



**END OF YEAR REPORT – FY'22**  
**(SMADC Fiscal Year: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)**

*The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission  
is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD).*

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## INTRODUCTION

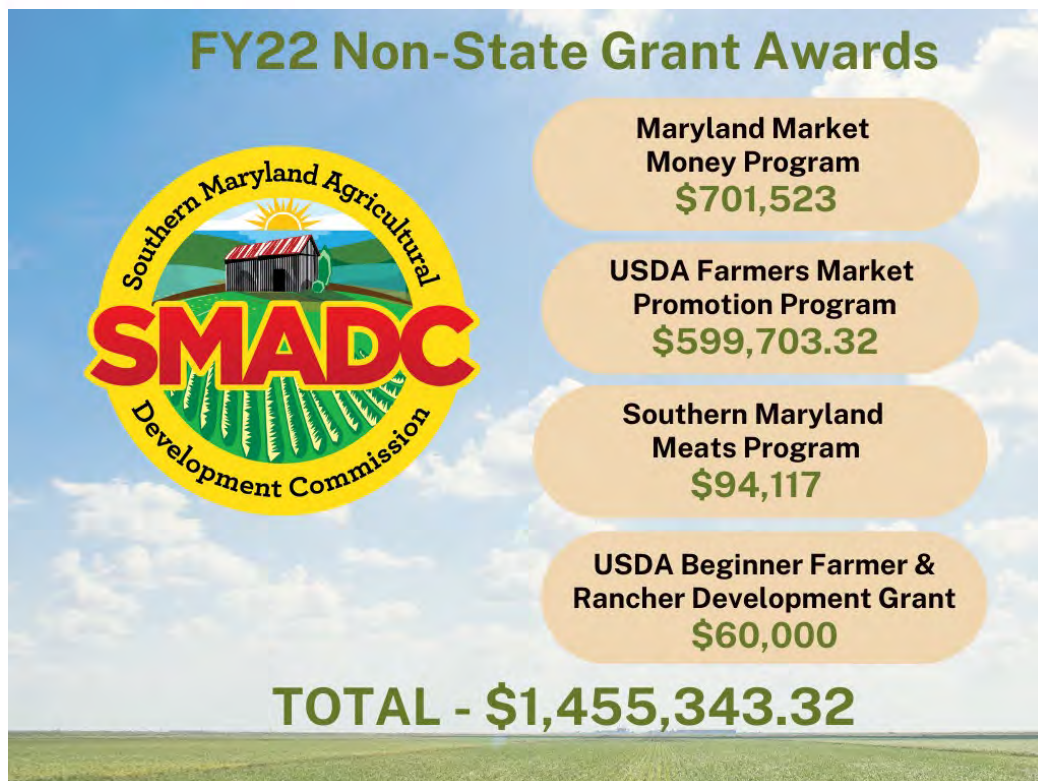
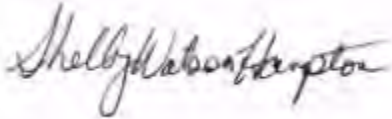
Southern Maryland encompasses a diverse and dynamic agricultural region; stretching from the Beltway to the Bay, from the top of the Patuxent to the tip of Point Lookout, and everywhere in between, the Southern Maryland farming community is alive and thriving.

The purpose of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) is to support those 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.

Fiscal Year 2022 was a busy one for SMADC. **By leveraging our partnerships and projects we brought in over one million dollars in grant funds that are dedicated to agricultural programs that enhance the economic viability of the region.** We welcomed several new staff and commission members, and we worked with local legislators to secure State Funding for SMADC for the next 3 years; ensuring that we can continue our vital work.

The SMADC staff and commission are passionate about the work that we do, and we thoroughly appreciate all the farmers and agribusinesses who utilize our programs, as well as our valued industry partners. We look forward to continuing to offer expansive opportunities to our farming community.

Shelby Watson-Hampton, Director



## **Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Strategy 2012—2022**

### **Measuring for Results FY'22**

#### **GOAL 1: Provide the resources, infrastructure and advocacy needed for market-driven farms and agribusinesses to thrive and be profitable**

##### Infrastructure:

- \$59,000 USDA Rural Development Grant for RAC value-added processing equipment
- 41 pieces of farm equipment in inventory, available for farmers to rent across the region

##### Southern Maryland Meats (SMM):

- First ever, 'off-the-grid' So.MD slaughter facility receives USDA 'full' Permanent Grant of Inspection
- 59 livestock producers participate in SMM
- 31 youth signed up for SMM Jr. Program in FY'22
- 31 youth program completers received stipends totaling \$3,100 (FY'21/22)
- 61 SMM Little Free Libraries installed/located in Southern Maryland

##### Education & Workshops:

- 11 (farm businesses and producers) attended Acidified Foods Training Workshop
- 92 regional youth participate in SMADC funded/sponsored 2022 SMILE Livestock Expo

#### **GOAL 2: Expand the region's overall agricultural economic development**

##### Financial Incentives:

- 28 mini grants awarded totaling \$46,806
- 1 project for Maryland Resource-Based Industry Financing Fund Loan (MRBIFF) totaling \$15,000
- 2 scholarships awarded totaling \$4,680
- 14 sponsorships awarded totaling \$7,800

##### Marketing & Outreach:

- 425 farms/producers promoted/engaged through SMADC websites, events, guides, news subscription
- 5,800 users engaged through SMADC online consumer guides
- 98,000 people/consumers reached through SMADC.com
- 55,955 viewers reached on SMADC Facebook (increase of 30.2% in FY'22)
- 1 new educational guide/video (Forestry Guide) released in FY'22

#### Regulatory Assistance:

- 1 USDA Permanent Grant of Inspection (slaughter process) awarded to Westham Butcher Shop
- 1 Retail-Exempt plan for Westham Butcher Shop submitted and achieved
- 2 USDA Grants of Inspection for butcher shop custom-exempt upgrades submitted
- 1 mobile poultry unit HACCP and sanitary documentation monitored
- 11 producers attend Acidified Foods Training Workshop
- 2 Acidified Foods Training Scholarships awarded
- 5 MDH acidified annual process reviews facilitated
- Cottage Food Testing Reimbursement Funding initiative launched
- 15 producers assisted (food safety, product development, and certification)

#### Maryland FarmLINK:

- 23,152 page views on Maryland FarmLINK website
- 2,487 people engaged through Facebook reach. (208.6% increase from 2021)

### **GOAL 3: Preserve Southern Maryland farmland**

SMADC did not receive funding in FY'22 for agricultural land preservation.

### **GOAL 4: Assure long-term viability of SMADC as a driving force of the regional agricultural economy**

#### Maryland Buy Local Challenge (BLC):

- 28,267 people reached through BLC Facebook page engagement (149% increase from 2021)
- 34,000 people reached through BLC website, Facebook, Instagram, BLC Celebration Event
- 15,000 BLC promotional cards distributed statewide
- 1,000 BLC shopping totes distributed to 29 So. MD farmers markets
- 920 MMM market customers redeem Buy Local Bucks; total \$4,600 disbursed
- 51 Maryland farms and producers promoted at the 15th Anniversary Celebration Event
- Over 700 people attended the 15th Anniversary Celebration Event

#### Maryland Market Money (MMM):

- 48 farmers' markets, farm stands, on-farm markets, mobile markets, and CSAs participated including 13 Southern Maryland Markets; plus 2 pop-up farmers' markets held (8 in So.MD)
- 688 raw agricultural producers (farmers, ranchers, and watermen) and local food producers participated in MMM program
- \$485,420 awarded to MMM program (US Department of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Rural Maryland Council, Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Whole Foods Foundation, Baltimore Women's Giving Circle, Greater Washington Community Foundation)
- \$382,276 granted to farmer's markets/stands in FY'22. \$391,485 distributed to customers in FY22 (includes farmer's markets' contribution to program incentives)

# **SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION PROGRAMS:**

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL CENTER (RAC)**

**Regional Agricultural Center Mission:** Local Producers working with Local Processors to feed Local Consumers

When completed in late 2023, the Regional Agriculture Center will operate under FDA, USDA, State and County Health department inspections. **Anchored by these vital services, the RAC will offer the following enhancements to the Southern Maryland region:**

- Regional Butcher Shop/Cut and Wrap Facility
- Finer Meats Processing Facility
- Creating a Southern Maryland Meats Charcuterie Brand
- Apprenticeship Programs and Job Training
- Meat Locker and Cold Storage Facility
- Warehouse and Distribution Site
- Commercial Kitchen
- Instructional Kitchen Classroom
- Regional Farmers Market
- Retail Store
- Product Storage Facility

SMADC has re-envisioned local meat processing by separating the primary services into two constituent parts: the humane slaughter of livestock; and further processing into retail cuts and finer meats, i.e., salami, ham, and sausages. Both operations are regulated and inspected by the USDA. Two partners were enlisted to meet these demands: the Amish community in St. Mary's County for the slaughter, and the St. Mary's County Government for the construction of the Regional Agricultural Center for further processing.

**Amish Slaughter Facility** – The Amish owned, and operated facility has been successfully under inspection since May 2021 which, with SMADC's assistance, has allowed an expansion of their operations to include Retail Exempt cut and wrapped meat cuts for over-the-counter sales to their customers. The USDA considers the Westham Butcher Shop project (unique in its off-the-grid construction) a significant benchmark achievement for the agency and SMADC.

**Regional Agriculture Center** – The RAC will complete the meat processing cycle by receiving USDA inspected carcasses from the Amish slaughter facility to further process and add value to Southern Maryland produced meats. In September 2020, the RAC was awarded a Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) Grant of \$30,000 for instructional kitchen equipment. **In FY’22 a USDA Rural Assistance Grant of \$59,000 was obtained that financed the purchase of a charcuterie, finer meats, processing cabinet for adding value to the product.**

**RAC Timeline** – RAC project development continued through FY’22 with the securing of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with St. Mary’s County delineating the ongoing responsibilities of St Mary’s as the owner and builder of the facility, and SMADC as the operating entity.

- December 2021 – SMADC and St. Mary’s County signed a 20-year Agreement specifying RAC building timelines and memorializing the ongoing relationship between the two parties. While St. Mary’s is the owner of the facility, SMADC is the operator of the facility fulfilling the role commonly played by a Property Manager.
- Preliminary site design and architectural floor plan are to be completed by July 2022 with construction bids due beginning of 2023 and completion set by late 2023.

**FY’22 Highlights:**

- **\$59,000 USDA Rural Development Grant awarded for RAC value-added processing equipment**

**FARM EQUIPMENT RENTAL PROGRAM**

SMADC continues to support a 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. In addition to popular pieces of equipment, priority is placed on equipment that promotes long-term environmental benefit to the Chesapeake Bay and/or supports new farm initiatives. The equipment is managed by local agricultural entities and rental fees are expected to cover routine maintenance and other costs of the program, such as insurance. **To date, 41 pieces of farm equipment are available for farmers to rent across the region. There were no new purchases in FY’22.**

**FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

**SOUTHERN MARYLAND FARMER MINI-GRANT PROGRAM**

The Farmer Mini-Grant Program was launched in FY’17 and has become more popular and competitive with each new round. The Mini-Grant program is designed to assist new and beginning farmers with small start-up projects and assist existing farmers looking to diversify or expand. The program is open to applicants ages 16 and older, residing and farming in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s or St. Mary’s counties. Grant awards are up to \$2,000

per applicant, with a lifetime maximum of \$6,000, as a one-to-one match and can be used for a variety of projects. Projects must be completed within one year. **To date, the program has received 173 applications with 129 funded for a total of \$203,813.**

**In FY'22 SMADC offered two rounds of Mini Grants. 28 grants were awarded totaling \$46,806.**



### **Round 8 Mini Grant Awards – Summer 2021**

- 804 Cattle Company (\$500) – farmers market marketing supplies, Prince George's County
- Ancient Oaks Farm (\$2,000) – spring planting stock, Prince George's County
- Berrywood Farm (\$1,000) – silo cistern, St. Mary's County
- Blue Berwyn Farm (\$1,722) – walk-in cooler, Prince George's County
- Bowensville Farm & Nursery LLC (\$1,307) – raised bed construction, Calvert County
- C3 Land and Cattle (\$2,000) – cleanup bull, St. Mary's County
- Curemore Farms (\$1,500) – no till roller/crimper, Prince George's County
- Dahlstrom Farms (\$2,000) – maxilator accumagrapple, St. Mary's County
- Danny's Lane (\$1,000) – bird netting and planting stock, St. Mary's County
- Elements of Nature, Botanicals and Pharmaceuticals (\$2,000) – drip irrigation system, Prince George's County
- Floating Lotus Farmstead (\$2,000) – mechanical transplanter, Anne Arundel County
- Florencia Farm LLC (\$900) – deer fence installation, Prince George's County
- Friendly Earth Farm (\$1,246) – walk-in cooler, Anne Arundel County
- Griffith Family Farm (\$2,000) – poultry operation expansion, Anne Arundel County
- Hole In The Woods Farm and Meats LLC (\$700) – display freezer, St. Mary's County
- Jubilee Farm Fermentations (\$2,000) – industrial bottle washer, St. Mary's County
- My Mustard Seed, LLC (\$2,000) – product line expansion, Calvert County
- New Brooklyn Farms (\$1,526) – food forest installation, Prince George's County
- Owl's Nest Farm (\$1,675) – root crop washer, Prince George's County
- Quince Blossom Ridge (\$2,000) – perennial plant stock, Charles County
- Tobacco Barn Distillery (\$2,000) – distillery grain cleaner, St. Mary's County
- Ugly Duckling Farmstead (\$2,000) – pasture fencing, Charles County
- Victory Chapel Family Farms (\$2,000) – honey production expansion, Charles County
- Willowmere Farm (\$1,730) – plant stock, Charles County



## Round 9 Mini Grant Awards – Winter 2022

- Zekiah Ridge Farm (\$2,000) – planter, plow and plugs for flower production, Charles County
- Prosperity Acres (\$2,000) – cattle chute, Calvert County
- Hollywood Farm (\$2,000) – pasture development pasture for livestock production, Anne Arundel County
- Prosperity Acres (\$2,000) – meat transport cargo trailer, Calvert County

**Featured below are two projects funded through the Mini-Grant Program that were started and/or completed in FY'22.** These projects illustrate how the mini-grant program assists farms at the beginning of their project, during expansion, and how a relatively small amount of funding can have a significant impact on a farming enterprise. “Thank you so much again for this grant. Without programs like this we wouldn’t be able to support our enterprise.” Jenya Zueva, Charles County.

### Griffith Family Farm – Poultry Operation Expansion



Kayla Griffith, 5th generation farmer, Anne Arundel County

*“Without the funds provided through the SMADC mini-grant, Griffith Family Farm would not have been able to expand and diversify their poultry operation, which serves as an additional and important source of income for Kayla, a young*



*farmer trying to become independently established within her parent’s operation.”*

### Dahlstrom Farms – Hay Maxilator Accumagrapple Purchase



*“I was able to bale and accumulate and stack all the hay on the trailer without the need of added costly labor. I was able to complete a late cutting of hay with minimal overhead and maximum profit. With inputs becoming more and more expensive by the day, this accumagrapple will help Dahlstrom Farms stay in operation through the 2022 growing season by eliminating the cost of hired labor. I appreciate everything SMADC has done for me, and I am very grateful for this opportunity.” Michael Dahlstrom, St. Mary’s County*

## **EQUITY INCENTIVE MATCHING FUND**

This partnership with MARBIDCO is designed to incentivize loan requests from Southern Maryland farmers and to help them meet certain down-payment (equity) requirements, 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. **Since 2017, a total of \$162,550 has been funded; \$190,000 has been approved for this program.**

**In FY'22, one project was approved for \$15,000 the Maryland Resource-Based Industry Financing Fund Loan (MRBIFF): Freedom Logging Inc., St. Mary's County.**

## **SOUTHERN MARYLAND REVOLVING LOAN FUND**

Designed by MARBIDCO, this loan program is offered exclusively for Southern Maryland applicants to assist with purchases and upgrades. Eligible use criteria include livestock purchase and shellfish aquaculture expansion, small fruits, and hops production, produce harvesting/packing food safety upgrades, value-added processing equipment and services, equine/horse farm foundation and expansion. **In FY'22, there were no new applications 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 agricultural careers and grow a new generation of farmers. To address this need, SMADC offers both sponsorships and scholarships to residents in Southern Maryland.

**In FY'22, SMADC awarded scholarships to two individuals totaling \$4680.**

These scholarships were to assist in offsetting costs for LEAD Maryland Class XI Southern Maryland Fellows, and Acidified Foods training.

- \$80 for Acidified Food 'Better Process Control School training'
- \$4,600 for LEAD Maryland Class XI fellows

### **FY'22 Highlights:**

- **28 mini grants awarded totaling \$46,806**
- **1 project for Maryland Resource-Based Industry Financing Fund Loan (MRBIFF) totaling \$15,000**
- **2 scholarships awarded totaling \$4,680**
- **14 sponsorships awarded totaling \$7,800**

## **SMADC SPONSORSHIPS**

SMADC supports workshops, conferences, and continuing education opportunities for farmers. **In FY'22, SMADC sponsored 14 events and initiatives (listed below) for a total of \$7,800.**

• 2022 University of Maryland Veg & Fruit Production Meeting	\$100
• 2022 Southern Maryland Crops Conference & Dinner	\$100
• University of Maryland Event Sponsorship	\$50
• Calvert County Envirothon Program	\$500
• Charles County Envirothon Program	\$500
• Prince George's County Envirothon Program	\$500
• St. Mary's County Envirothon Program	\$500
• LEAD Maryland Southern Maryland Tournament	\$2,000
• Maryland Organic Food & Farming Assoc. Event Sponsorship	\$350
• UMD IAA Garden Event	\$250
• Southern High School FFA Alumni Event	\$500
• Kinder Farm Park (Anne Arundel Co. 4H Project)	\$1,500
• University of Maryland Agriculture Law Conference Sponsorship	\$500
• Record University of Maryland Event	\$450

### **Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo (SMILE)**

SMADC has supported the SMILE show as the major sponsor for 15 consecutive years. This unique youth Expo combines education, showmanship preparation competitions and fun activities for youth (ages 6 – 21 years) involved in raising livestock. The SMILE Board retained \$12,000 of previously allocated FY'20 funding to support the 2022 SMILE expo which took place on June 24 – 25. In honor of the Expo's 15th Anniversary, Chairman Jay Farrell and his wife Justine Farrell were presented with a plaque in recognition of their 15 years of organizing the show. **In FY'22 92 youth from around the region took part with 234 animals forming 400 class entries.**

### **FY'22 Highlights:**

- **28 Mini Grants awarded totaling \$46,806**
- **1 project approved for MRBIFF loan of \$15,000**
- **2 SMADC Scholarships awarded totaling \$4680**
- **14 SMADC sponsorships awarded totaling \$7,800**

## **PROGRAMS & MARKETING**

### **SOUTHERN MARYLAND MEATS**



*Mobile Meat Processing*

Over the past 12 years, SMADC has undertaken the challenge of expanding the local meat industry by bringing localized meat processing, distribution, and aggregation. The effort will also reduce operation costs for Southern Maryland Meat producers. The Southern Maryland Meats (SMM) program was developed in response to high consumer demand for local, farm-raised meats where livestock is raised with access to pasture and fed a diet free of antibiotics and growth hormones. SMM producers agree to abide by the program standards of quality and humane care and use clearly defined terms for their raising practices. **In FY'22, 59 producers participated in the SMM program.**

#### **Southern Maryland Meats Mission Statement and Program Goals:**

The Southern Maryland Meats brand is building upon the area's rich farming legacy by enhancing farm profits and bringing naturally crafted, humanely raised foods to your table.

To fulfill the SMM Mission, SMADC provides education, marketing support, and infrastructure for livestock producers. SMADC is proud to be leading the effort to solidify the local food supply chain and enable its growth. By providing vital infrastructure to amalgamate and distribute new and unique products to customers, the entire farm-to-table process can be kept close to home, efficient and creative, capitalizing on Southern Maryland producers' efforts to raise meats in a natural and environmentally friendly way.

**The SMM program emphasizes the creation of infrastructure to support the region's expanding meat production industry with associated processing services**, namely slaughter, butchery and finer meat processing that are currently only available at locations considerable distances from Southern Maryland.

**Slaughter/Process – In Summer of 2022, with SMADC staff assistance, the Amish owned and operated Westham Butcher shop successfully passed USDA Grant of Inspection 90-day trial and achieved 'full' USDA Permanent Inspection Status.**





The Westham Butcher Shop is one of, if not the only, off-the-grid meat processing facilities in the United States and impressively meets the stringent USDA documentation and logging standards without computerized or automated technological aids.

**Butchery/further meat processing** – SMADC is now working to ensure the region can avail itself of complete meat processing services by facilitating a seamless flow of USDA inspected meat carcasses from the Westham Butcher Shop to USDA approved regional processing locations for ‘cut and wrap’ and labelling. Staff is currently helping a small butcher shop (in Calvert County) to upgrade from Custom-exempt to USDA Process for retail sales. The project is ongoing and in negotiation with the USDA.

**Meat transportation** – SMADC purchased an existing “Mobile Meat Processing” cab and trailer equipped with the necessary requirements (refrigerator and rail hanging capabilities) to fulfill USDA standards for the transport of carcasses from the Westham Butcher shop to the Calvert County butcher shop and other USDA approved regional processing locations (including grocery stores).

#### **SMM PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

Little Free Libraries (LFL) - Marketing for Southern Maryland Meats continues with multi-platformed outreach featuring the SMM logo prominently displayed on Little Free Libraries which promote the Southern Maryland Meats brand and participating livestock producers and encourage awareness of the importance of agriculture in everyday life. (Little Free Library is a worldwide non-profit organization that increases access to books through the creation of book-sharing boxes). **Currently 61 SMM Little Free Libraries are installed in locations around Southern Maryland. In FY’22, there were no new installs for this program.**



#### **SMM JUNIOR PROMOTION**



Since the start of the Junior Promotion Program in 2017, 114 youth have participated. SMM has always seen one of its core missions as supporting the next generation of livestock farmers. Through sponsorship of the Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo (SMILE Show), and the Junior Promotion Program, SMM seeks to provide financial, instructional, and marketing support to the youth (aged 8 through 21 years) of our 5 Southern Maryland counties. Participants receive a free t-shirt and stall card to promote

their animals during the fall county fairs and, at the completion of the program, a stipend of \$100 to help finance their on-going livestock projects. **In the FY’22 season, 31 Juniors successfully completed the program to receive stipends for a total of \$3,100.**

As part of the Junior Program, each participant submits a short essay about their project animals and experiences. **Essay topic choices for FY'22 were:**

- Imagine it is your job to teach someone younger than you how to properly care for an animal. What would you teach them?
- Many kids who live in cities have never visited a farm and think their food comes from the grocery store. What would you teach them?
- What are your personal rewards for raising a healthy animal? What are some tough things that you have learned?
- Has raising healthy animals taught you anything about yourself? What are those things?

**The following is an excerpt from an essay submitted by SMM Junior Participant 'TJ'Ireland on how to teach someone younger than you how to properly care for an animal.** *"I am writing on the above essay question because I wish when I started with 4-H many years ago that our group had a program for new members who have never raised a market animal before. This program would teach and mentor the new livestock owners on how to care for your market animal....*

*I believe it would be beneficial to new members to have a mentor or attend a workshop to show the proper form\etiquette, and how to prep my animal for the show. Just working with my animal was a silly idea to me because I had no one to explain its importance to me. I had to learn through a very painful process of trial and error. My first time in the ring was not a fun experience and I was very upset because when I went into the show ring with my animal it ran in and after a few minutes it became tired hard to manage and laid down. I couldn't figure out why and I later learned the importance of exercising my animal. I thought they would be able to go out there and simply do what everybody else's animals had done, but boy was I wrong. After talking with several people, I learned that exercise helps the animal build endurance, increases blood flow, increases muscle tone, avoid obesity and they are easier to manage. The more I talked with people I realized that my animal needed an area outside of their stall for exercising, rooting and cooling off. The following year we fenced in an area just off the stalls for the hogs. I put a chair in the fenced area and let the hogs come to me. Once I earned their trust, I could brush them, scratch their bellies and start walking them around in that area. Working with your animal really needs to be done daily and the more you work with them the better they work with you. My plan for the upcoming year is to discuss with our group about having a program like I wrote about to help new livestock owners and I want to attend any classes/training offered on showmanship."*

#### **FY'22 Highlights:**

- **first ever, 'off-the-grid' So.MD slaughter facility receives USDA 'full' Permanent Grant of Inspection**
- **59 livestock producers participate in SMM**
- **31 youth signed up for FY'22 SMM Jr. Program**
- **youth program completers received stipends totaling \$3,100 (FY'21/22)**

#### **MARYLAND BUY LOCAL CHALLENGE (BLC) 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PROMOTION**

First conceived as a regional initiative in 2007, the BLC is jointly promoted statewide in partnership with Maryland Department of Agriculture. The promotion is designed to encourage consumers to try local foods, and



to commit to buying local by inviting them to take an informal pledge to “enjoy at least one Maryland grown product every day during Buy Local Week,” always the last full week in July (July 22 – 31, 2022). Individuals, markets and businesses statewide enthusiastically promoted the BLC engaging consumers with creative visual social media promotions and ‘buy local’ incentives. **Overall, the Buy Local Challenge 15th Anniversary Promotion engaged 34,000 people across all social media platforms, including the Buy Local Challenge website. Of note, Facebook reach for the period July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, engaged 28,267 people (149% increase from the previous year).**

- **Statewide Buy Local Challenge promotional highlights included:**  
**BLC Website** – provided statewide resources to help consumers find, buy, eat, and enjoy Maryland farm products during BLC week and beyond. Downloadable BLC Media Kit – offered ‘Pledge Certificates, BLC Facebook, Instagram and Twitter images for farmers, producers and buy local enthusiasts to share across their social media (161 businesses/people engaged). BLC Competitions – ‘Show of your Buy Local Shopping Spree’ and ‘Take the Pledge’ incentives engaged consumers during BLC week (230 entries).
- **BLC/logo Tote Bags** – Southern Maryland farmers markets received free BLC logo shopping bags as incentives for consumers during BLC week. **1,000 bags distributed to 29 Southern Maryland farmers markets.**
- **BLC Postcards** – postcards promoted BLC week resources and the Buy Local Challenge Celebration Event. **15,000 cards distributed to consumers statewide.**
- **Maryland Money Markets (MMM) ‘Buy Local Bucks’** – participating Maryland Market Money markets across Maryland offered customers shopping with their federal nutrition benefits an extra \$5 Buy Local Bonus in addition to their Maryland Market Money match during Buy Local Week. **920 market customers redeemed Buy Local Bucks for a total of \$4,600 disbursed.**

### **15th Anniversary Buy Local Challenge Celebration Event**

The BLC ‘Celebration’ wraps up the statewide ‘Buy Local Week’ and is an in-person farmers market-style festival that showcases Maryland farms and producers. Previously hosted in Prince George’s County (2017) Anne Arundel County (2018) and Calvert County (2019), the Celebration was put on hold for 2 consecutive years during COVID and was re-launched in Charles County in 2022.

**The 15th Anniversary Celebration offered free admission to incentivize equal opportunity for all Marylanders to attend and to increase awareness for Maryland grown, raised, and produced farm products.** The Celebration was held at Serenity Farm, in





**A post event survey of vendors and attendees** solicited feedback. More than 80 % of vendor respondents indicated they were pleased with customer interaction and the opportunity to market and promote their businesses. *"I think it's always good to bring awareness to what's available in the community for people to shop, be involved with and socialize with. Southern Maryland has a unique heritage and events like the Buy Local Challenge bring all of that to light."* – Vendor survey response.

*“We enjoyed ourselves greatly, and enjoyed the opportunity to purchase locally produced meats, cheeses, vegetables, honey, beer/wine/liquor, dried flowers, and kettle corn (which we did in all cases mentioned).”*  
– Guest survey responses.



- **28,267 people reached through BLC Facebook page engagement (149% increase from 2021)**
- **34,000 individuals reached BLC Website, Facebook, Instagram & ticketing**
- **15,000 BLC promotional cards distributed statewide**
- **1,000 BLC shopping totes distributed to 29 So. MD farmers markets**
- **920 MMM market customers redeem Buy Local Bucks; total \$4600 disbursed**
- **51 Maryland farms and producers promoted at 15th Anniversary Celebration Event**
- **Over 700 people attended 15th Anniversary Celebration Event**



## **MARYLAND FARMLINK**

The Maryland FarmLINK program and companion website are designed to help farmers find 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, and workshops and educational opportunities happening around the state. The website also hosts a 'Property Exchange' with a two-fold service approach: helping landowners keep their farmland in production and helping farmers (many new and beginning farmers) find farmland for sale or lease.



SMADC recognizes farming is changing in the area and identified our increasing commitment to serve all residents, including the growing number of urban farmers in our state. Discussions are ongoing, and we continue to cultivate new connections with resource partners. In FY'22, staff worked to improve the functionality of the website in preparation for future expansion of existing website tools and additional resources and updates specific to Urban and Peri-Urban agricultural endeavors including added criteria for Urban/Peri-urban Property

Exchange listings, new Urban/Peri-Urban Farming landing page/s, Zoning and Realtor Tutorial updates and more.



### **FY'22 Highlights:**

- **23,152 page views on Maryland FarmLINK website**
- **2,487 people engaged through Facebook reach. An increase of 208.6% from the previous year**

## **MARYLAND MARKET MONEY (MMM)**



A statewide food access program that feeds Marylanders and supports farmers. MMM removes economic barriers for Marylanders experiencing food insecurity, providing a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits at Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs. MMM is a multi-tasking program that helps shoppers, farmers, and markets equally. It helps shoppers by lowering economic barriers to healthy foods; farmers by improving their economic viability; and markets by increasing their customer base. Maryland Market Money is jointly administered by SMADC and the Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO).

### The goals of Maryland Market Money are threefold:

- To increase purchasing power and access to locally sourced, nutrient dense foods for economically underserved households experiencing food insecurity.
- To support the viability and sustainability of Maryland farmers markets, especially where access to fresh foods is otherwise scarce due to food deserts and apartheid.
- To generate additional revenue and diversify customer base for local farmers and producers.

### How MMM Addressed and Strengthened Food Access in FY'22

- **MMM increases revenue for local food producers.** On average, every \$1 spent in MMM is accompanied by \$1.30 in federal benefits spending, resulting in \$2.30 for local farmers.
- **MMM matched federal nutrition benefits** (SNAP/EBT, P-EBT, FMNP (WIC or Senior), and eWIC CVB) redeemed with direct-marketing farmers and markets to strengthen access to healthy, fresh food.
- **MMM doubled the dollars of Maryland families.** Participating farmers markets provided at least \$10 per market day in matching dollars to patrons facing food insecurity. In June, as a direct result of intense fundraising, the program increased the incentive match to a 1:1 dollar-for-dollar unlimited match without a per-person per day cap on the match at most markets (per each market's discretion).
- **MMM is taking federal nutrition incentives digital.** A tokenless “e-Incentive” pilot at Montgomery County farmers markets (supported by a grant from the Greater Washington Community Foundation) will result in a bespoke customer-facing app usable on smart devices to function as a benefits and incentives e-wallet replacing physical tokens. Dedicated e-incentives coordinator contracted to manage the project.
- **MMM increased access and availability to fresh local food in Maryland.** Expanded MMM availability at participating local grocery stores sourcing from local farmers and community refrigerator 24/7 food pantry to include a buying program for post-farmers market leftover produce is in development for implementation in Southern Maryland in FY'23.
- **MMM leveraged statewide partnerships.** 138,000 MMM brochures mailed to Maryland households receiving SNAP redetermination letters throughout the summer of 2021 in partnership with Maryland DHS, the State agency administering SNAP/EBT.

**The Metro Washington Region Incentive Program Coalition** – In FY'22 and ongoing, MMM is collaborating with its sister Mid-Atlantic incentive programs, DC Fresh Match and Virginia Fresh Match on a large-scale regional USDA GusNIP grant project with FRESHFARM Markets as project lead, to form The Metro Washington Region Incentive Program Coalition. The Coalition will leverage collective potential to improve stewardship of SNAP and SNAP incentives in the Metro Washington Region by building incentive program reciprocity across borders, fostering public and



private marketing collaboration, and standardizing data collection and financial administration amongst at least 90 farmers markets and CSAs. The goal is to improve the dietary quality of participating SNAP consumers by increasing fruit and vegetable purchases and consumption, identify and address program and food access disparities, and increase SNAP processing capacity at farmers markets and CSAs across the region. **Over 3 years, this project will increase fruit and vegetable purchases for 35,000 SNAP households across the region.**

## **MMM COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH**

**Informational/Promotional Materials** – tri-fold brochures, rack cards, and county-specific flyers were distributed with SNAP redetermination letters by way of Maryland DHS, MMM access points and community partners. Additional resources developed include ‘How to use your Benefit’ postcards, receipts, banners and signage, digital guides, e-incentive materials, and more. The MMM trifold brochure listed all participating markets, instructional infographics on how to use benefits and get incentives at markets, and a QR code leading to a customer-facing survey probing for answers on how MMM can better serve its customers. To ensure equity and inclusion, many MMM resources include multiple languages such as Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese. *“Most of our customers tend to be repeat customers. The MMM program brought in new customers that don’t usually know where to go to buy fresh, local produce. It was a highlight of my day anytime I received the MMM chips because I knew our food was going where it was needed, would be valued, and I knew I was providing them with high-quality, nourishing food.”* – Cece Clark, Elioak Farm

**Meta Marketing Campaigns** – several Meta marketing campaigns were developed and distributed via Facebook and Instagram including Southern Maryland access point promotions and 2022 MMM Applications, which included information to Southern Maryland targeted farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs, MMM program participants and benefit users. **Overall consumer reach was approximately 970,000 people through organic and paid promotions.**

**MMM Website** – provides federal nutrition benefit matching program details, resources for customers, farmers, and farmers markets as well as a list of participating farmers markets and farm stands. **10,750 total users (88.2% new visitors) in FY’22.**

**#LoveMDMarkets Monthly Newsletter** – provides outreach to MMM (participating and prospective), community partners, farmers markets, farmers, shoppers, and more. Content features MMM and SMADC program related information and resources as well as resources from community partners, local and regional food system peers, and more. **1,593 contacts were subscribed resulting in 3,919 views in FY’22.** *“I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you what an awesome, timely, informative, and engaging newsletter you are creating each month - it is chock full of all of the best information and news we can all use to promote and make the most of the market season - well done!!”* – Lynn Rubin Traversa, Maryland SNAP-Ed Program, University of Maryland Extension

**MMM Social Media** – promotes the MMM program, celebrates seasonality, connects communities to the farmers that grow their food, shares resources, and disseminates federal nutrition benefit information.

**In FY'22, SMADC engaged with 15,839 followers on MMM social media channels.**

- **Instagram**  
**@MDFarmersMarkets**  
6,323 followers, 757 new in FY'22  
34,061 reached in FY'22, up 11.7% from last year
- **Facebook**  
**@MDFarmersMarkets**  
7,658 followers, 655 new in FY'22  
269,128 reached in FY'22, up 328.8% from last year
- **Twitter**  
**@MDFarmersMkts**  
1,858 followers, 177 new in FY'22  
138,318 impressions in FY'22



#### **FY'22 Highlights:**

- **48 farmers' markets, farm stands, on-farm markets, mobile markets, and CSAs participated including 13 Southern Maryland Markets; plus 2 pop-up farmers' markets featuring 60 pop-up dates were held (8 in Southern Maryland).**
- **688 raw agricultural producers (farmers, ranchers, and watermen) and local food producers participated in the program**
- **\$485,420 awarded to MMM – (US Department of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Rural Maryland Council, Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Whole Foods Foundation, The Baltimore Women's Giving Circle, and The Greater Washington Community Foundation)**
- **\$382,276 granted to farmers markets/stands (\$391,485 distributed to customers in FY22 as a result of MMM funds granted and farmers markets' own contribution to program incentives)**

### **SMADC MARKETING & COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS**

SMADC's identity (branding and visual) sets a unified standard for programmatic outreach: websites, social media, consumer guides, newsletters, blogs, advertising, and promotion. Platforms are regularly reviewed and updated to maintain a dynamic and engaging media presence. **In FY'22 SMADC welcomed Kelly Swann as Creative Services specialist, responsible for all SMADC websites, social media platforms and Maryland FarmLINK program.**

**SMADC marketing resources in combination with SMADC's programmatic outreach benefit and serve a regional farming community comprising 2,011 farms in FY'22** (Maryland Farm Bureau statistics). 425 (27 new) farms/producers directly promoted and engaged through SMADC websites, events, guides, news subscription.



## **SMADC GUIDES**

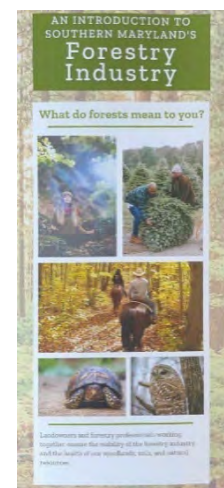
SMADC consumer guides are published online in digital format ensuring year-round consumer outreach and marketing support for farms/producers. Free to view on the 'Get Our Guides' page at SMADC.com, guides and directories are refreshed with annual or seasonal updates as needed. Printed rack cards alert consumers to guide launches distributed regionwide through agriculture partners, farms, libraries, welcome centers, and other businesses by request. **In FY'22 SMADC's online guides engaged over 5,800 users.**



**Southern Maryland Holiday Farm Guide** – updated in FY'22, features over 100 listings of farms and producers including wineries, breweries, distilleries, restaurants, stores, and winter markets offering Southern Maryland farm products, farm-hosted holiday events, tours, and tastings. A printed rack card promoted the online guide with scannable QR code for consumers to quickly find farm offerings from their mobile devices. **84 farms/producers/businesses and 7 regional winter markets promoted in FY'22 (12 new). 3,500 rack cards distributed to 130 regional pickup locations.**

**So. Maryland, So Good: Buy Local Guide** – updated in FY'22, features an interactive directory of Southern Maryland and regional farmers markets, farm stands, on-farm stores and farm hosted CSA's (new in FY'22) offering farm raised produce, value-added, and other Maryland produced farm foods. Additional metro area markets in Maryland, Washington, D.C and Virginia are included that host one or more So. MD farm vendor. A printed companion rack card promoted the guide. **30 So.MD farmers markets, 10 Metro markets and 29 farm stands/stores promoted (7 new) in FY'22. 5,000 rack cards distributed to So.MD Libraries and Welcome Centers, and regional agriculture partners. Full-page advertisement placed in 'This is Living Magazine' (readership 22,500).**

**'An Introduction to Southern Maryland's Forestry Industry' Resource Guide** – in the Fall of 2021, SMADC in partnership with Grow & Fortify with input from the Maryland Forest Association and Maryland DNR Forest Service developed a new forestry resource guide, promotional rack card and companion video to highlight the importance of forestry in Maryland. The guide is a free educational resource for students/schools, residents, entrepreneurs, and commercial interests and can be viewed on the SMADC website 'Get our Guides' page, and the Grow and Fortify website 'Reports' page. **An audience of 1,957 reached through combined SMADC and Grow & Fortify Facebook, Instagram Social Media promotion, guide/webpage views, and press release distribution. 500 rack cards distributed. The Forestry Industry Guide and video were made possible in part by a Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund Grant (RMPIF) of \$25,000 awarded to SMADC.**



**Southern Maryland Meat & Seafood Guide** – promotes regional livestock, aquaculture, and seafood producers. **58 livestock and 20 seafood producers promoted in FY’22.**

**Southern Maryland ‘Horse Extra’ Guide** – promotes horse farms and equine-related businesses. **50 regional horse barns/farms and 17 hay producers promoted in FY’22.**

**Southern Maryland Oyster Guide** – website promotes 71 profiles highlighting the region’s oyster industry: producers (wild harvest and aquaculture), heritage/education sites, museums, restaurants and stores featuring local oysters, waterman tours, research organizations and institutions. **21 oyster producers promoted. 1 new restaurant in FY’22. The Oyster Guide website registered. 5, 956 page views in FY’22.**

**Southern Maryland Meats Website** – promotes livestock producers participating in the Southern Maryland Meats marketing program, and hosts the SMM Junior Program, plus resources for consumers and farmers. **54 regional livestock producers promoted (2 new in FY’22). The SMM website registered 43,136 views in FY’22.**

### **SMADC WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

**SMADC Website** - SMADC.com is the primary portal for SMADC’s expansive suite of ‘go-to’ resources in Southern Maryland for farmers, and producers who want to increase their potential and for consumers who want to connect with local farms and food. **SMADC.com engagement reached 98,000 people.**

**SMADC Facebook** – an interactive interface for the farming community enhancing engagement with consumers and stakeholders. **55,955 viewers reached (increase of 30.2% in FY’22).**

**SMADC Instagram** – @southern\_maryland\_ag. **1, 933 viewers reached (increase of 28.6% in FY’22).**

**SMADC YouTube channel** – hosts 28 videos including Farms in Focus Series, In A Cook’s Kitchen Series, Small Fruits Portal webinars, and new in FY’22 Introduction to Southern Maryland’s Forestry Industry video. **1 new video released in FY’22.**

#### **FY’22 Highlights:**

- **425 farms/producers directly promoted, engaged through SMADC websites, events, guides, news subscription**
- **84 farms, producers, businesses promoted in (12 new in FY’22) – 2022 Farm Holiday Guide**
- **30 So.MD farmers markets, 29 farm stands/stores, 10 regional markets promoted – 2022 Good Buy Local Guide**
- **50 regional horse barns/farms and 17 hay producers promoted – Horse Extra Guide**
- **54 Southern Maryland meat producers promoted – SMM Website**
- **58 livestock and 20 seafood producers promoted – Meat & Seafood Guide**

- **21 aquaculture and wild harvest oyster producers promoted – Oyster Guide Website**
- **98,000 people reached – SMADC.com**
- **55,955 viewers reached SMADC Facebook (an increase of 30.2% in FY'22)**
- **1 new educational guide/video (Forestry Guide) released in FY'22**

## **SERVICES**

### **REGULATORY ASSISTANCE**

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 with federal, state and local agencies to facilitate a vital regulatory information conduit for the farming community by providing:

- **Liaison** – SMADC capitalizes on its relationships with regulatory entities and industry partners to leverage positive outcomes for farms.
- **Consultation and Training** – SMADC partners with regulatory entities and industry experts to develop workshops/trainings, and offer one-on-one staff support for licensing, certification, product development, permits, and other issues as farms diversify their business models.
- **Tutorials** – **SMADC's online tutorials** - Acidified Foods and On-Farm Processor/Meats License are available to producers in Southern Maryland and statewide; endorsed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH).

**Trainings in FY'22** – SMADC staff regularly attend training offered by regulatory, processing, agriculture agencies and other specialists:

- **Agricultural & Environmental Law Conference** – sponsored in part by SMADC, staff attended virtual presentations; sessions of interest addressed carbon credits for Maryland farmers and supply chain and equity issues in Maryland's food system.

### **Examples of SMADC regulatory outreach in FY'22**

- **Westham Lane Butcher/Slaughter Facility** – USDA Permanent Grant of Inspection (slaughter process) awarded and implemented. Retail-exempt plan (HACCP, SOP, SSOP, and GMP) developed for retail “over the counter” cuts from facility production. Achieved Retail Exempt status to increase meat sales and revenue.
- **Butcher Shop USDA Upgrades** – staff is assisting two regional butchers with preliminary HACCP plans and facility upgrades for USDA Grant of Inspection processor licensing. Ongoing assistance to one butcher shop in Calvert County in upgrading facility and HACCP plan.
- **Mobile Poultry Processing Unit** – staff continues to monitor HACCP and sanitary documentation. The unit is highly sought after by on-farm processors throughout So.MD.

- **Cottage Food & Value-Added Food Testing Reimbursement Funding** – launched September 2021, is intended to ease compliance, and incentivize value-added production. Reimbursement funding underwrites the cost of laboratory testing services for ‘retail’ sales of cottage and value-added foods. Funding is available for recipe testing up to \$250 for up to 10 So.MD farmers.
- **Acidified Foods Training** – January 2022, virtual Better Process Control School training workshop offered for acidified foods certification. 11 producers attended.
- **Acidified Foods Training Scholarship** – 2 scholarships awarded to So.MD farmers/producers towards half the tuition fee (\$80) of the Better Process Control School workshop.
- **Cottage Food Training Workshop** – in development with MDH for the Fall of 2022, designed to encourage production and increase sales of value-added agricultural products.
- **MDH Acidified Process Reviews** – 5 annual inspections/on-farm licenses facilitated
- Dairy food safety – staff guidance solicited by Virginia Department of Agriculture (VDACS) for ‘off the grid’ new Amish cheese dairy under construction in Richmond, VA.
- **Food safety/product development/certification** – 15 producers assisted (1 food truck, 2 commercial kitchens, 2 recipe/product development, 2 lab testing, 4 new MDH & MDA meats licenses, 2 Amish cheese dairy, 2 zoning/ag.tourism)

#### **FY’22 Highlights:**

- **1 USDA Permanent Grant of Inspection (slaughter process) awarded to Westham Butcher Shop**
- **1 Retail-exempt plan for Westham Butcher Shop submitted and achieved**
- **2 USDA Grants of Inspection for butcher shop custom-exempt upgrades submitted**
- **Mobile poultry unit HACCP and sanitary documentation monitored**
- **1 Acidified foods training workshop facilitated. 11 producers benefitted.**
- **2 Acidified Foods Training Scholarships awarded**
- **5 MDH acidified annual process reviews facilitated**
- **Cottage Food Testing Reimbursement Funding launched**
- **15 producers assisted – food safety, product development and certification**

### **EDUCATION & WORKSHOPS**

**Acidified Foods Workshop, January 2022** – developed in partnership with Dr. Y. Martin Lo, Process Authority, offered Acidified Foods Better Process Control School training on food safety and regulation mandated by Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Food and Drug Administration. Post-workshop surveys indicated 100% of participants will use training practices to increase their value-added product inventory and





enhance their business potential. (The workshop is deliverable of a USDA FMPP grant).

**11 producers attended (including 5 So.MD farmers), 2 So.MD farmers/producers received workshop Reimbursement Scholarships (\$80 each, for a total of \$160).** *“Great workshop. I was motivated to attend to increase the utilization of my produce so that I can avoid loss and add value-added products to my business.”* Prince George’s County Farmer.

#### **FY’22 Highlights:**

- **11 individuals (farm businesses and producers) attend Acidified Foods Training Workshop**



**SMADC Director and Staff Collaborations Across the State:** 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 entities across the state and beyond in FY’22:

- American Association of Meat Processors
- American Farm Bureau Federation
- Anne Arundel County Economic Development
- Baltimore Department of Planning, Baltimore Food Policy Initiative
- Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle
- Calvert County Economic Development
- Capital Area Food Bank
- Charles County Economic Development
- Christ Church La Plata Food Pantry
- Cornell Food Venture Center Crossroads Community Food Network
- Dirigo Food Safety
- Destination Southern Maryland
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- F3 Tech Accelerator Program
- Farmers Market Coalition
- FRESHFARM
- Future Harvest – Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (FHCASA)
- Garrett County Economic Development
- George Mason University
- Good Meat Project
- Greater Baden Medical Services Greater Washington Community Foundation
- Greenwell Foundation Equine Program
- Grow & Fortify
- Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
- KCD Cooperative Solutions
- LEAD Maryland Program
- Lifestyles of Maryland, Inc.
- Little Free Library

- Mereleigh Foods
- MARBIDCO
- Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation
- Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Maryland Department of Commerce
- Maryland Department of the Environment
- Maryland Historical Trust
- Maryland Horse Council
- Maryland Horse Industry Board
- Maryland Hunger Solutions
- Maryland Soybean Board
- Maryland SNAP-Ed
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Mid-Atlantic Food Resilience & Access Coalition
- MidAtlantic Women in Agriculture
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Food Council
- National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs
- National Corn Growers Association
- NC Choices Carolina Meat Conference
- Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network
- Novo Dia Group
- Oasis Community Partners/ Good Food Markets
- Prince George's County Department of Social Services
- Prince George's County Food Equity Council
- Maryland Department of Health
- Maryland Department of Human Services
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Farm Bureau
- Maryland Food Bank
- Maryland Grain Producers
- Prince George's County Economic Development
- Rural Maryland Council
- Solutions from the Land
- Southern Maryland Economic Development Offices
- Southern Maryland Heritage Area
- Southern Maryland Shellfish Growers Association
- Southern Maryland Soil Conservation Districts
- St. Mary's County Economic Development
- Town of La Plata
- University of Maryland's Equine Studies Program
- University of Maryland Extension (UME)
- University of Maryland's Research and Education Centers
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA)
- Washington County Economic Development
- Whole Foods Foundation

## **SMADC STAFF**

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SMADC is a division of the  
TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL  
for SOUTHERN MARYLAND