



END OF YEAR REPORT – FY'16 (JULY 2015- JUNE 2016)

INTRODUCTION

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) has worked for many years to provide resources for farmers to be profitable, support land preservation, grow new farmers, and foster healthy food, farms and communities.

With our partners, SMADC has helped individual farms and the community transform to a new agricultural economy based on food, beverages, equine, tourism, green products, and natural resources. Our efforts have successfully enhanced individual farmers' capacity and increased the supply of fresh, locally grown food. SMADC has initiated and/or fostered the development and successful incubation of several agricultural industries, most notably the direct sale of farm food to the local food markets, the re-emergence of a meat industry, the creation of a wine industry and an agritourism industry. We have worked to increase access to fresh food for the hunger community while enhancing farmers' profitability. We created a *Farm Share* program so that farmers could share equipment, and we developed a *Maryland FarmLINK* program to foster new farmers, and bridge communication between farmers, both new and experienced. 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, dairy processing, and more.

Simultaneously, SMADC launched promotion campaigns to the public to alert consumers and buyers to the availability of Southern Maryland's diverse farm foods and innovative on-farm services (*So. Maryland, So Good*), the *Maryland Buy Local Challenge*, *Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination*, *Southern Maryland Meats*. Throughout the process, SMADC has held public forums, focus group discussions, and invited public input on our strategic plans. Consistently, the community has asked SMADC to address a meat processing facility for the region, provide assistance to the growing equine and aquaculture industries, provide infrastructure for value-added processing and on-going regulatory support.

SCALING UP:

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS PARK AND FOOD INNOVATION CENTER

The Ag and Food Innovation Center is intended to benefit Southern Maryland by: 1) enhancing farmers' profitability, 2) enabling entry to bigger wholesale markets, 3) increasing the region's capacity to meet consumer demand for locally produced foods, 4) expanding and fortifying the region's multi-cultural farm community, 5) enabling businesses to develop and expand using local farm products, and 6) creating new jobs for the region. The Center plan concept is structured in a way to give farmers and rural businesses a voice in the Center and its success.

MEAT PROCESSING FACILITY

Feedback from public forums and surveys over the past two years, particularly during FY'15, identified the key components for the potential agriculture center for Southern Maryland. SMADC's concept for the Ag and Food Innovation Center includes multiple infrastructure components based on the needs, as expressed, of the regional farming community (meat processing, warehouse/distribution, certified kitchen, new farmer incubation, farmers' market/retail, aquaculture processing) of which a meat processing facility was identified as the top priority for the region.

Introduction

In March 2016, SMADC was directed by the Executive Board of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD) to focus exclusively on the creation of a USDA certified meat slaughter/processing facility convenient to the region's farmers and develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a site and managing entity and pursue an aggressive timeline to complete the project. Since time is of the essence, TCCSMD Executive Board resolved that co-locating the Ag. Center with the meat processing facility is not practical. All other prioritized infrastructure components of the Ag and Food Center are now secondary to the immediate successful creation of the meat facility and may be considered at a later date pending outcomes of the meat processing facility.

The TCCSMD directive is to create an RFP that allows a public-private partnership to develop, manage and operate the meat processing facility for the farmers of the region (under current structural organization the TCCSMD and SMADC cannot hold title to property). The objective is to find an entity that will make a long-term commitment to operate the facility at a mutually agreed upon location. TCCSMD has grant funds available to assist with regulatory requirements, equipment purchases, ongoing operational assistance and other potential overhead expenses.

In order to inform the agricultural community to the opportunity of the RFP, SMADC and TCCSMD Executive Board held a public information session in April 2016 to outline the RFP objective, to put in place a meat processing facility located within the five counties of Southern Maryland, and to clarify specific goals of the RFP for potential property owners, developers and operators considering submitting a bid. 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) as well as 'custom' processing options for local producers. The facility may include retail and wholesale outlets with the potential to develop a high quality line of meat products including niche products to meet ethnic community demand.

In May 2016, the TCCSMD Executive Board temporarily assigned the duty of managing SMADC to the TCCSMD Executive Director (upon the departure of the SMADC Executive Director) and assumed control of the RFP development. The RFP is being drafted in strict alignment with state procurement law requirements under the legal oversight and review (for content and language) by the TCCSMD attorney at the Department of Commerce and attorneys at the Department of General Services (DGS) and state attorney's at the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). The RFP will be presented to the Board of Public Works for final review and approval before implementation. Regular updates on the project/RFP (projected timelines, public meetings and status) are posted on the SMADC website homepage and provided directly through SMADC media communications conduits and in press releases.

SMADC has set aside funds in FY'16 to support the development/construction of the meat processing facility. Additionally, TCCSMD and SMADC have engaged in conversations with Maryland Agricultural Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) to investigate the possibility of dispensing SMADC funds for this project through MARBIDCO financial instruments, such as a conditional loan. This would entail issuing the funds as a low-interest loan which may be converted to a grant, conditional upon certain benchmarks being achieved. MARBIDCO has expressed willingness to take on this role and assist with the financial component of the RFP development.

Highlights (2015-2016):

- 23 public meetings/open houses have been held regarding the Ag. Center since December 2014.
- 2 meetings with wholesale producers/farms (Ag. Center infrastructure requirements).
- Ag Center Community Survey issued on-line and in-print (110 respondents) as of July 2016.
- Initial Business Plan elements drafted/completed in FY'16.
- 1 public information meeting on RFP components and timeline (April 2016).

SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:

PROVIDING FARMERS RESOURCES TO BE PROFITABLE

SOUTHERN MARYLAND MEAT INDUSTRY

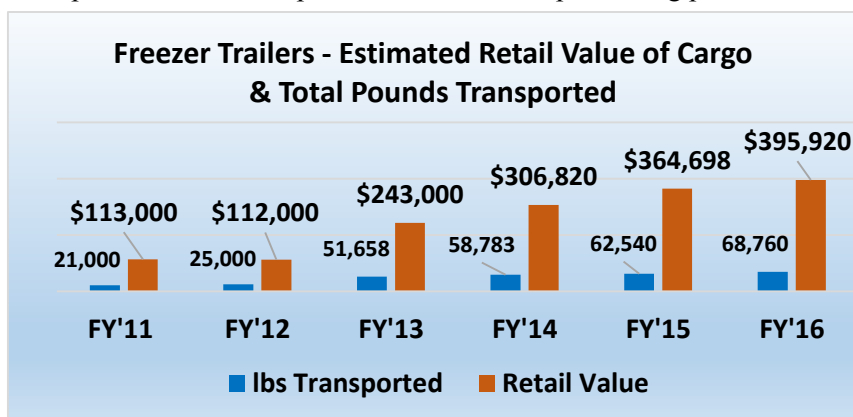
Southern Maryland Meats (SMM)

In the past six years, SMADC has undertaken the challenge of building the local meat industry. As a result, more producers are adding livestock to their business models and taking advantage of value-added potential for profit offered by SMM trailers, retail cases and rental farm equipment provided by SMADC grants. Cumulative trailer use and meat display case sales since the inception in 2010 of the Southern Maryland Meats (SMM) program demonstrate the industry is successfully incubated, solidly established and shows potential for continued steady growth.



Farm Share Equipment - Freezer Trailers

In 2011, SMADC provided funds to St. Mary's County Farm Bureau and Prince George's County Farm Bureau for two freezer trailers to transport farmers' meat products from USDA processing plants to farm or retail stores. 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 the past five years, St. Mary's and Prince George's trailers have accumulated considerable mileage resulting in wear and tear. In FY'16, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties submitted proposals to purchase two new trailers with more robust specifications to replace existing trailers. SMADC approved funding, which was conditional upon parity of rental rates, across all counties, to ensure equitable use of the trailers.



Counties continue to experience steady use of the trailers; 68,760 pounds of frozen meat product was transported in FY'16 (an increase of 10%), for an estimated retail value of \$395,920. Consensus of the managing entities is that the trailers are well utilized and *“have done the most good for the transition from tobacco by enabling operations to expand and transport meat as never before.”* (SMADC Regional Equipment Meeting, November 9, 2015).

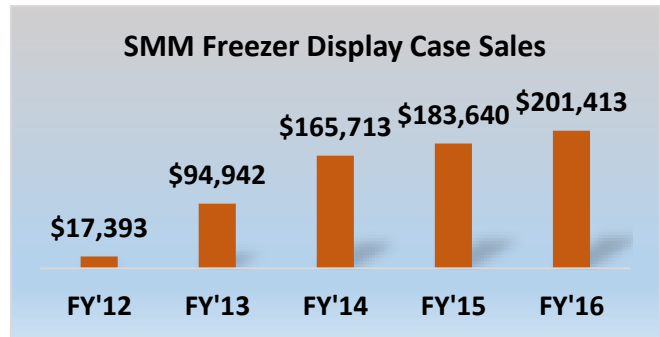
Marketing at Retail Venues

SMADC also funded the purchase of eight commercial freezer display cases to promote sales of Southern Maryland Meats directly to the public. The SMM freezer case initiative has provided SMM participants with important retail sales opportunity within Southern Maryland and has achieved program goals of facilitating successful, profitable on-going retail connections for producers. In FY'16, SMM retail partners reported meat sales are steady with total sales of \$201,413.00 (10% increase overall). SMM

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partner, Chesapeake's Bounty (farm market retailer) stated SMM meats constitute approximately 85-95% of their total meat sales *"With the exception of 2 farms, all meats purchased are sourced from SMM (participating) farms."* William Kreamer, owner, Chesapeake's Bounty.

In FY'16, seven retail display cases were located at farm market stores and grocery stores (3 in Calvert, 1 in Charles, 1 in Anne Arundel and 2 in St. Mary's). Two cases were relocated to new partner sites in Calvert County (Chesapeake's Bounty North) and Anne Arundel County (Greenstreet Gardens). As the cases age (most purchased in 2011), retailers are experiencing recurring maintenance issues (cumulative repairs are over \$6,000). The SMM Steering Committee has proposed a 'twilight' of cases and will offer the cases for sale to livestock producers to be used for their on-farm meat storage needs. Proceeds from the sale of the freezers will be used to establish a maintenance fund for all SMADC funded equipment. Two freezers are in temporary storage pending sale.



SMM Website

A popular destination for both consumers and producers, the SMM website averages 1,850 visits a month. The website is the main public portal for the SMM program providing producer and retail partner directories, plus resources for producers such as marketing and processing information, promotional materials, rental equipment and regulatory/licensing guidelines. 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.

Promotion and Marketing

A program priority is to build awareness for SMM meats. SMADC published the first Meats and Seafood Directory for the region in 2012. Although no longer available in print, the guide is the top download on the website (over 1,400 views in FY'16) and remains a top resource for consumers eager to find locally raised meats. A new, updated printed guide is planned for development in FY'17.

The "Southern Maryland Meats" brand/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. 47 producers participate in SMM program (2 new in FY'16). In response to SMM Steering Committee requests for enhanced marketing support to educate farms on how to make the most of social media and other digital tools to market their products, SMADC hosted two social media workshops which covered the social media basics (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) plus advanced topics on blogging and other trending digital resources, 21 farms attended.

What's Next

The program continues to show successes with consistent retail sales; however, more work needs to be done to increase consumer awareness for the brand. Steering Committee recommendations include increased marketing efforts to build and reinforce brand recognition for SMM 'juried' meats, promote SMM participating farms and provide more tools for consumers to find SMM products in the market place. In FY'16, SMM has requested funding for a 'youth' promotion to build awareness of SMM program, inform a new generation of beginning farmers and producer families, to stimulate interest to implement SMM raising practices and grow participation in the SMM program.

Highlights:

- 47 producers participate in SMM (2 new in FY'16).
- 68,760 pounds of frozen product transported, estimated retail value of \$395,920.
- 7 retail host venues report sales of \$201,413 (an increase of 10% from FY'15).
- 2 new freezer trailers purchased (Calvert and St. Mary's).
- 7 retail venues host retail SMM display cases.
- 21 farms attended the Social Media Workshops.

www.southernmarylandmeats.com

DAIRY INDUSTRY

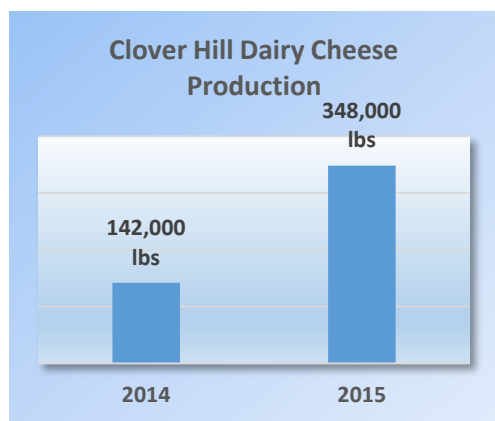
In 2011, SMADC was solicited by members of the Amish farming community in St. Mary's county to assist with regulatory requirements to obtain a permit for a Grade 'M' dairy for the production of cheese.



From 2011 to spring of 2014, SMADC staff facilitated meetings with the state Center for Milk Control, developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) and assisted with other regulatory issues to facilitate approval of the dairy pasteurization equipment. In March 2014, Clover Hill Dairy received their Grade 'M' operating permit (the first for Southern Maryland).

On-Going Regulatory Facilitation

SMADC staff continues to facilitate communications with the state Center for Milk Control and assist the dairy management with regulatory compliance requirements. *"Meetings we have are much more productive with SMADC staff in the loop."* Kirk Engle, Center for Milk & Dairy Product Safety.



In FY'16, staff attended two training sessions with dairy personnel to assist in the preparation for new Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan requirements (now a prerequisite for all Maryland creameries/cheese houses) mandated by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). SMADC staff will work as requested/needed to help develop and implement the dairy HACCP plan by the fall of 2017.

Clover Hill Dairy processed over 348,000 pounds of finished cheese in 2015, an increase in production of well over 100% from 2014. Seventeen local dairy farms in St. Mary's and Charles counties supply bulk milk for the cheese production.

A new extension for dry-goods, packaging, storage, and office space was completed in the spring of 2016. Currently, staff is facilitating coordination of plan review requirements with the Center for Milk Control for permit applications and equipment approvals for a further expansion of the dairy production area (7,000 sq. ft.).

Highlights:

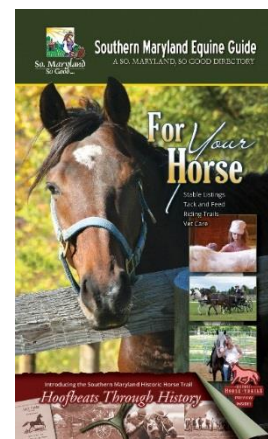
- 348,000 lbs. of cheese produced in 2015.
- New packaging/office expansion completed.
- 17 dairy farms supply bulk milk.
- 17 recipes approved for production.

EQUINE INDUSTRY

Since its creation in 2000, SMADC has helped local farms expand and thrive. SMADC focuses on promoting the region's diverse agricultural businesses inclusive of Southern Maryland's equine community. Southern Maryland's horse stables and farms help to preserve the rural landscape and stimulate the trajectory of the regional economy bringing together communities through equine sports events, recreational activities, and as vibrant tourism destinations. Over 30,000 acres are attributed to equine businesses in Southern Maryland, (MD Horse Board 2010 Census) and more than 165 Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) licensed equine facilities operate in the region.

Southern Maryland Equine Guide

In FY'16, SMADC developed and published "For Your Horse," the fourth edition of the Southern Maryland Equine Guide, which showcases Southern Maryland's equine community and provides information and resources for horse owners, horse-related businesses and consumers. The 44-page, full-color directory lists 63 horse farms and stables (9 new in FY'16), in Anne Arundel (23), Calvert (10), Charles (12), Prince George's (6) and St. Mary's (12) counties that offer riding lessons, training programs, horse boarding, sales and breeding. Additionally, 18 regional hay producers are featured as well as listings of equine-related goods and services including feed suppliers, vets, farriers, tack shops, horseback riding trails, show arenas and equine associations.



The guide also highlights Southern Maryland's seven Horse Discovery Centers [Anne Arundel (2), Calvert (2), Prince George's (1) and St. Mary's (2)]; these certified stables provide a safe, knowledgeable environment where visitors can interact with horses. Another section offers a preview of SMADC's newest heritage trail "Hoofbeats Through History: The Southern Maryland Historic Horse Trail," a network of destinations highlighting the important role of horses in the area's culture and heritage. A total of 15,000 Equine Guides were printed in FY'16, with initial distribution of 6,300 copies to regional public libraries, welcome centers and participating businesses. Ten full color advertisements generated \$2,640 towards print costs. The guide is available to view or download on the SMADC website.

Southern Maryland Historic Horse Trail



Launched in June 2016, "Hoofbeats Through History: The Southern Maryland Historic Horse Trail" is one of a network of heritage 'driving' trails in development across the state that highlight the contribution of horses to Maryland's history and culture.

The state-wide Maryland Historic Horse Trails (HHT) was initiated by the Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) which invited SMADC's participation and provided \$3,000 funding for the development of the HHT website and companion brochure. The HHT initiative is a novel approach to heritage tourism which enhances economic opportunity for regional cultural sites hand in hand with the promotion of the area's equine industry.

The HHT website is the project centerpiece and features a mapped, self-guided driving trail of 17 documented/equine-related destinations in Southern Maryland (Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties*) that illustrate the role of horses in the region's past offering historical insight and educational opportunities. The trail website includes descriptions, stories, photos, hours, galleries of related documents, articles and an interactive map for the key sites.

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In addition to the history piece, the website highlights the area's active working horse farms, plus equine events that encourage visitors to experience and participate in the world of horses today. A full color printed brochure provides a summarized version of the trail which directs the public to the HHT website; 15,000 brochures were printed, with 5,850 copies distributed in FY'16. The HHT website has received over 6,000 visits since the launch date in June. A series of Ads and events to promote the Trail and Equine Guide are planned for FY'17.

*(*SMADC's mission and programs generally encompass all five Southern Maryland counties; for this initiative, Anne Arundel County will produce a separate trail.)*

Highlights (FY'16):

- 63 equine businesses (9 new FY'16), 18 hay producers, 31 equine businesses listed/Equine Guide
- 10 ads generate \$2,640/Equine Guide
- 6,300 Equine Guides distributed
- 17 destination sites, 63 active equine businesses promoted/HHT brochure and website
- 5,850 HHT brochures distributed
- Over 6,000 visits recorded on HHT website since June launch

www.somdhorsetrails.smadc.com

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.

SMADC's 2016 theme, "Healthy Plate, Healthy Communities," conveys messages about the benefits of buying locally raised farm foods that parallel the state's "Smart, Green and Growing" (SGG) initiative, highlighting personal, community, environmental and economic health for the region. Governor Hogan and Agriculture Secretary Bartenfelder have endorsed the annual continuance of the BLC promotion as a statewide initiative. SMADC co-promotes the BLC in partnership with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA).

The Buy Local Cookout and contest, hosted each year at the Governor's mansion (for eight consecutive years and through two administrations) featured selected recipes showcasing the diversity of Maryland's farm products. In FY'16, recipes included products from 14 Southern Maryland farms including one winery, a brewery and eight Southern Maryland restaurant/caterers/chefs.

Enhanced consumer education, through promotions like the BLC, is increasing public awareness and preference for locally raised/produced products. *"We are really seeing the demand from the public for locally produced meats, we have increased our production every year and we still can't keep up."* Deanna Tice, Enticement Meats, Anne Arundel. (Capital Gazette BLC editorial, July 21, 2016). In direct response to retail demand, Maryland distributors such as Coastal Sunbelt and Hearn Kirkwood are sourcing Maryland-grown farm products. As more distributors make connections with local growers, chefs and food service directors have direct and convenient access to locally produced foods.



In FY'16, 150,000 SMADC BLC fliers were distributed to over 100 Southern Maryland region 'farm to table' venues (stores, restaurants, caterers), area food banks, farmers' markets, three

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regional library systems and welcome centers. MDA distributed 100,000 (SMADC designed) state BLC flyers to the general public in their MVA license renewals. Statewide Agriculture Marketing Professionals (AMPs) spearheaded BLC promotions/events in their counties. The Maryland Wineries Association, Brewers Association of Maryland and Maryland Distillers Guild, all endorsed Buy Local Week.

BLC Media Campaign

The BLC campaign is self-propelling, borne out by the activity on Facebook 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. *“We decided to do this annually...we have fun and tell about all we ate and where it came from.” North Beach Senior Center, Calvert.*

Throughout the BLC week the Governor’s Office, MDA, SMADC, numerous independent media (ABC News, Capital Gazette, CBS, Baltimore Sun), county agencies, local townships and governments promoted the BLC on social media and on their websites. During the campaign, the BLC Facebook page registered a total ‘reach’ of over 10,700. The BLC website registered 84,925 unique visits for the fiscal year, with over 10,000 visits during the FY’ 16 BLC week (of which 7,200 were new visitors). SMADC supported the BLC with advertisements served to all Maryland and the metro DC area. The ‘creative’ performance of the Washingtonpost.com advertisement exceeded industry benchmarks (77.6% versus 52.9% industry), employing content and behavioral targeting across all platforms (desktop, mobile and pads), delivered to an audience of over one million (1,396,315) with a click through rate of 15%.

Highlights (FY’16-17):

- 150,000 SMADC/BLC fliers distributed regionally.
- 100,000 MDA/BLC fliers mailed with MVA license renewals statewide
- Governor Hogan and Agriculture Secretary endorse BLC Week.
- Numerous independent articles, press notices, TV, radio and SMADC ads reached a combined audience over 1 million people.

www.buylocalchallenge.com

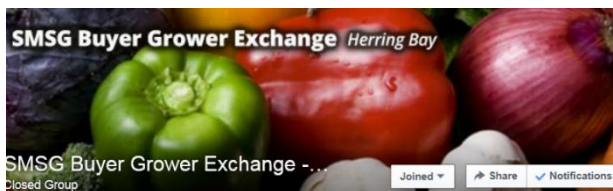
SO. MARYLAND, SO GOOD: MARKETING SOUTHERN MARYLAND

So. Maryland, So Good (SMSG) – This three-fold campaign seeks to directly link farmers and buyers, add value to local agricultural products through the use of an identifiable brand (logo), and educate consumers about the benefits of buying from and supporting local farms.

Data from the latest USDA National agricultural census shows that from 2007 to 2012, the value of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption grew 58% in Southern Maryland. Direct sales grew by \$1.6 million in Southern Maryland, with growth in all five counties.

SMSG Buyer Grower Exchange – Connecting Buyers and Sellers

In April 2015, at the request of chefs and farmers, SMADC designed and developed a pilot communication platform, the *So. Maryland, So Good Buyer Grower Exchange* on Facebook, in partnership with Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) and hotel/caterer Herrington on the Bay. The Exchange facilitates sales of fresh farm foods between buyers and growers. The Exchange has 29 participants consisting of farmers, chefs, restaurants, caterers, and stores located in the Herring Bay area on the Anne Arundel/Calvert county lines.



SMSG Farm to Table List

Launched to coincide with the 2015 Buy Local Week, SMADC published an online 'Farm to Table' listing of regional businesses that purchase and promote farm products grown and produced exclusively by farms in Southern Maryland. Available to view or download, the SMSG Farm to Table List is intended as a resource to help consumers find locally grown farm products at regional stores, restaurants and other retail businesses. 15 food service businesses applied to be listed in FY'16.

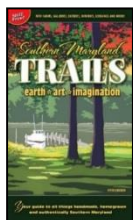
Highlights FY'16:

- SMSG Farm to Table Listing (15 venues listed in FY'16).
- 369 farms (9 new in FY'16), listed throughout all of SMADC websites, guides and contact lists.
- 2016 Farmers' Market Guide listing 30 So. MD Markets and 10 additional markets in MD, Metro DC and VA hosting Southern MD farm vendors.
- 2016 Farms for the Holiday's Guide listing 72 agricultural businesses, 6 new farm listings in FY'16 (of which 2 farms are new to SMADC programs)
- 2016 Equine Guide listing 63 horse farms/stables (9 new farms).
- 4 SMADC workshops benefitted 107 individuals/farm businesses.
- SMADC website over 43,800 unique visitors* in FY'16.
- SMADC Facebook page registered 13,992 total 'daily reach' for FY'16.

**In FY'15 SMADC measured using the total number of visits, not accounting for multiple visits by individuals. We feel that measuring by unique visitors is a more accurate way to show the impact of the SMADC website and we will continue to use this measurement in the future.*

<http://www.smadc.com/programs/smsg.html>

SOUTHERN MARYLAND TRAILS: EARTH, ART, IMAGINATION



The Southern Maryland Trails Guidebook has connected area farms with arts, eateries and other public venues and businesses to enhance cross promotion, profit opportunities and build a sense of local awareness and community. Now in its fifth edition, the guide continues to be a sought after publication in Welcome Centers across the state and the entire 30,000 original print run has been distributed. SMADC continues to receive requests for additional copies and it is envisioned that a sixth edition should be developed soon.

FARM SHARE: EQUIPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Beginning in 2010, SMADC was hearing from the farming community that farm equipment is expensive, and many found it cost-prohibitive to purchase equipment that is used only a few times a year. SMADC invited agricultural entities to identify farm equipment needs that would be shared and rented by farmers across the Southern Maryland region. Funds were 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 (such as wine grape growing, small scale and urban farming operations).

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. SMADC held a meeting in the fall of 2015 with all the managing entities to discuss the program; review any underutilized equipment and take

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steps to make the program even more successful. SMADC plans to hold an equipment meeting every two years.

The equipment is listed on the “farmer resources” page of the SMADC website, and on the websites of the managing entities.

Highlights (2016):

- In 2016, SMADC offered an Equipment Grant for local agencies to apply. 15 pieces of equipment were requested and after reviewing and researching the requests, SMADC approved five pieces for funding. Four pieces will be replacing equipment already in the program.
- 37 pieces of equipment have been purchased and are available for farmers to rent across the region.
- 2,396 acres positively impacted by conservation tillage across the five counties.
- The no-till drill is the most demanded piece of equipment. There are four drills between three counties.

<http://www.smadc.com/farmRESOR/equiprental.htm>

REGULATORY ASSISTANCE/ SMADC OMBUDSMAN

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

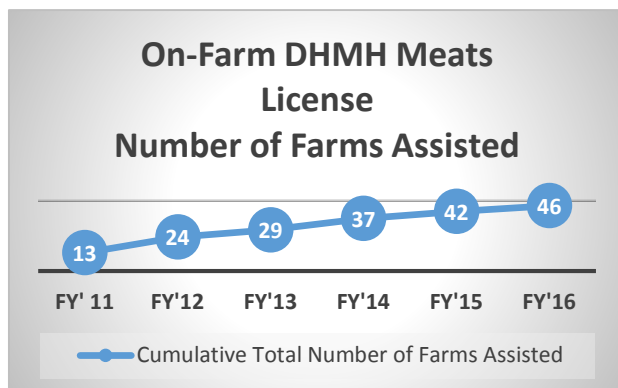
What’s SMADC Doing?

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, DHMH, SHA) which oversee food production and farm enterprise.

Examples of SMADC regulatory outreach in FY’16 include partnering with DHMH and University of Maryland Extension to present at Annie’s Project workshop which featured presentations and updates to on-farm processing and value-added regulations (15 producers attended). SMADC with St. Mary’s County Government facilitated and attended meetings with FSIS/USDA (Food Safety Inspection Service) to assist with the development of an Amish-owned meat processing facility. SMADC staff were also invited to participate on the Anne Arundel County Agritourism Workgroup to provide input which will be used to assist in the development of an agritourism definition for Anne Arundel County.



In winter of 2016, SMADC held two meetings to determine ongoing needs and opportunities for wholesale producers of fruits and vegetables in Southern Maryland. Feedback from these meetings concerning regulatory and other hurdles inhibiting farm business was included in testimony given by



SMADC staff at Governor Hogan's Regulatory Reform Commission listening sessions in July 2016. This information was also documented and provided to the Maryland Agricultural Commission for the development of the Maryland Agriculture Strategic Plan.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), is intensifying regulatory oversight for food production, as focus shifts to heightened preventative controls. In August 2016, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a

final rule that extends and clarifies the compliance dates of FSMA as manifested in the Current Good Manufacturing Practices and Preventive Control Rule for Human Food. It is anticipated, almost all farming enterprises will be affected by the new regulations.

In FY'16, SMADC staff attended several workshops to be better prepared to assist farms with steps needed to achieve mandatory FSMA compliance deadlines, (commencing September 2016 through the next 2 to 3 years), including two HACCP training sessions for building practical, sustainable food safety plans for small and mid-sized dairy plants. As many mid-size and large retail food businesses are now requiring GAP certification for their farm sources, staff attended Maryland GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) training sessions and a 'mock' GAP audit hosted by MDA and the University of Maryland's Terp Farm which also included updates on the FSMA rule for vegetable and fruit producers.

SMADC's online tools, tutorials and template resources continue to provide easily accessible local and state regulatory compliance guidelines for Acidified Foods and the On-Farm Processor/Meats License application; both tutorials remain top visited pages on the SMADC website. SMADC facilitated 5 new meat/on-farm processor licenses in FY'16.

Highlights FY'16:

- 2 new acidified recipe submissions facilitated/approved (Cornell, FDA, DHMH)
- 4 on-farm acidified foods DHMH annual process reviews, 4 SOP updates facilitated.
- Clover Hill Dairy FSMA/HACCP training facilitated
- Clover Hill Dairy storage room expansion/approvals facilitated
- 5 new on-farm processor meat licenses facilitated
- Enhancing Wholesale Distribution 'needs and opportunities' meetings - 10 producers attended
- Annie's Project value-added regulation update - 15 producers attended

Ongoing:

- Clover Hill Dairy – assist with compliance approvals for new extension/equipment and HACCP
- Acidified - SMADC will work with DHMH in FY'17 to update acidified tutorial and facilitate on-farm reviews.
- Group GAP – SMADC will explore implementation of a pilot with state partners

www.smadc.com

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. SMADC's funds permit the counties to place a priority on former tobacco farms through matching funds. These funds assure that farmland will persist not just for today, but for farmers and food production into the future.

Highlights FY'16:

SMADC funds:

- 81 acres (1 farm) directly preserved in one county (1 Anne Arundel).
- Resulting in 16,257 cumulative acres over the 14 years of program funding.

SMADC plus leveraged County and State program funds:

- 36,325 acres (320 farms) cumulatively preserved in the five counties.
- SMADC has been able to attain SMADC's early goal of 35,000 acres preserved by including leveraged funds with SMADC funds. SMADC funds represent approximately **45%** of the 36,325 total acres preserved.

FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY 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 wanting to know where one's food comes from. They can also be a means to provide fresh food to the underserved communities, while also boosting income for farmers.

SMADC Support

SMADC assists farmers' markets in the five counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's) through education, promotion, advice for start-up, and acting as a conduit of information about regulations and other pertinent information.

SMADC hosts workshops for farmers' market managers to keep the markets up to date with new incentives, opportunities and regulations. SMADC has provided administrative support to individual markets in applying for grants for EBT/SNAP incentive funds. As well as annual production of a directory of farmers' markets throughout the five-county region. The brochure features a chart of "What's in Season" and lists markets which provide EBT/SNAP.

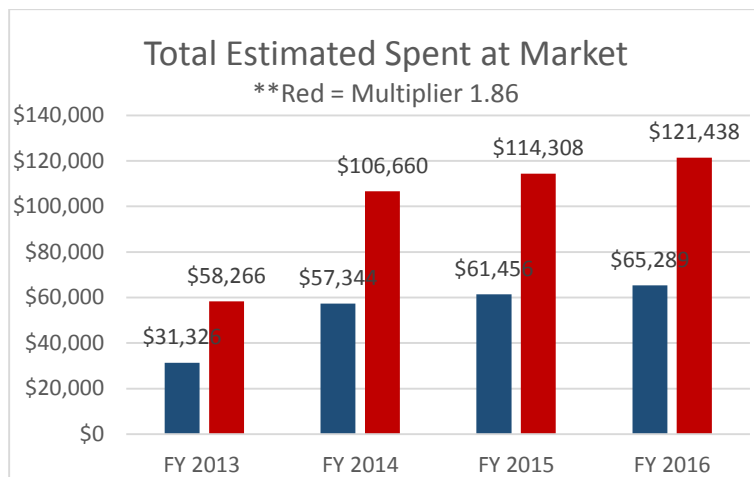
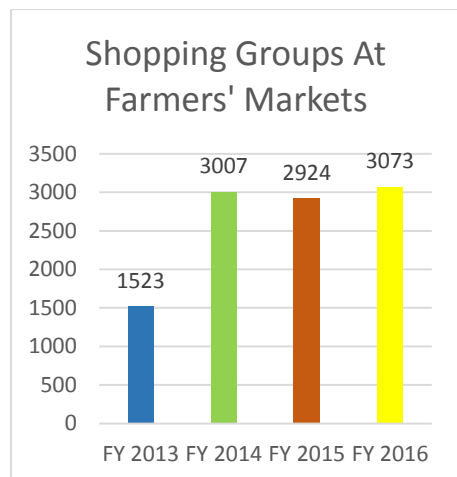
SMADC provides promotional assistance grants, ranging from \$500 - \$2,000, directly to farmers' markets where the majority of farm vendors are from Southern Maryland. Since 2003, over \$242,000 has been awarded to eligible farmers' markets for promotion. In 2015, gross revenue from these farmers markets was approximately \$2.4 million, from 266 Southern Maryland vendors. Over the years that SMADC has worked with markets, a cumulative estimate of over \$25 million has been earned through the markets; which amounts to a \$47 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.

Year (Previous Market Year)	Total Markets	Total Vendors	So. Md. Vendors	SMADC Mkt. Grant	Revenue	Market impact with multiplier* (1.86)
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
TOTAL	181	2817	1271	242,850	25,775,346	47,942,144

Farmers' Market Economic Surveys

In order to fully appreciate the economic and social impact of Southern Maryland farmers' markets on the local economy, SMADC has conducted consumer surveys at markets. The number of shoppers is recorded, along with a customer survey. Analysis is enabling SMADC and the markets to better understand the impact of the market on the local communities. These surveys also help vendors, market managers and local community government better understand the needs and wishes of their customers.

Five markets have been continuously surveyed for three years, and in 2015, staff will conduct a 4th survey round. Surveying over a number of years should average out abnormalities in any given year. Data and highlights are shared with the individual markets. The following graphs show preliminary data from the original five markets.



Results are for a single market day on a specific date. Note: Shopping group is typically 1.6-2.0 people; SMADC used 1.8 as the average number. Counts take place hourly, 20 minutes after the hour. The estimated attendance is determined by multiplying the total of the hourly counts by 3. Shopping groups are determined by dividing the est. attendance by 1.8.

Thus far, in 2015, preliminary data for five markets shows following:

- 83% of all patrons of these markets primarily came out exclusively for the market (may depend on market location and proximity to other businesses).
- Patrons surveyed spent \$15 - \$24 at the markets on day of survey.
- An estimated \$4,000 - \$23,000 was spent at the markets on day of the survey.

Increasing Access to Fresh Food for the Hunger Community at Farmers' Markets

Several federal nutrition assistance programs have been established to help needy families attain better access to fresh farm food, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP/WIC), and Fruit and Vegetable Check (FVC) program. The primary challenge in making farmers' markets accessible to low-income shoppers is the technology and administration required to accept SNAP benefits. In Maryland, all SNAP benefits are redeemed through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) machines. Debit and credit cards can also be swiped through the EBT machines which allow the market to earn income through transaction fees. In the past, SMADC has assisted two markets to obtain EBT machines.

Recently, USDA has expanded to allow direct marketing farmers to accept SNAP. This change is helpful because if a market does not have the resources to host a machine for all farm vendors, individual farmers can apply to accept SNAP. SMADC offers assistance to any farmers in the application process and assisted two farms in 2016.

HUB AND SPOKE PROGRAM

The Hub and Spoke model of local food distribution is designed to increase the availability of fresh produce to those in need in Southern Maryland. While many anti-hunger organizations are providing food, donations to these organizations tend heavily toward bulk, packaged products with a deficit of fresh produce. Moving bulk fresh produce often requires its own distribution needs. At the same time, Maryland farmers often have vegetables or fruit that are surplus or slightly blemished and therefore not marketable at full retail value. The Hub and Spoke has provided a market for this produce. Notably, it has



also provided a market for dropped accounts by large wholesalers, and an outlet for what would be otherwise considered food waste. A Maryland Hub and Spoke Task Force convened in 2013 to study the needs, challenges and opportunities of the region. The Task Force's findings and recommendations were published in a report available on SMADC's website. From that, a partnership between SMADC and Farming 4 Hunger formed, and the Hub and Spoke model was built and tested in the region. SMADC provided grant funds to assist Farming 4 Hunger in purchasing a truck to help with distribution and administrative support for coordination. During FY'16, SMADC continued to coordinate the program and donations by farmers to both Farming 4 Hunger (considered the hub) and to independent organizations (considered the spokes) willing to receive locally grown produce directly from farmers.

The intent is that farmers will be offered a financial incentive for their donation through a proposed Maryland tax credit (to help cover the cost of production, harvest and delivery). The bill was brought forth in the Maryland General Assembly in FY'14 (SB0670 and HB1083), FY'15 (SB0280 and HB0359), and FY'16 (SB249 and read in the House). To date the bill has not passed; however, the program has carried on, and in many cases, Farming 4 Hunger has been able to provide a financial incentive to farmers. SMADC funds expended to Farming 4 Hunger have amounted to \$74,790 in total, resulting in over \$670,000 in revenue to 29 farms and 4,241,230 pounds of fresh, local produce to those in need. With SMADC's support, Farming 4 Hunger has made (and continues to make) connections and partnerships with Southern Maryland wholesale produce farmers, including: Miller farms (Prince George's County), Tim Wallace (Calvert County), the Loveville Produce Auction (St. Mary's County) and Serenity Farm (Charles County).

Some farms donate directly to Spokes in their neighborhoods. Many of these partnerships have gone so well that the pantries have reduced having to buy canned vegetables and fruits, thus providing their communities with fresher and tastier foods. Farms who donate regularly, did not receive funds in FY'15 or FY'16, and would have received the benefit of the Maryland Tax Credit for Farm Food Donations, had it existed.

New during FY'16, the Hub and Spoke program implemented a measurement tool (survey) to assess the impact of the distribution of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. The objective of the survey was to gather baseline data on the clients receiving fresh food through the distribution sites. The survey provided information beyond basic measures (pounds of food delivered, number of families served, etc.) such as the extent of unmet need for fresh food, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors about fresh food, and the program's impact on social well-being and community engagement. This was helpful to the program stakeholders. The findings of the survey and assessment report can be found on SMADC's website.

The Hub and Spoke has always been intended by both SMADC and the Task Force members, to be adaptable to the needs of any community, and to be replicated and shared with other communities around the state and beyond.

Highlights (FY'16):

- Survey conducted by SMADC from 115 fresh food recipients across southern Maryland.
- Drafted and published the "Hub and Spoke Fresh Food Survey Summary" report.
- SMADC worked to make connections to additional local farmers for fresh produce that would have otherwise been purchased from out of state. 29 farmers are now engaged.
- Diversity, quality and freshness of farm foods increased: over 20 varieties of fresh vegetables and fruits are now offered.
- Increased direct farmer to food pantry relationships (Spokes), increasing fresh produce intake.
- SMADC funds expended to Farming 4 Hunger have amounted to \$74,790 in total, resulting in over \$670,000 in revenue to 29 farms and 4,241,230 pounds of fresh, local produce.

MARYLAND FOOD HUBS - REPORT AND CONVENINGS



In response to a request from the Maryland Legislature, SMADC prepared a summary report of food hubs in Maryland in FY'15 and FY'16. SMADC undertook the reporting through a transparent process, inviting all hubs willing to participate. A survey was sent to all food hubs that could be identified in Maryland, with a relatively good response rate. Some significant changes occurred between the FY'16 report and the FY'15 report such as hubs dissolving and a few new hubs emerging. The two reports have helped identify areas of need and provided a blueprint for the state. The summary reports were then used by the Wallace Center during FY'16, in partnership with SMADC, to write a follow-on report to assess the Maryland food system and the roles food hubs play. SMADC and the Wallace Center conducted research and regular meetings to gain feedback from hubs and food system stakeholders, before the final report was released in June of 2016. SMADC sees value in breaking down the silos across the region. By working together as a group or sub-groups, the Maryland food hubs are learning about each other and discovering ways to work together to enhance the local food system.

During FY'16, SMADC coordinated four (4) convenings at existing regional food hubs. Each was designed to showcase the different models in operation, and build connections between those who operate, or are thinking of operating, food hubs. Attendees toured each operation and had Q&A sessions. Discussions included topics to help the audience make initial decisions about feasibility and business planning, understanding the different food hub models and how they operate, food safety and regulation updates, market pricing, transportation and distribution, and financing and raising capital.



The first convening took place in the Fall at Common Market, one of the oldest Food Hubs in the Mid-Atlantic. Common Market is a nonprofit food hub providing wholesale to institutions, primarily schools in Maryland and Pennsylvania. SMADC coordinated a second convening in January during the Cultivate the Chesapeake annual conference to discuss food hub trends in the Maryland region and beyond, and to gain insight for the report in collaboration with the Wallace Center. SMADC coordinated a third convening in the Spring to a for-profit food hub selling direct-to-consumer, Friends and Farms. The afternoon portion of that convening met at the Maryland Food Center Authority, a wholesale terminal market, for a roundtable discussion. The Wallace Center was also present at this convening to discuss the "2015 National Food Hub Survey" results and gain final input to the "Maryland Food Hubs: Scaling the Food System Impact" report which was in its final draft at the time of the convening. Lastly, over the Summer, a convening was coordinated to Chesapeake Farm To Table, a for-profit food hub with a commitment to sourcing from small farms, and delivering to restaurants in the Baltimore metro region.

All convenings in FY'16 met our target audience, each having representation from all regions of Maryland, including Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern. We also had attendees from the surrounding regions of Washington D.C., Virginia and Pennsylvania. Many attendees were food hub operators, or emerging food hub operators. All came from different food system backgrounds such as economic development and food policy, and brought a lot to the table during the discussion and Q&A sessions. One attendee wrote us after a convening and said, *"Thank you for orchestrating this. Bringing the local food systems activist, practitioners and supporters together was an invaluable opportunity to*

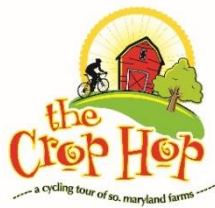
share and network for the greater good of developing the Maryland local food system.” SMADC was grateful to the generous food hub operators who offered their time, knowledge and feedback to attendees.

SMADC places importance in continuing to pursue these endeavors and sharing lessons learned, cross-marketing, and working collectively as needed. All three reports are available on SMADC's website.

Highlights (FY'16):

- Updated and published the “2015 Existing and Emerging Food Hubs in Maryland” report.
- Coordinated on 4 food hub convening’s at operating food hubs.
- Collaborated on the “Maryland Food Hubs: Scaling the Food System Impact” report with the Wallace Center.

CROP HOP: A CYCLING TOUR OF SO. MARYLAND FARMS



Always looking for creative ways to engage and educate the community about the importance of farms and fresh food, SMADC initiated the Crop Hop in 2012. The Crop Hop is a cycling tour of Southern Maryland farms designed to provide a fun and healthy way to learn about our area’s diverse agriculture, and raise funds to provide fresh, local farm products to low-income communities in Southern Maryland. The event is for all riders, including avid cyclists and families.

The Crop Hop has the three following goals:

- Connect people to the local food system by improving their understanding of local farms.
- Promote healthy living through a diet of fresh, local foods and physical activities such as bicycling.
- Support those who can’t afford to buy locally produced foods by donating proceeds to a local anti-hunger organization to purchase and distribute fresh local foods.

In its fourth year, the 2105 Crop Hop was scheduled to take place in Anne Arundel County in partnership with Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC), however, due to late submission for review of the routes the ride had to be canceled. Five diverse farms and a historic baseball field were to be featured (The Vineyard at Dodon, Obligation Farm, Griffith Farm, Greenstreet Gardens, Red Top Farm and Hot Sox Ball Field).

2016 Crop Hop

The 2016 Crop Hop is scheduled for Saturday, October 22, 2016 in St. Mary’s County. The route will begin and end at the 7th District Optimist Club Park. The 2016 farm stops will be Moore or Less Farm, The Clover Hill Dairy, Russell Brothers, Briar Branch Alpacas, Russell Produce Stand, Wolves Knoll Farm and Still Creek Vineyards.

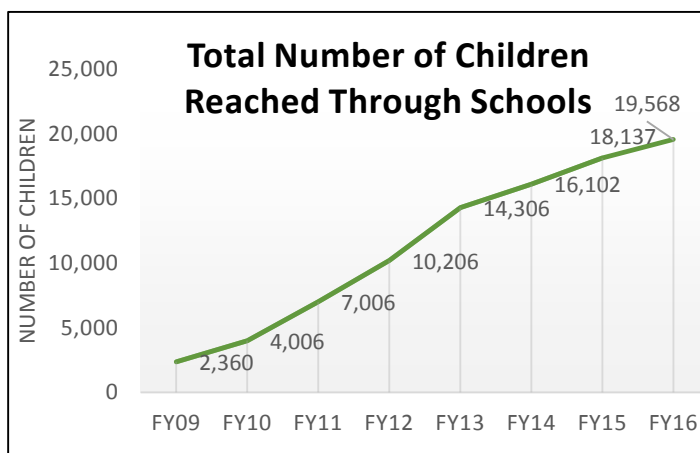
www.crophop.com and www.facebook.com/TheCropHop

CORNELIA AND THE FARM BAND PROGRAM

ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD HEALTH

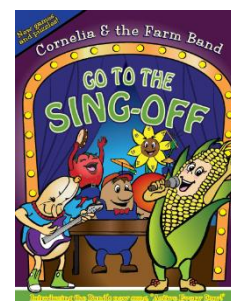
SMADC's Cornelia and the Farm Band program was created to educate and excite children and their families about the long term benefits of supporting farms, good health and tasty local foods. It addresses serious topics such as childhood obesity and exercise in fun and creative ways. The program has grown over the years, and impacts children and their families in many diverse ways.

Now in its tenth year, much of the educational package is available to view and download from the www.Let'sGotoAFarm.com website for individual classroom and home schooling venues. These materials also continue to be widely distributed at public events and *Farm to School* activities.



Cornelia and the Farm Band Go to the Sing-Off

This year Cornelia and the Farm Band have a brand new coloring/activity book. With support from a grant from the Maryland Agriculture Council, Inc. SMADC has produced the fourth activity book for children. These books are distributed at schools, fairs, and other special events helping Cornelia to continue to share her messages about eating healthy and staying active. The 20 page book features the farm band trying some unhealthy ways to get ready for a big singing competition and Cornelia is there to lead them back onto a safe and healthy path. Included in the activities are a crossword puzzle, word search, maze and a brand new song “Active Every Day” is sung to the tune of “She’ll be Comin’ Round the Mountain” to remind kids to be active and make healthy choices.



Farm to School (Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week):



The goal of the Maryland Farm to School Week is to encourage the use of locally grown produce in school meals, to promote community partnerships, and to help students connect with local farmers. Throughout FY'16, SMADC's mascot, Cornelia attended three elementary schools, reaching 1,431 students. This year Cornelia was featured during Farm to School week in the local newspapers as she helped the children understand the importance of local farm foods and encouraged them to identify some of the many fun outdoor activities they can experience at local farms. Since 2009, Cornelia has reached over 19,568 students in schools.

Blue Crabs Baseball Game

In early July 2016, SMADC sponsored the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs (Baseball) “Farm Fresh” Night. Farms and Farming entities were featured on the concourse. During the game Cornelia and staff had the opportunity to promote SMADC, the Crop Hop, the Buy Local Challenge and SMADC's guides and resources. Cornelia posed for photos and shared her message with the 4,400 fans in attendance.



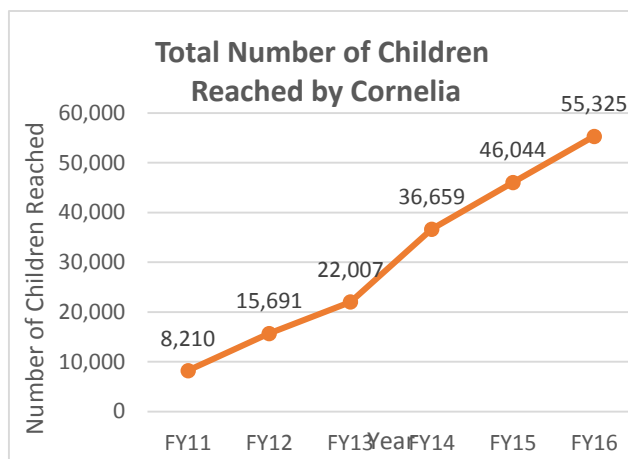
Bowie Baysox Baseball Game



On July 22nd, 2016, SMADC sponsored their third Bowie Baysox baseball game and for the first time the Bowie Baysox offered grilled locally sourced corn for patrons to purchase. Cornelia and staff promoted SMADC programs: The Buy Local Challenge, The Crop Hop and the Historic Horse Trail. SMADC was also given the opportunity to speak prior to the game, display banners and distribute marketing materials. Cornelia threw out a spectacular first pitch and SMADC radio announcements were played through the entire Baysox season. Cornelia had opportunities to interact with the 4,000 fans in attendance.

County Fairs

Cornelia and Couch are enthusiastically received at the local County Fairs where they pass their messages to parents and children, and encourage people to visit the SMADC booth. SMADC was honored in Charles County with the Best Non-Commercial Inside Exhibit. Cornelia continues to make countless connections with parents and children, many of whom remembered her from visits to their schools. This year the end supply of “Farm Starter Kits” were distributed to kids during the County Fairs.



Marine Corps Marathon



Cornelia once again attended the Marine Corps Marathon Healthy Kids Fun Run in October. The MCM Kids run is an opportunity for children ages 5 to 12 to get active with a one-mile fun run. During the event Cornelia has an opportunity to interact with a portion of the 3,600 children participating, where she shares her message, poses for photos and cheers the runners on as they near the finish line.

Highlights (FY'16)

- Approximately 9,281 new children were reached at the special events and schools.
- Since 2009, Cornelia has reached over 55,325 children through schools and special events.
- Since 2009, over 19,500 school children have been reached at schools

www.Let'sGotoAFarm.com

SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD COUNCIL



SMADC created the Southern Maryland Food Council in 2011 to bring a new set of voices to a table concerned with food issues, food access and availability, and to increase awareness of Southern Maryland farms, farm stores, and agritourism. The Council has a mission to bring together diverse stakeholders to integrate all aspects of the food system (production, distribution, access, consumption, processing and recycling) in order to sustain and enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Southern Maryland. The Council provides a forum for education and community discussion, which has resulted in stronger community networks between organizations and individuals.

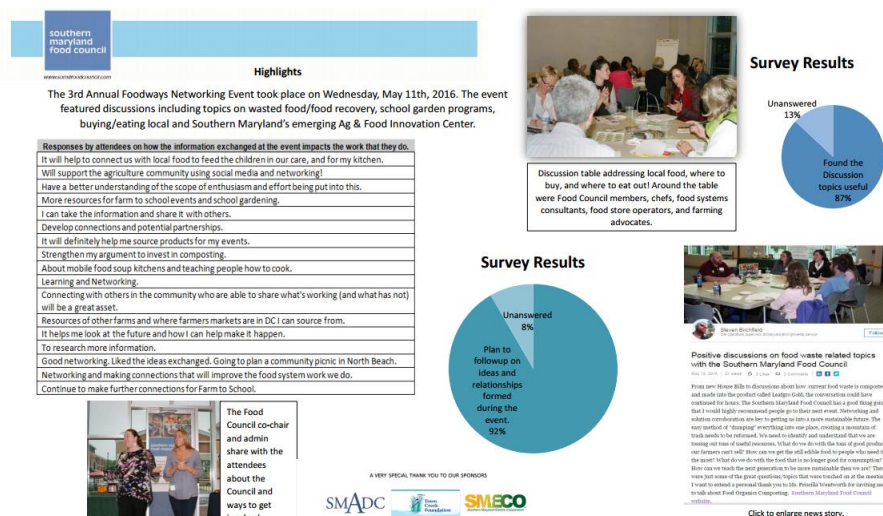
In FY'16, SMADC continued to administer and chair the Council, which held public meetings, discussion groups, a community networking event, and hosted guest speakers from around the region. The Council continued to meet regularly to provide an intersection point for community members to come together around the different sectors of the food system. The Council continued to partner and network with other food councils around the state at regional meetings to collaborate and support each other. The Council continued to work to increase partnerships and expand its membership.

3rd Annual Foodways Community Networking Event

During FY'16, the Council hosted the third annual Foodways Community Networking Event. The event was well attended and allowed participants to explore specific food-related issues. Topics of discussion were identified through an online public survey.

The event was successful in reaching the intended target audience, featuring a networking session followed by an action planning session. Topics focused on: Community Gardens, the Southern Maryland Meat Processing Facility, Buying and Eating Local, and Wasted Food/Food Recovery. During the event, new connections were made and networking took place among organizations and citizens working on food-related work.

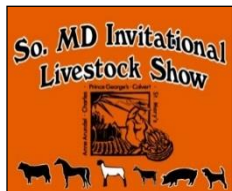
In July of 2016, it was decided that SMADC would no longer administer or Chair the Council due to funding restraints. Fortunately, the Council's Co-chair, Brenda DiCarlo of the Southern Maryland Food Bank, stepped up to take the lead role in administering and chairing the Council moving forward. SMADC was pleased that a regional organization, that has been engaged in the Council since the beginning, came forward to take the Council out of incubation and into the next phase. The Council has always filled a niche for Southern Maryland that no other organization covered, and quickly became another successfully incubated program.



Highlights (FY'16)

- Held seven Council meetings.
- Held four Educational Presentations from food-related organizations prior to Council meetings.
- Held one annual Community Networking Event.
- Participated in three meetings/conference calls with other Food Policy councils from Maryland and surrounding region.

SMILE: EDUCATION AND NETWORKING FOR YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE



As farms become fewer in number across the state of Maryland, it is increasingly important to find ways to provide educational and networking opportunities for farm and community youth, stimulate interest in agricultural careers and grow a new generation of farmers. To address this need, SMADC has sponsored the Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo (SMILE) show for 12 consecutive years.

The SMILE Expo features fitting and showing, market and breeding competitions for large livestock species and for small domestic species (rabbits and guinea pigs). For urban youth who may not have the land and facilities to raise large livestock, the SMILE Rabbit and Cavy classes offer an opportunity to participate in an agriculture event and connect with farmers and other youth involved in farming. Team games and a community dinner reinforce friendships and exchange of ideas. The show is consistently well attended with 103 kids participating in FY'16.



Highlights (FY'16):

- 103 youth participated from five counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, Montgomery).
- 362 animals were registered for the events (79 Swine, 59 Sheep, 128 Meat Goats, 31 Dairy Goats, 8 Dairy Cows, 30 Beef and 27 Rabbits and Cavies).

FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: FUTURE

GROWING NEW FARMERS

Within the next 20 years, 75% of the Maryland's farmland will change hands. The average age of a principal farmer in Maryland is 59 and the average age of the former tobacco farmers is well into the 70s. As those farmers retire, they are not being replaced sufficiently. Less than 5% of Maryland farmers are under 35 years of age.

The American Farm Bureau Federation's 2015 national survey of young farmers reports that they are most concerned about the availability of land to grow their crops and raise their animals. Despite increased interest in farming (by those who grew up on a farm, and those who did not), access to land remains a top concern. Furthermore, new farmers who did not grow up on a farm lack access to experienced farmers who can act as mentors.

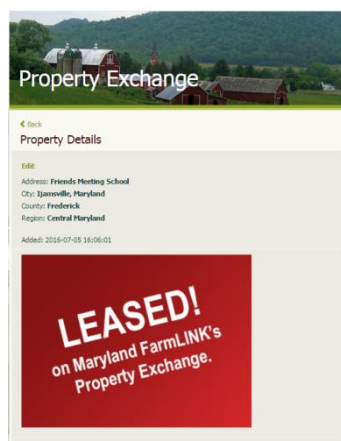
MARYLAND FARMLINK

Maryland FarmLINK is designed to help beginning farmers locate farmland, find mentors and business partners, a Farm Forum for all farmers to exchange valuable information (such as where to find equipment for rent), educational opportunities, and general topics of interest. The FarmLINK website provides a one-stop shop for farm resources in Maryland. SMADC has been on the forefront of incubating these services in Maryland, as no other farm linking program currently exists



Property Exchange: Helping farmers buy, sell, and lease farm land in Maryland

Land access continues to be a barrier for beginning farmers. First, land values in Maryland are nearly



three times the national average and it is difficult for beginning farmers to qualify for farm loans. Second, farmland owners appear reluctant to make their land available for lease, a preferred option for many beginning farmers. Third, most farmland offered for sale is sold through a realtor, but many realtors, particularly those outside the region, are not familiar with the unique characteristics of selling farmland, and may not be aware that Maryland FarmLINK exists. Maryland FarmLINK's Property Exchange is helping those seeking farmland find properties for sale or lease.

To overcome these challenges, staff reaches out to real estate agents, agriculture organizations to expand the list of properties available on Maryland FarmLINK. Over 130 farm properties have been listed for sale or lease on the FarmLINK website. FarmLINK has not been able to monitor

when a property has been successfully sold or leased at this time. However, during FY'16 staff worked to check in with property owners periodically to find out if a sale or lease was made and whether or not it was to a farmer. Several new farmers made leasing arrangements through FarmLINK in FY'16. A land owner in Frederick County, who had posted a listing, contacted SMADC to let us know the land was leased soon after it was offered on FarmLINK. The tenant farmer called to thank us, saying he had been looking at Maryland FarmLINK from California for some time and finally found a good fit for relocating.

Maryland FarmLINK serves as a site which has a two-fold approach: helping land owners keep their farmland in farming, and helping farmers (many beginning farmers) find farmland for sale or lease, and occasionally with that lease, a landowner willing to provide mentorship. A land owner in Prince George's County, who leased a house and farmland to young farmers through FarmLINK, commented, *"When working with new farmers, us older traditional farmers need to keep an open mind and have plenty of patience. Many of these younger people have not been raised on a farm and have no knowledge of equipment, general farming techniques or maintenance. Much of the knowledge we take for granted, needs to be taught to them right up front. You need to be willing to talk with them openly about the smallest issues pertaining to the stewardship of your land, and always keep in mind that you can actually learn a thing or two from them."*

Mentor Match: Training for beginning farmers

Another dynamic component of FarmLINK is, Mentor Match, which pairs experienced farmers (mentors) with new or transitioning farm owners/operators (mentees) for one-on-one training, advice and interaction. Staff also hosts an annual mentee/mentor meeting where recipients can meet and network with each other. In FY'16, the meeting included presentations by SMADC, FarmLINK, the University of

Maryland Ag Law Initiative, and Soil Conservation. The cost to match a mentor and mentee is roughly \$1,200 per year, requiring about 30 hours of staff time per mentee per year.

A mentor from Prince George's County, Scott Hertzberg of Jug Bay Market Garden, said this, *"I enjoyed participating as a Mentor in the Mentor Match program. Farming is often a solitary and competitive enterprise. The mentoring was an opportunity to be less lonely and help rather than compete with a young farmer. Just the other day I saw a Facebook post from my mentee about how he is growing pole beans after seeing that the crop did well on our farm last season. My first response was to hope his beans would not do as well as mine. Then I thought about it some more and decided to just be happy I had a role in him planting beans. The Mentor Match program inspired me to think beyond myself and our farm for the betterment of the community at large."*

Initially, Mentor Match was offered by SMADC for the five Southern Maryland counties; however, through a 3 year grant with the Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmers Success was awarded funding from the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which expand Mentor Match state-wide. During FY'15, the program grant funding ended; however, SMADC members agreed to continue to support and fund the program in the five counties of Southern Maryland.

Mentor Match & Tomorrow's Harvest

"Networking and word-of-mouth is critical with farming and the program has helped expand my network. By being in the Mentor Match program, I know Lisa [mentor] a lot better now, and have better connections to new sales outlets. Lisa helped me find a place to buy herb plugs when I need them, and when we needed more chickens I was able to reach out to her too. We traded chickens for seedlings this year. Lisa has been a person to reach out to for solutions -helpful- because both Emma and I have no formal education in agriculture." -Jason James, Mentee, Farmer, Moon Valley Farm



Tomorrow's Harvest

SMADC worked to create a website to host and showcase farmer profiles of successfully graduated mentees of the Mentor Match Program. Eight profiles were published in the fall of FY'16 (5 of which are new farmer enterprises). In the Spring and Summer of 2016, SMADC worked on the second round of seven interviews; resulting profiles are expected to launch on the website in early Fall of FY'17.

Outreach

The popularity of Maryland FarmLINK continues to grow. Visits to the site increased during FY'16; the website picked up 581 new members. FarmLINK maintains a current calendar of upcoming seminars, workshops and other educational opportunities around the state and region, averaging 30-50 listings at any time. Staff researched and published 29 blog posts. FarmLINK maintains a Tools page on the website that provides resources such as guides and tutorials for farmers. Each week FarmLINK sent 55 "Weekly Roundup" newsletters to subscribers by email with topical updates.

NEW! FarmLINK 2.0 Website

During FY'16, SMADC worked to make FarmLINK the ultimate online destination to find or market farm properties, and facilitate online community networking where farmers can connect with each other, with experts and find educational opportunities. The new design and enhanced operating system has expanded features and flexibility. A new mobile-compatible format enables FarmLINK to be experienced on smart phones and tablets, making it more accessible to farmers on the go.

During FY'16, the property listing tools were also enhanced. Specifically, the Property Exchange searchable fields: "for sale" or "for lease." Users can also: upload multiple photos (up to three) to illustrate the listing, or link to photos on other servers, edit, revise and save unfinished listings as needed.

Users looking to buy or lease property, can now engage in multiple search preferences: properties for sale, lease only, or view a full list. Searchable field include: by region (i.e. Southern Maryland or Eastern Shore), by county, by address and more. Users can now search for past Farm Forum conversations using keywords and sort the threads by original post date or recent activity. The Person-To-Person feature has been expanded to help make it easier to find other FarmLINK members with specific expertise looking to mentor, partner or apprentice and to search the member database by keywords.

SMADC has provided a benchmark model for others around the state and has been happy to share resources, partner, and share information for both Maryland FarmLINK and Mentor Match.

Highlights (FY'16):

- Launched a new website (FarmLINK 2.0) platform with increased features for users.
- Conducted seven site visits to Mentee farms.
- Held annual Mentor Match meeting with Mentees and Mentors.
- 130 properties posted for sale or lease.
- 581 new members signed-up for the FarmLINK website/Weekly Roundup.
- 29 blog posts researched and published.
- 55 Maryland FarmLINK “Weekly Roundup” newsletters sent to 1,900 subscribers.
- Eight new farmer profiles implemented and launched Tomorrow’s Harvest website.



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

MEASURING FOR RESULTS FY'16

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

Resources for Profitability

Measurement forecasted in FY'12: 5 % increase in profitability for key product areas for existing farms by 2015.

Southern Maryland Meats (SMM):

- 68,760 pounds of frozen product transported, estimated retail value of \$395,920.
- 7 Retail host venues report sales of \$201,413 (over 100% increase since program inception).
- 47 producers participate in SMM (2 new in FY'16).
- 21 farms attended the Social Media Workshops.

Dairy:

- Southern Maryland's first Amish Dairy established in 2014, assisted by SMADC.
- 348,000 lbs. of cheese produced in 2016.
- 17 dairy farms supply bulk milk.

Maryland Buy Local Challenge (BLC):

- BLC Facebook page registered a total 'reach' of over 10,700.
- BLC website registered 84,925 unique visits for the fiscal year; over 10,000 visits during FY' 16 BLC week, of which 7,200 were new visitors.

GOAL 2: FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Increased acres under farmland preservation

Measurement forecasted in FY'12: 247 farms preserved, which will result in preserving an estimated cumulative total of 28,200 acres, by 2015, assuming funds are made available.

Agricultural Land Preservation:

- One farm containing 81 acres has been directly preserved by the program in one county of Southern Maryland in FY'16, resulting in 16,257 acres cumulative over the 14 years of program funding (just SMADC program funds).*
- 320 farms containing 36,325 acres have been cumulatively preserved in Southern Maryland (SMADC and leveraged funds by the counties).
- The FY'16 goal of 36,000 preserved acres has been achieved. SMADC funds represent approximately 45% of the 36,325 total acres preserved.

** (Recommend the FY'17 goal increase the number of preserved acres to an estimated 37,000 acres.)*

Farm Share Equipment:

- 37 pieces of equipment purchased, available for farmers to rent across the region.
- 2,396 acres positively impacted by conservation tillage across the five counties, a decrease of 9% from FY'15.

GOAL 3: A FUTURE WHERE PROFITABLE FARMS PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY (FARMS, FOODS, COMMUNITIES)

Increased access to farm foods

Measurement: Track the number of underserved that receive fresh, local farm foods.

Farmers' Markets

- 10 Farmers' markets in Southern Maryland now accept EBT. Of those markets, 1 received marketing assistance from SMADC and 2 farmers received assistance with acquiring EBT equipment.

Hub and Spoke

- Survey conducted by SMADC from 115 fresh food recipients across Southern Maryland.
- "Hub and Spoke Fresh Food Survey Summary" report drafted and published.
- SMADC worked to make connections to additional local farmers for fresh produce that would have otherwise been purchased from out of state. 29 farmers are now engaged.
- Diversity, quality and freshness of farm foods increased: over 20 varieties of fresh vegetables and fruits are now offered.
- Increased direct farmer to food pantry relationships (Spokes), increasing fresh produce intake.

Enhanced awareness of the beneficial role farms provide in childhood obesity, nutrition, overall community health, and the environment.

Measurement: Track the number of children exposed to the benefits of local farm foods. 20% more children exposed: 3,000 more school children exposed to the benefits of local farm foods in FY'14 and again in FY'15

Cornelia and the Farm Band:

- Approximately 9,281 new children were reached at the special events and schools.
- Since 2009, Cornelia has reached over 55,325 children through schools and special events.
- Since 2009, over 19,500 school children have been reached at schools.

SMILE:

- 103 youth participated from five counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, Montgomery).

Increase the number of new farmer enterprises

Track the number of new farms in the region. Measurement forecasted in FY'12: 20 new farmer enterprises by 2015.

5 new Mentor/Match farm enterprises facilitated in FY'16

Equine: 63 equine businesses (9 new promoted in FY'16)

Meats: 5 new on-farm processor meat licenses facilitated

2016 Farms for the Holiday's Guide 72 (2 new farms in FY'16).

Maryland FarmLINK

- Launched a new website (FarmLINK 2.0) platform with increased features for users.
- Conducted 7 site visits to Mentee farms.
- Held Mentor Match meeting with Mentees and Mentors.
- 130 properties posted for sale or lease.
- 581 of new members signed-up for the FarmLINK website/Weekly Roundup.
- Researched and published 29 blog posts.
- Sent 55 Maryland FarmLINK Weekly Roundup newsletters to 1,900 subscribers.
- Implemented and launched Tomorrow's Harvest website including 8 new farmer profiles.

For more information regarding this program, please contact:

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Acronyms and Abbreviations	
AAEDC	Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation
AMPS	Agricultural Marketing Professionals
BLC	Buy Local Challenge
CASA	Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DC	District of Columbia
DGS	Department of General Services
DHMH	Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfer
EOI	Expression of Interest
F4H	Farming 4 Hunger
FARM	Free and Reduced Meals
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FMNP	Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
FSMA	Food Safety Modernization Act
FVC	Fruit and Vegetable Check
FY	Fiscal Year
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HEAL	Healthy Eating and Active Living
HHT	Historic Horse Trails
MD	Maryland
MD H2E	Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment
MDA	Maryland Department of Agriculture
MHIB	Maryland Horse Industry Board
MOMS	My Organic Market
Mt.	Mount
MVA	Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
RFP	Request for Proposal
SB	Senate Bill
SGG	Smart, Green, and Growing
SHA	Maryland State Highway Administration
SMADC	Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
SMECO	Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative
SMILE	Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo
SMM	Southern Maryland Meats
SMSG	So. Maryland, So Good

Acronyms and Abbreviations

SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
So. MD	Southern Maryland
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
St.	Saint
TCC	Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
UME	University of Maryland Extension
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children

www.smadc.com