekly Roundup newsletter.
- 2,400 subscribers receive FarmLINK "Weekly Roundup" newsletters.
- 4 Mentor/Match farm enterprises facilitated.
- 35 new/beginning farmers engaged – FarmLINK "Dig It" Introduction to Farming Workshop

**For more information regarding this program, please contact:**

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