

# Maryland Farm Bureau Policy 2011



*As Adopted by the Voting Delegates on December 7, 2010 at  
the 95<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.*

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1  
2 **FOREWORD**

3 Farm Bureau, the voice of agriculture, is a free, independent, non-governmental  
4 voluntary association of farm families and those with related interest.

5 Farm Bureau is local, statewide, national and international in its scope and influence. It is  
6 non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. It is organized to provide a means by  
7 which farmers can work together toward the goals upon which they agree. It is wholly  
8 controlled by its members and is financed by dues covering county, state and national  
9 membership, paid annually by each member family.

10 Farm Bureau policies stem from the people on the land. Farm families discuss issues,  
11 talk them over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from  
12 these community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as  
13 recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies herein  
14 were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm Bureau  
15 policy for 2011 as set by voting delegates during the 95<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the Maryland  
16 Farm Bureau on December 7, 2010.

17  
18 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

19 We support an effective, systematic instructional program about agriculture in our public  
20 schools. We believe the curriculum should include "Introduction to Agriculture Science"  
21 starting in the middle school and continuing into high school to generate awareness of the  
22 importance of agriculture to our society and to ensure future generations of well-trained leaders  
23 for the agricultural industry. '08

24 We urge the public schools to implement the Curriculum for Agricultural Science  
25 Education (CASE) in at least one high school in each county. '10

26 We recommend that teacher-training units of Maryland public colleges include a mini-  
27 course in agriculture, and that state educational sub-divisions include an in-service day or days to  
28 instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture. '05

29 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and  
30 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the  
31 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs  
32 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades K-12 and the  
33 recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of the  
34 Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school system.  
35 '07

36 We support the vocational education program in Maryland. We recommend that local  
37 boards of education, with state support, introduce an approved production agriculture program in  
38 Maryland junior/senior or senior high schools. We strongly recommend that the State board of  
39 education institute standards for vocational agricultural programs that include teaching  
40 agriculture, ag economics and general agri-business. '05

41 The public needs to be made aware of the importance of the preservation of agricultural  
42 land for a totally healthy environment. We encourage more farm city festivals, including farm  
43 tours and educational displays so the general public can have a better understanding of how food  
44 is produced. '08

45 We urge the introduction or expansion of agricultural programs in the community  
46 colleges throughout the state. '07

47 We support the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation and its efforts to receive  
48 legislative funding from the state special fund appropriations and funding through grant-in-aid  
49 from the Maryland State Department of Education. '06

50 We support the Maryland Ag Tag and we believe that all fees derived from sales should  
51 continue to be used to support MAEF. '08

52 We oppose the expenditure of public funds to promote animal rights and the use of  
53 educational materials in public schools that discourage the use of animal products. '06

#### 54 55 **AGRICULTURAL FAIRS**

56 We support state level legislation to grant an exemption to all county Agricultural Fairs  
57 from the provisions of noise control regulations that establish ambient noise levels and  
58 equipment performance standards. '10

59 We support state laws and regulations that encourage viable agricultural practices and  
60 encourage farmers to operate in a manner that would avoid endangering the safety of the general  
61 public. We support an increase in funds to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board to be used to  
62 encourage, through promotion and assistance, agricultural fairs, 4-H exhibits, FFA and other  
63 qualifying agricultural events. '06

#### 64 65 **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

66 We support the concept of agricultural land preservation and urge all landowners to  
67 acquaint themselves with the programs available and the benefits derived thereof. Furthermore,  
68 we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary preservation of  
69 agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to work with all  
70 interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize farmland  
71 preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not negatively  
72 impacting any other rights running with the land. '06

73 We encourage neighboring counties to work cooperatively to achieve these goals  
74 provided county sovereignty is respected and all planning and zoning decisions are made at the  
75 county level. '04

76 We support the Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation and county preservation  
77 boards in their efforts to preserve agricultural land throughout the state. Furthermore, we urge  
78 that these boards maintain the right to select land eligible for easement sale with priority toward  
79 creating large contiguous blocks of preserved land. '08

80 The decision to target priority farms should be left to the county's Agland preservation  
81 board under the current MALPF funding formula. '10

#### 82 **Ag Preservation Funding**

83 We urge additional funding by the state and counties for agland preservation programs,  
84 including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program. Payments for  
85 these programs should reflect current market values for farmland. '05

86 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '09

87 We support the issuance of bonds to fund agland preservation programs. '04

88 We oppose transfer and/or use of funds set aside for agricultural land preservation for  
89 anything other than the preservation of farmland. '07

90 We support a line on state income tax returns to allow taxpayers to donate funds to the  
91 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to preserve farmland. '07

92 We recommend the creation of a new Maryland lottery scratch with the proceeds going  
93 towards Agland Preservation. '05

94 We urge the Maryland State Legislature to fully fund the Maryland Agricultural Land  
95 Preservation Program. '07

96 Furthermore, we recommend that additional county and state incentives for participation  
97 should be provided, such as property tax credits for agricultural district properties committed to a  
98 term of five years or property tax credits on land where easements have been purchased, and the  
99 enactment of a Maryland agricultural land property tax credit program as part of the contract. '09

100 **Appraisals**

101 We urge the state to use local appraisers who should base their appraisals on the recent  
102 sale or transfer of property in the immediate vicinity. We also believe that the appraisers should  
103 be required to successfully complete a course of study specifically on agricultural land appraisal  
104 approved by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. Furthermore, appraisers  
105 should be required to take into consideration the value of standing timber, the subdivision value  
106 of any property, as well as the uniqueness of the metropolitan areas when making their  
107 appraisals. '05

108 **Mapping**

109 We oppose the identification and inclusion of state and county ag land preservation  
110 easement properties in land use and public facilities maps. Where so included and identified,  
111 such areas should be prominently labeled as private property. '06

112 **Maryland Agland Preservation Foundation**

113 In order for the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) to  
114 operate more efficiently we believe that the Maryland General Assembly should develop a  
115 permanent annual allotment for the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. We also believe  
116 the following changes should be made:

- 117 (1) The "Right to Farm" provisions provided in the sale of Maryland agricultural land easements  
118 should be extended to anyone who is enrolled in an agricultural district.'07
- 119 (2) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the present  
120 agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including expanded  
121 permitted uses such as ag tourism and value added operations. '02
- 122 (3) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products  
123 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (.e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts, small  
124 gifts). '07
- 125 (4) We support the voluntary sale of water recharge easements on MALPF land in the Piedmont  
126 region providing it does not interfere with any current or future potential agricultural  
127 production. '05
- 128 (5) We recommend a revision of the agricultural value formula that is being used by the  
129 Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation because the current formula discriminates  
130 against farms in the program with superior soils.'05
- 131 (6) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral  
132 rights issues.'09
- 133 (7) We support the proposal to alter children's lots to allow the right to pass residual lots to a  
134 new owner.'09
- 135 (8) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under  
136 MALPF easement. '08

137 **Other Methods to Preserve Agland**

138 As another step toward preservation of agricultural land, we propose legislation to create  
139 an Agricultural Land Condemnation Board, chaired by the State's Secretary of Agriculture.  
140 Before anyone can condemn any productive agricultural lands for any purpose, the involved  
141 body must appeal to the board. The board must determine that there is no reasonable or prudent  
142 alternative. '05

143 We support the establishment of a state level green payments program similar to the  
144 federal Conservation Security Program. '06

145 **Soil Surveys**

146 We urge the Natural Resource Conservation Service to complete the updating of the  
147 county soil surveys for Maryland to include numerical productivity indexes. '06

148 **Transfer Development Rights**

149 We oppose the conveyance of Transferable Development Rights across county lines.'06



150 **Zoning**

151 We recommend that every county review their agricultural zoning and its impact on the  
152 equity of landowners. '06

153 We support the preservation of agricultural land and equity through the process of  
154 donating, purchasing and transferring development rights. However, state mandated down-  
155 zoning is totally unacceptable. We support local zoning authority only. '08

156

157

**AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY**

158 We strongly support funding for the recommendations outlined in the “2006 Statewide  
159 Plan for Agricultural Policy and Resource Management.” '07

160 We encourage and support the passage of legislation to help resource-based industries  
161 and alternative or value-added enterprises. We encourage the state to coordinate laws and  
162 regulations with contiguous states. '10

163 On-farm value-added processing of agricultural products should be considered a part of  
164 normal agricultural practices. '09

165 Rules and regulations written by the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
166 should be revised to allow for on-farm food processing and food preparation. The revisions  
167 should require reasonable sanitary food handling practices without the cost and complication of  
168 those required for year-round food service businesses. Short-term food service permits should be  
169 issued for longer than the current 14 days and should be available in place of a year-round  
170 permit. '04

171 We encourage MDA to work with state and county agencies to coordinate uniform  
172 statewide rules concerning the marketing of locally produced meat, dairy and poultry products at  
173 farmers markets, roadside stands and farm commissaries in non-commercial agricultural  
174 buildings. '04

175

176 **AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION**

177 We urge MDE to consider all agricultural water withdrawal permits in use before  
178 increasing water withdrawal permits or approving new water withdrawal permits for  
179 municipalities or subdivisions when these lands coincide. '07

180 We urge MDA, MDE and DNR to work with the U.S. Geological Survey in updating computer  
181 models for Maryland’s underground aquifers. '07

182 We support the recommendations of the Agricultural Water Use task force regarding the  
183 State's Water Appropriation Law. The task force proposal would eliminate agriculture's  
184 exemption for a permit and provide priorities for agricultural usage with a simple reporting  
185 system. '04

186 We oppose any fees for permits or any fees for agriculture water use in the state. '04

187 Under the State Water Application Law, MDE is the only agency that may restrict water  
188 usage in Maryland. We believe MDE should continue to be the only authority in this area.  
189 Local governments should not be allowed to regulate water usage. Agricultural water use should  
190 continue to be exempt from usage control. '04

191 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture’s right to use water for irrigation.  
192 '04

193 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to  
194 provide more timely approval. '08

195

196

**AIR QUALITY**

197 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of  
198 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when  
199 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '05

200 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean air  
201 (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in reducing  
202 equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '05

203 We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to  
204 emission control rules and standards for farm equipment that would require the retrofiting of our  
205 equipment to meet those standards. '05

206 We urge repeal of the Emission Control Act of Maryland. In the event the program is not  
207 repealed, the dynamometer testing should be voluntary. We support a review of the program to  
208 evaluate cost and determine its effectiveness. '05

209 We oppose exhaust emissions from farm machinery along with dust and particulate  
210 matter generated from agricultural activity being subject to the federal Clean Air standards  
211 instituted in 1997. '05

212 We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from  
213 agricultural activities. '09

214

### 215 **ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES**

216 We recommend legislation be enacted that would require the assignment and prominent  
217 display of an identifying number on all ATV's, dirt bikes, etc.'06

218 Furthermore, parents and guardians should be held responsible for damage caused by  
219 ATV's ridden by their minor children. '04.

220 Landowners should not be held responsible for injury to riders or damage to ATV's when  
221 operated on private lands. '03

222 We recognize the use of all-terrain vehicles as necessary agricultural vehicles in the day-  
223 to-day business of agricultural operations. We support a farmer's ability to cross state and  
224 county roads to get from one part of his/her farm to another. '04

225

### 226 **ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS**

227 We support research into cost-effective alternative uses for agricultural commodities  
228 including value-added products that would increase demand, and thus, improve marketing  
229 potential. '08

230 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy  
231 resources.'07

232 We strongly urge the local, state and federal government agencies to support new  
233 alternative ag enterprises to provide assistance in market development; and, to provide education  
234 so that new enterprises can become viable sources of income in agriculture.'07

### 235 **Corn Starch**

236 We encourage a ban on the various non-degradable plastic products. Due to a lack of  
237 landfill space and other environmental problems, the sale of biodegradable plastic products  
238 should be phased into law over the next several years. County, state and national laws should  
239 prohibit the use of non-degradable six-pack rings, the sale of non-degradable grocery bags and  
240 trash bags, and the sale of non-degradable disposable diapers. Biodegradable plastics should be  
241 manufactured by the plastics industry, using cornstarch in its manufacturing process. The use of  
242 biodegradable products will have very positive implications on the environment and use of a  
243 renewable resource.'05

244

### 245 **ANIMAL CARE**

246 We oppose any legislation that would interfere with the right of farmers to raise livestock  
247 and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices. '06

248 We encourage farmers to be proactive by using voluntary quality and environmental  
249 assurance programs. '06

250 We support properly researched and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that  
251 provide consumers with a wholesome food supply and enable farmers to improve the care and  
252 management of their animals. '06

253 We oppose any legislation or regulation that would prohibit or unduly restrict the use of  
254 animals in agricultural or medical research. '06

255 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in  
256 educating the food industry, school children, the general public and those elected to represent us  
257 in government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,  
258 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated  
259 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.  
260 '09

261 We support the right of farmers to protect their livestock and poultry from predatory  
262 animals. '06

263 We support the establishment of a Livestock Care Standards Board at MDA to review  
264 and publish existing industry standards for livestock care and make recommendations to the  
265 Secretary of Agriculture as needed. '10

266 We recommend that a farm operation suspected of animal cruelty be inspected by a  
267 University animal science specialist or licensed veterinarian to determine whether a cruelty  
268 situation exists before charges are filed or animals removed from the site. '06

269 We oppose animal rights activism that disrupts farming operations, fairs, or research  
270 facilities. '06

#### 271 **Antibiotic Feed Additives**

272 Antibiotic feed additives found safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration  
273 should not be restricted. '07

274 We support continued research to provide a definitive answer to the question of the use of  
275 antibiotics in agribusiness and to the health of the public. '09

276

#### 277 **ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES**

278 We recommend the Maryland Department of Agriculture update, remodel and maintain  
279 regional animal health laboratories. '08

280 We urge Maryland Department of Agriculture to fund and fill the un-staffed positions  
281 without delay. '10

282 A strong animal health program needs to be supported by the state. We support full  
283 accreditation of Maryland's Animal Health Labs at Salisbury and Frederick. With bio-security  
284 and agri-terrorism concerns and to support the well being of Maryland's livestock industries, it is  
285 crucial that the laboratory services are upgraded for rapid and accurate disease diagnosis. '09

286

#### 287 **AQUACULTURE**

288 Aquaculture is a branch of agriculture and all applicable regulations shall be a function of  
289 MDA. DNR, as a regulatory agency, shall be removed from control of all aquaculture products  
290 and production regardless of location. All current DNR laws and regulations affecting  
291 aquaculture shall be referred to MDA for modification and implementation as agricultural laws  
292 and regulations. Restrictions and policies implemented by DNR relating to the management of  
293 wild aquatic resources shall not infringe in any manner on aquaculture activities. '07

294

#### 295 **AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD**

296 We recommend legislation be developed to prohibit clam rigs and other equipment  
297 (which disturb or have the potential to destroy submerged aquatic vegetation, and which is used  
298 for the capture of wild aquatic life) from operating within 300 feet of the shoreline and the same  
299 distance from SAV in other areas. '05

300 We recognize that Blue Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are a highly valuable resource for  
301 both commercial and recreational activities. Regulations controlling this fishery should be  
302 managed through modern data collection and sound science, with input from all stakeholders as  
303 well as the Bi-State Blue Crab Technical Committee and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. '06

304 The movement of oyster spat and adult oysters by the Department of Natural Resources  
305 from one area in the Chesapeake Bay to another area shall not be done until such time as a site  
306 specific testing of the animals to be moved has been completed by an independent laboratory  
307 within 30 days prior to the proposed movement. In the event a determination is made that oyster  
308 spat and oysters are not disease-free, they shall not be moved as such movement of the animals  
309 creates stress, and survivability of spat moved is poor. '07

310 We support the research and development on the Asian Oyster and request that efforts to  
311 introduce it into the Bay be put on a fast-track.'07

### 312 BEEKEEPING

313 MDA should give regulatory approval to effective miticide products used to protect  
314 beehives. '07

315 Honeybee populations have been dwindling as the result of mite infestations, weather  
316 conditions and other unknown factors. Funding should be provided and enhanced for additional  
317 research and staffing to assist beekeepers and others in overcoming these challenges, to ensure  
318 adequate honeybee populations in the future. '09

319 There should be no laws or regulations that prevent or discourage the keeping of  
320 honeybees and other pollinators in an area unless it is determined that the beekeeper is not using  
321 best management practices. '08

### 322 BROWNFIELDS

323 We support incentives and liability protections to encourage new enterprises to utilize  
324 former industrial sites as a means of reducing sprawl. '07

325 We support incentives to encourage the redevelopment of former residential and  
326 commercial properties as a means of reducing sprawl. '03

### 327 CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

328 We oppose regulations that put farmers who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed at a  
329 competitive disadvantage. We fully support Federal programs such as the Conservation  
330 Stewardship Program at USDA that reward and encourage farmers to install conservation  
331 practices. '09

332 We recommend that industry, urban run-off, wastewater treatment plants, etc. be given  
333 the same time limit as agriculture to reduce the impact of nutrient loading on the Chesapeake  
334 Bay. Emphasis should be placed on municipal, urban and industrial areas regarding water  
335 quality, nutrient management and solid waste disposal.'10

336 We recognize the Chesapeake Bay as a valuable natural resource. We support efforts to  
337 restore the health of the Bay and we encourage farmers to utilize Best Management Practices in  
338 their agricultural operations. '07

339 We urge funding for all cost-share programs for farmers to implement the TMDL and  
340 funding for staff and technical support for the UMD Extension and the Soil Conservation  
341 Districts. '10

342 We urge continued and increased funding for research and implementation of BMPs on  
343 farms, including nutrient management plans and the construction of ponds, waterways and buffer  
344 strips to reduce run-off and ground water contamination. '07

345 We recommend that cost share programs be evaluated and revised as necessary to ensure  
346 equity for participants. '07

350 We urge Maryland’s legislators to consider the financial and practical impact on the  
351 state’s diverse agriculture when imposing new laws and regulations. ‘07

352 We urge the UMD, MDA and MDE to jointly develop and utilize thorough, accurate and  
353 current information for describing the condition of the natural resource base in Maryland and the  
354 contribution of the agricultural industry in protecting and enhancing that base. ‘09

355 We recommend that greater attention and research be given to what is happening in the  
356 water column of the Bay itself. The filter feeders and small aquatic life will have to be a part of  
357 the long term solution for the Bay cleanup. Harvesting moratoriums, restrictions on harvesting  
358 methods, Asian oyster introduction with proper safeguards and other measures should be  
359 considered. ‘07

360 State funding should be dramatically increased for revival of oysters, targeting surface  
361 raised oysters and other filter feeders. ‘05

#### 362 **Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up**

363 We support a dedicated fund for conservation programs that financially assists farmers  
364 and other non-point source contributors who implement practices to improve the water quality of  
365 the Chesapeake Bay. ‘07

366 All dedicated funds for Chesapeake Bay clean-up should be restricted solely to improve  
367 the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. ‘10

368 Farms and farmsteads should be exempt from any impervious surface fees. ‘10

369

### 370 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

#### 371 **Farmers’ Markets**

372 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers markets. ‘07

#### 373 **Farm to School Program**

374 We support the Farm-to-School program offered by the State. We encourage all school  
375 systems to participate in and actively promote this program and purchase more locally grown  
376 products for school nutrition programs. ‘10

#### 377 **Grain Dealers**

378 We recommend that all grain dealers in the state of Maryland should have certified grain-  
379 testing personnel. We request that samples taken for moisture tests be free and clear of foreign  
380 materials. We support the voluntary establishment of standards for moisture discounts, which  
381 separate shrinkage, and the drying cost and which are not tied to the price paid for the grain. ‘05

#### 382 **Labeling Requirements**

383 Since the risk of illness from unpasteurized cider is no greater than the risk of illness  
384 from any other food source, we do not support any labeling of cider beyond whether or not it is  
385 pasteurized. ‘07

#### 386 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

387 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise. We  
388 urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's efforts to  
389 improve marketing services. We support the “Maryland’s Best” marketing program. ‘09

390 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that  
391 serve all citizens. ‘07

392 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Economic Development to continue  
393 its policy of providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries. ‘06

394 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of  
395 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. ‘05

#### 396 **Deep Water Terminal**

397 We support a viable grain export terminal. ‘07

398 The State of Maryland must work diligently to develop a competitive grain trade deep  
399 water terminal, which is critical for the survival of grain producers. ‘07

400 We urge the creation of more storage capacity for fuels in the Baltimore area. '05

401 **Roadside Markets**

402 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural  
403 products.'06

404 We encourage the enforcement of current county zoning laws related to farmers markets  
405 and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer merchants and/or  
406 non-local merchants. '10

407 **Roadside Signs**

408 Due to the need for the farmers to diversify their operations the use of roadside signs is  
409 imperative to let the public know your location and which products are available. Therefore, we  
410 support exempting such signs from the regulations governing roadside signs. '06

411 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

412 We oppose any segment of the farm community promoting their production methods as  
413 healthier or better for the environment without evidence to support those claims. '06

414 **Value Added**

415 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. '09

416

417

**CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

418 **Best Management**

419 The process of obtaining a permit from the appropriate government agencies to do any  
420 type of work in or along the small streams that flow through our farmland has become extremely  
421 burdensome and time consuming. We urge these government agencies to approve general  
422 permits to install approved best management practices. '06

423 We encourage agricultural landowners and tenant operators to study, develop and  
424 implement long-term programs or lease arrangements with conservation practice systems,  
425 including voluntary nutrient management plans that will achieve the desired water quality  
426 benefits.'07

427 We support the development of a reporting system to capture farmer installed and funded  
428 Best Management Practices that meet the established standards, to demonstrate agricultural  
429 progress towards meeting Chesapeake Bay water quality improvement goals and for  
430 incorporation into the Chesapeake model. We support the development of standards for farmer  
431 installed Best Management Practices that may not meet NRCS standards and specifications, or  
432 are ineligible for cost-share payments, but that provide water quality and erosion control  
433 benefits; such practices would include stream fencing and narrow buffers. '09

434 Interpretation and definition of Best Management Practices (BMPs) must recognize the  
435 economic impact and cost to the farmer. '07

436 If accepted best management practices are implemented in good faith and later  
437 determined to have a negative impact on the environment or natural resources, the landowner  
438 should not be held legally or financially responsible.'07

439 **Conservation Practices**

440 We support the reclassification of Class 3 trout streams, which contain no native trout to  
441 Class 4 streams. '06

442 We recommend the Maryland Department of Agricultural include a bunker-type structure  
443 to be covered with a tarp for the storage of solid animal waste in the Maryland Agriculture Cost-  
444 share (MACS) program. Any contract poultry grower in Maryland, regardless of capacity, should  
445 be eligible for cost share funds for both manure sheds and composters.'07

446 We support landowner wildlife plantings, but encourage the restriction of tree and shrub  
447 plantings within 25 feet of any right-of-way in order to reduce the cost of trimming at taxpayer  
448 expense and to enhance public safety. '04

449 We urge the state to assure that adequate funds be available to provide sufficient cost  
450 sharing of approved soil conservation practices. We also urge the state to provide an adequate  
451 number of trained personnel in local Soil Conservation District to assist farmers and property  
452 owners in the development and implementation of their conservation plans, making sure the  
453 plans not only provide the needed environmental protection but are practical and economical as  
454 well. '06

#### 455 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

456 We strongly recommend that public agencies should not be eligible for funding under the  
457 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). '07

458 We believe that programs that offer incentives for conservation, wildlife habitat creation and  
459 preservation should minimize the loss of prime farmland while maintaining our natural  
460 resources. '03

461 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for  
462 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out of  
463 production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable agricultural  
464 land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract. '07

465 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 466 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact on  
467 water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality  
468 benefit is negligible. '07
- 469 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical  
470 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive  
471 cropland.'07
- 472 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and  
473 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include  
474 trees within 35 feet of a ditch in order to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice  
475 of digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '03
- 476 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP  
477 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '07
- 478 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by  
479 other means. Weeds of primary concern to adjacent farmers include, but are not limited  
480 to: giant ragweed, multiflora rose, burr cucumber, phragmites, autumn olive, mile-a-  
481 minute, and kudzu, scrub trees and noxious grasses. '04
- 482 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale  
483 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime  
484 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '10

485  
486 USDA landlord/tenant rules should be strictly enforced to prevent losses to farmers who  
487 have already invested resources into land being considered for a CREP contract. '02

488 Upon re-enrollment of land under a CREP contract, a farm should not be required to  
489 destroy existing vegetation and replant as long as the existing CREP land has been properly  
490 maintained and will meet the water quality and erosion control goals of the program. '09

491

#### 492 **COVER CROP PROGRAM**

493 The cover crop program administered by MDA should remain a voluntary cost-share program  
494 and should be amended as follows:

- 495 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
- 496 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs.'10
- 497 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '07

- 498 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is  
499 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07  
500 (5) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain  
501 crops and hay acreage. '07  
502 (6) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07  
503 (7) It should allow variable planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '07  
504 (8) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast seeding.  
505 '07  
506 (9) Aerial seeding should be funded at the same rate as all other methods of seeding. '07  
507 (10) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it  
508 on the farm. '08  
509 (11) The annual signup date for the program should be the first two weeks of August. '09  
510 (12) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested  
511 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09

512  
513 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.  
514 '10

### 515 CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

517 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of  
518 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area.'07

519 Due to the impact on the agricultural community, we urge county governments to work  
520 with their county Farm Bureaus when they develop their local programs.

521 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the  
522 Critical Areas Program.'07

523 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market  
524 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation  
525 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '08

526 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial loss  
527 for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss.'07

528 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and  
529 other recreational water related activities. '08

530

### 531 CROP PROTECTION

#### 532 Chemicals

533 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them by  
534 approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '08

535 In order to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to  
536 maintain a biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old  
537 chemicals, chemical containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '07

538 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned  
539 chemicals.'06

540 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water contaminated  
541 by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to label  
542 instructions. '06

543 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not  
544 on emotional issues. '08

545 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The  
546 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an



547 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to  
548 farm his property. '07

549 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to  
550 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '08

551 We support legislation that provides for the pesticide laws to be regulated only by the  
552 State or Federal government. '08

### 553 **Disease Prevention & Pest Control**

554 We support the monitoring of plant diseases such as Asian Soybean Rust in the exotic  
555 plants used by homeowners and landscapers that may include invasive weed species that serve as  
556 alternate hosts. We urge MDA to study these plant species and bolster its efforts to assure that all  
557 new plants have no negative impact on farm crops or nursery stock.'07

558 We support existing restrictions on the movement of Ash trees to prevent the spread of  
559 the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. '07

560 We support funding for joint research by universities to study and eliminate the Brown  
561 Marmorated Stink Bug. '10

### 562 **Environmental Surcharge**

563 We are opposed to any state tax or surcharge on fertilizers and crop protectants to fund  
564 environmental programs.'06

565

566

## 567 **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

568 We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the MD Dairy  
569 Industry Association and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a program that will  
570 enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk prices, and increase the  
571 stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. '10

571 We urge the state to fund the Maryland Dairy Farmer Emergency Trust fund with a  
572 minimum of \$5 million per year. '09

573 We support the Maryland Dairy Industry Association and urge farmers to join. '09

### 574 **Milk Marketing**

575 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy  
576 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated.'07

577 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as "raw milk" only. '09

578 We believe schools should not sell milk to students after the sell-by date. '07

### 579 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

580 We oppose new or increased fees for dairy farmers, haulers and cooperatives. '04

581 We support current Maryland Law for the prohibition of raw milk sales. We support  
582 legislation that would prohibit the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements as a means to  
583 circumvent existing raw milk sales laws. '09

584 Maryland should allow farmers to produce and process raw milk cheese on their farms  
585 and sell it from the farm after the federally required 60 day aging period. '06

586

587

## 588 **DREDGE SPOIL**

589 We support the dredging of Baltimore Harbor, which would improve ship traffic and  
590 benefit the state's economy.'07

591 When deposit sites are needed, dredge spoil shall be used to replenish low areas that were  
592 once highland that are now wet or have eroded away. '05

593 We oppose dumping of dredge spoils into open water and on farmland. '05

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**EFFLUENT TRADING**

We oppose any form of government mandated and controlled effluent trading for the compliance for nutrient reductions from point sources of nutrient loading in lieu of Biological Nutrient Reduction (BNR) upgrading or delaying of any sewage treatment facility upgrades. '10  
We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient reduction that allow farmers to receive fair compensation for nutrient removal and/or reductions. '10

**ENDANGERED SPECIES**

We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species.'05  
Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by the Endangered Species Act.'07  
We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered) that might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere.'06  
Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal law. '07  
Any plant or animal that is taken as a result of an agricultural practice shall be considered an incidental taking. '07

**ENERGY POLICY**

We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the role of agriculture. '03  
We support an increase in off-shore and land based drilling for oil and natural gas to enhance supplies, lower prices and reduce dependence on foreign sources. '05  
**Ethanol & Bio-Diesel Fuel**  
We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval, environmental issues, funding and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of renewable fuels in county, state and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction of ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives for ethanol and biodiesel. '07  
We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and soy diesel in diesel fuel. '05  
We urge research and education on the use of ethanol in all engines at 10 percent and higher blends to ensure we meet the Renewable Fuel Standard goal of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel use by 2025. '09  
We urge new research to improve ethanol compatibility with farm equipment. '10  
We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) be required to use bio diesel or ethanol fuels. '05  
We urge the required use of at least 5% bio-diesel by all state diesel powered vehicles. '04  
We encourage the maritime industries to use bio-diesel fuel on the Chesapeake Bay and in other Maryland waterways. '07  
We strongly believe that public officials need to seriously consider the opportunities and potential for increasing local or domestic demand of commodities through the production of Ethanol E-85. '07  
We recommend that the Maryland Department of Transportation make changes to guidelines so that current E85 (85% blend gasoline/ethanol) models may be used in fleets to meet alternative fuel mandates. '07  
We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Business & Economic Development (DBED) in the development of bio-fuels in Maryland. '02

643 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

644 We encourage research, development and utilization of alternative energy sources from  
645 methane, biomass, wind, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, hydro and clean natural gas. '08

646 Additionally, we urge that this process be aided by appropriate government tax  
647 incentives. '07

648 We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric  
649 energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county  
650 governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and turbines  
651 to help offset farm energy costs.'10

652 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

653 Outdoor wood fired boilers/furnaces that utilize approved emission control systems and  
654 EPA best burn practices for Hydronic heaters should be allowed. '08

655

656 **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING**

657 We recommend no changes be made to Maryland's "Standing Law," which negatively  
658 affects the state's economy and the private property rights of individuals. '07

659 We support the reversal of any laws to increase standing to special interest groups. '10

660

661

662 **EQUINE INDUSTRY**

663 We support the inclusion of inventories of the various classes of equine in the state in  
664 future MDA and NASS agriculture statistical surveys. '07

665 We support the recognition of equine as part of the agricultural industry and not as  
666 companion animals. Riding lessons, boarding or training given on a farm should be considered a  
667 part of the normal agriculture practices. We support measures to improve the Maryland Bred  
668 Program within the Thoroughbred and Standardbred Industry. '05

669 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock  
670 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a  
671 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's  
672 responsible actions. '04

673 We support the creation of state debt to fund the Maryland Horse Park. '05

674 We support the establishment of a permanent, federally operated import/export  
675 quarantine facility for livestock in the state of Maryland. We urge the USDA and MDA to work  
676 toward its establishment. '05

677

678 **FAMILY VALUES**

679 We recommend that the Maryland legislature and the Governor should: (1) Pass  
680 legislation to make parents more accountable for the destructive action of their children; and  
681 (2) Have the party involved more monetarily liable for the destructive action they cause. If they  
682 are financially unable to pay, they should do so through community service. The monetary  
683 amount should be determined and paid in full.'05

684

685 **FARM SERVICE AGENCY - COUNTY COMMITTEES**

686 We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county  
687 committees to adequately staff county offices. '07

688 We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation  
689 occurs. '05

690 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and  
691 consolidation of offices and services. '06

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**FOREIGN INVESTMENTS**

Maryland Farm Bureau is concerned about the purchase of farmland by investors who are foreign nationals. We believe land purchases by foreign investors should be closely monitored. We insist that foreign investors be required to conform to all United States Tax laws and to import and export regulations applicable to American producers. '05

**FOREST CONSERVATION**

The Forest Conservation Act of 1991 has far reaching language, including reforestation lands cleared for development and afforestation, which means planting trees where no trees have existed for many years. We urge amending the Forest Conservation act to remove the afforestation section completely. We urge state government to recognize the difference between rural low-density development and urban high-density development in relation to tree conservation. The percentage of reforestation needs to be based on actual forest that is destroyed, rather than the present threshold percentage of parcels.'06

We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with regards to the harvesting of trees.'06

Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural lands under the state of Maryland's conservation or land use programs. '08

**GAMBLING**

We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources be used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar value of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into other forms of gambling such as table games and sports book should benefit the equine industry similar to Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs). '09

**GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS**

We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits and environmental benefits of GMOs. '07

**GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS - STATE GOVERNMENT**

**Regulatory Reform**

We urge consideration be given to the economic impact upon farmers and landowners as local, state, and federal legislators and agencies develop laws, regulations and policies. '06

We request that the farm community continue to be consulted and be allowed to participate in the formulation of regulations and laws at all levels of government particularly when they impact the Ag community. '05

Agencies developing regulations should have a thorough knowledge of all related aspects of agriculture, not just their immediate subject matter, or they should seek additional input from agriculture in the development of regulations. '05

We urge all government agencies develop regulations in cooperation with other agencies so that there is a reduction in duplication and a consistency of purpose. '05

We ask for removal of the question on Maryland's death certificate in bold print "Did tobacco use contribute to the cause of death, YES { } NO { } UNCERTAIN { } ? '06

Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said regulations '05

741 We recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that affect the  
742 agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no purpose. '05

743 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and  
744 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry  
745 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All  
746 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '07

747 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)  
748 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being implemented.  
749 The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full General Assembly for a  
750 vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed regulation. '08

751 Since innovative ideas and non-traditional thinking have been the underpinnings of  
752 agricultural advancement, we urge the various agencies to allow for this in the writing and  
753 enforcement of policies and regulations, provided basic health and safety concerns are met. '04

#### 754 **Elected Officials**

755 We recommend that any proposed pay increases for policy making elected officials shall  
756 be placed on the general elections ballot in an electoral year in which a candidate for Governor is  
757 on the ballot and shall not become effective until ratified by the electorate. In addition, no  
758 retirement benefits shall accrue to any policy making elected official as a result of service in that  
759 position. '05

760 We support a constitutional change to elect one senator per county. '07

761 We support a House of Delegates apportioned on population with a minimum of one  
762 delegate per county. '07

763 We oppose any method of selection for Clerks of the Court, Register of Wills, and Judges  
764 of the Orphans Court, other than election by the people. '07

765 We urge local control in the selections of those responsible for operating our local court  
766 systems. '07

#### 767 **Ethics**

768 We support a change in current State law to allow farmers to become eligible for  
769 employment by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '06

#### 770 **State and Local Agencies**

771 We support the co-location of ag agencies, ag education and resources in regional ag  
772 centers when feasible. '07

773 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the  
774 state. '08

775 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry  
776 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the Maryland  
777 National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict the  
778 access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on private  
779 property to no greater than is allowed to law enforcement agencies. '07

780 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by  
781 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural  
782 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate  
783 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these  
784 practices. '08

#### 785 **Maryland Agricultural Commission**

786 We support the efforts by the Maryland Agricultural Commission to implement the  
787 Strategic Plan for Agriculture. '08

788 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

789 We strongly oppose consolidation or transfer of any of MDA's current programs,  
790 functions or authorities to any other department. We strongly support the transfer of any and all  
791 ag-related programs, functions and authorities from other departments to MDA. '09

792 We urge the MDA to establish official standardized office hours for all department  
793 offices including field offices. '09

794 **Government Spending**

795 We urge the reduction of government agency bureaucracy and duplication in an effort to  
796 reduce costs, fees and frustration of the general public. '04

797 We urge all levels of government to operate within a balanced budget. '07

798 **Procurement**

799 We believe that all government purchases (including DNR purchases) should be made  
800 through local Maryland businesses. '03

801 **State Owned Farmland**

802 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and  
803 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be  
804 converted to conservation uses. '08

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**GREENWAYS - RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

807 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We  
808 recognize the value of urban greenways, but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural  
809 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with  
810 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or rails  
811 to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that adjoins  
812 the proposed greenway before a study commences. '07

813 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any  
814 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the  
815 opportunity for input. Also the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail use  
816 on the safety, health, security, privacy and economic interests of the adjacent landowners and  
817 determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail  
818 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,  
819 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use of  
820 the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for  
821 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers. '10

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**GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

824 Maryland Farm Bureau is concerned about the damage caused by the gypsy moth.  
825 Therefore, we support the appropriation of sufficient funds to spray all areas in the state where  
826 the gypsy moth population has reached the critical stage. We recommend that the program be  
827 returned to the 250 egg masses per acre baseline. '05

828

829

**INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

830 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow industrial hemp as an agricultural  
831 crop. '07

832

833

**INSURANCE**

834 **Crop Insurance**

835 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a  
836 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

837 We oppose the late planting penalty due to wet soils. '03

838 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

839 We recommend that state and federal governments consider appropriate measures to  
840 control skyrocketing medical costs. Every effort should be made to limit medical expense  
841 increases to the cost of living. Furthermore, we believe that health insurance expenses should be  
842 deductible as a business expense for self-employed individuals.'06

843 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated health  
844 insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits in an attempt to better manage health  
845 insurance costs. '05

846 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge  
847 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of  
848 quality health care. '04

849 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent  
850 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.'06

851 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits to  
852 long-term care insurance. '10

853 **Insurance Rates**

854 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates  
855 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on  
856 experience ratings. '05

857 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry as a result  
858 of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '03

859 We urge the General Assembly to conduct a legislative review of all insurance costs in  
860 Maryland. '02

861 **Liability Insurance**

862 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '06

863 Maryland should pass a law limiting liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers  
864 to afford the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '06

865

866 **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

867 It is imperative that a John's testing protocol be immediately developed for Maryland  
868 and that total funding be provided. The protocol should be designed after those of the  
869 surrounding states. The protocol should be farmer-friendly, designed and directed toward use as  
870 an on-farm management tool. '03

871 A fully funded indemnity program should also be established in Maryland. '02

872 We acknowledge that the Maryland Department of Agriculture has made progress with  
873 the John's program and request continued support for it. '05

874

875 **LABOR STANDARDS**

876 We oppose efforts to change Maryland law to require the payment of overtime wages to  
877 farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '04

878

879 **LAND STEWARDSHIP**

880 Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the recognition  
881 of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources. '06

882

883 **LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING**

884 **Annexation**

885 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations  
886 within the county. '05

887 **Growth Management**

888 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations  
889 within our state. '07

890 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.  
891 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural  
892 counties. '08

893 We believe no program (or parts of a program) should be adopted until we review and  
894 evaluate the accumulative impact of all of our present programs. We need to know the inter-  
895 relationship of all the legislation and regulations dealing with growth management such as the  
896 Chesapeake Bay critical area law; the Nontidal Wetland Protection Act; federal, state, and local  
897 resource protection programs; the agricultural land preservation program; Program Open Space;  
898 and the reforestation law passed by the General Assembly. '05

899 We support a requirement for local governments to consider the impact of new  
900 development on water resources and current users. Development should not be allowed to  
901 surpass the level of water resources. '07

902 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's  
903 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '06

904 We support public and private programs that improve the livability of urban areas and  
905 attract residents to those urban areas. '02

906 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).  
907 '10

908 **Permitting**

909 We support the continued exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building  
910 permits and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the zoning code. We further support  
911 the inclusion of specific language in the building code to permit public access to existing,  
912 structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated upgrades to the full current codes.  
913 '05

914 **Reverse Set-backs & Buffers**

915 We urge county planners to require protective measures for farmland, such as reverse  
916 setbacks, buffers, fencing, etc. for new non-agricultural uses occurring adjacent to existing  
917 agricultural operations. '06

918 **Zoning**

919 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their efforts  
920 to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners involved  
921 should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria changes.  
922 Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall provide for just  
923 compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning on agriculture land.  
924 '07

925 Zoning regulations should be determined at the local, not state level. '08

926 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '08

927 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or  
928 default. '08

929

930

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

931 **Penalties & Confinement**

932 We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of "Mason-Dixon Line"  
933 markers. '05

934 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We  
935 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on  
936 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and support



937 and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of persons  
938 confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a constructive role in  
939 society. '06

940 We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a mandatory  
941 life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and murder  
942 offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled dangerous  
943 substances (drugs). '05

944 We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin after  
945 the completion of their sentence before their release.'07

946 We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if  
947 convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits  
948 pertaining to the office that they held.'06

#### 949 **Judicial Process**

950 We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given a  
951 sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial sentencing  
952 for all.'07

953 We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity  
954 defense of "innocent by reason of insanity" to "guilty, but insane." '05

#### 955 **Investigation of Crimes**

956 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between  
957 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. '07

958 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who  
959 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

960

961

#### 961 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

962 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law  
963 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

964

965

#### 965 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

966 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public  
967 monies.'06

968

969

#### 969 **LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

970 Government officials and inspectors must be required to follow stringent biosecurity  
971 practices and respect private property rights at all times when visiting farms. '08

972 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. '07

973 We support changing the classification of Reindeer and Bison to livestock and placing  
974 them under the regulatory jurisdiction of the MD Department of Agriculture. '03

975

976

#### 976 **LOCAL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

977 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

978

979

#### 979 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

980 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the  
981 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as necessary,  
982 including the purchase of needed equipment.'07

983

984

#### 984 **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

985 We oppose the present definition of Nontidal wetlands as set forth in the 1989 "Federal  
986 Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands." This definition would designate many acres of

987 marginal wetlands that possess minimal wetlands values. It would also include many acres of  
988 cropland that has been farmed historically. '05

989 We support the revision of the "Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands"  
990 to exclude:

991 (1) cropland that was farmed prior to the enactment of any laws dealing with the  
992 regulation;

993 (2) areas with woody or natural vegetation that are not ponded for more than fifteen  
994 consecutive days during some part of the growing season. '05

995 This definition should also be used for any existing or proposed state legislation. It is  
996 imperative that the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the  
997 Natural Resource Conservation Service review the definition of Nontidal wetlands and evaluate  
998 its implications on agriculture. Furthermore, it is our belief that all three of the criteria should  
999 exist before land is considered a wetland and we hope the manual will be amended accordingly.  
1000 '05

1001 We support the designation of the Natural Resource Conservation Service as the lead  
1002 agency for the development of uniform wetlands delineation.'06

1003 Agriculture needs to be exempt from mitigation for agricultural activities where the  
1004 farmer has, and is carrying on good agricultural practices. '07

1005 We recommend that when wetlands are identified, property owners must be notified and  
1006 an appeal or review process be developed.'07

1007 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should be  
1008 deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly compensated." '08

1009 Maryland regulations should not be more stringent than the federal regulations regarding  
1010 non-tidal wetlands in agricultural land. '08

1011 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that  
1012 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of  
1013 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost  
1014 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. '08

1015 We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands.'07

1016

1017

## **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

### **Noxious Weed List**

1018 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, asiatic tearthumb,  
1019 kudzu, multi-flora rose (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry), and mile-a-  
1020 minute placed on the noxious weed list. '04

### **Compliance on Government-Owned Land**

1022 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments abide by the noxious weed  
1023 control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '02

### **Enforcement**

1026 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the  
1027 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,  
1028 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's  
1029 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '07

1030 We re commend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators  
1031 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are  
1032 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it  
1033 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or  
1034 non crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all of the control methods outlined by the  
1035 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '05

1036 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other  
1037 conservation programs so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.  
1038 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '09

1039 **Public Education**

1040 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the  
1041 general public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of thistles, multi-  
1042 flora rose, johnsongrass, poison hemlock, shatter cane and autumn olive.'07

1043 **Weed Control Methods**

1044 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of  
1045 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and  
1046 eliminate these noxious weeds. Until these materials are developed, MDA should ban ornamental  
1047 grasses such as eastern gamma grass from being introduced in Maryland. '05

1048 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious  
1049 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will  
1050 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination.'05

1051

1052 **NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

1053 **Nutrient Management for Farms**

1054 We believe in a voluntary nutrient management program and that all farmers should  
1055 apply nutrients in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science.  
1056 '07

1057 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of nutrient  
1058 management plans. '09

1059 We support a Maryland Department of Agriculture nutrient management program that  
1060 (1) produces real water quality improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3)  
1061 requires reasonable recordkeeping, (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5)  
1062 provides adequate flexibility for farmers to properly manage their operations, and (6) provides  
1063 appropriate inspection and enforcement. '08

1064 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.  
1065 '10

1066 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient  
1067 management program to achieve the following:

- 1068 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- 1069 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.  
1070 '05
- 1071 c. Allow the use of nutrient standards for manure established by the University of Maryland  
1072 if so desired.'05
- 1073 d. Prevent yield capping.
- 1074 e. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of  
1075 Maryland or other public and private sources. '07
- 1076 f. The elimination of the Nutrient Management Voucher requirements and the transfer of  
1077 the resultant savings to Extension for nutrient management plan writing. '10

1078

1079 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a  
1080 farm based on a complaint. '09

1081 We support the continuation of the farmer-filed annual certification of plan compliance along  
1082 with an annual summary of nutrient application rather than requiring the filing of the completed  
1083 plan. '06

1084 MDA should develop an optional on-line reporting system for the annual summaries. '09

1085 **Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality**

1086 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain  
1087 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately-written nutrient  
1088 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government  
1089 entity. '10

1090 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date they should be  
1091 properly destroyed. '08

1092 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**

1093 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake  
1094 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '03

1095 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1096 We seek reinstatement of full funding for Nutrient Management Cost-Share for the  
1097 development and updating of nutrient management plans by private industry and by University  
1098 of Maryland Extension. All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '07

1099 The nutrient management plan writing positions that were recently eliminated by the  
1100 University of Maryland Extension due to state budget cuts should be replaced when funds  
1101 become available. '09

1102 Assets and personnel should be redeployed through the University of Maryland  
1103 Extension to provide: (1) Adequate nutrient management planning staff in each county to  
1104 service all farmers who request assistance; (2) Permanent Extension positions with competitive  
1105 salaries and benefits for nutrient management planners; (3) training for all farmers who desire to  
1106 write their own nutrient management plans. '06

1107 We urge full funding of \$1.8 million per year to the University of Maryland Extension to  
1108 provide nutrient management plan writing services to all farmers requesting assistance. '10

1109 We request that funding for nutrient management education and plan development go  
1110 directly to University of Maryland Extension in order to hire and maintain adequate permanent  
1111 nutrient management advisors in each county. '10

1112 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1113 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately  
1114 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1115 We strongly oppose additional requirements, such as the Maryland Animal Feeding  
1116 Operation (MAFO) and the revised Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by  
1117 MDE. '08

1118 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations  
1119 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1120 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '10

1121 **Manure and Litter Management**

1122 We strongly urge MDA to review the requirements and procedures for the manure  
1123 transport program. The process should be made more user-friendly. '03

1124 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for crop  
1125 production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '04

1126 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.  
1127 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies, beyond those previously conducted by  
1128 UMD researchers, that include different soil types, locations and manure types before any ban on  
1129 the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1130 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be  
1131 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1132 **Soil Testing**

1133 We recommend that a public soil testing lab at the MD Department of Agriculture be  
1134 opened and available to Maryland farmers/landowners. '08

1135 We believe MDA should work with the University of Maryland and the soil testing labs  
1136 used by area farmers to develop a soil test report and recommendations that can be directly  
1137 included in a certified plan. '03

1138 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to  
1139 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '10

1140

1141

### **POULTRY LITTER**

1142 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter. '10

1143 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a cost-  
1144 share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the mandatory  
1145 covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '07

1146 We oppose any effort to move ALL poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '08

1147 We oppose burning poultry litter for energy generation. Poultry litter is an excellent  
1148 fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be replaced with an expensive non-  
1149 renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere in the world and shipped to  
1150 Maryland farms. '08

1151 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research based guidelines for field  
1152 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in  
1153 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '08

1154

1155

### **PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1156 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property  
1157 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner. '07

1158 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production of  
1159 an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07

1160 Any government action that diminishes an owner's right to use his property constitutes a  
1161 taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should provide due process and  
1162 compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been diminished. The just basis for  
1163 compensation must be at least fair market value. '08

1164 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and state  
1165 levels.

1166 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the party  
1167 disputing any property lines. '06

1168 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to notify  
1169 all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified letter,  
1170 in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '03

### **Eminent Domain**

1172 We believe the recent Supreme Court Kelo decision violates the basic principles and  
1173 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent  
1174 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public  
1175 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We  
1176 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and  
1177 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of  
1178 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local  
1179 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop. '06

1180 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without  
1181 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real  
1182 property. '10

1183 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.

1184 '06



1233 **Timberland Management**

1234 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use  
1235 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting  
1236 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '07

1237

1238 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1239 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome and most affordable food in the  
1240 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the  
1241 media unless substantiated and accurate.

1242 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.  
1243 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based  
1244 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors and  
1245 subsequent retailers.

1246 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and  
1247 information regarding the local farm community.

1248 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the  
1249 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland  
1250 agriculture to the public through various media outlets.

1251 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that  
1252 would:

- 1253 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1254 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1255 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the  
1256 environment.
- 1257 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals and educational displays.
- 1258 5. Include a speakers bureau.'08

1259

1260 We encourage state, county and local government officials to take a more active role in  
1261 supporting, promoting and defending agriculture. '09

1262

1263 **RAILROADS**

1264 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action  
1265 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including  
1266 adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1267

1268 **RECYCLING**

1269 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury to  
1270 animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that would  
1271 require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we recommend that a  
1272 sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for recycling. '05

1273 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we  
1274 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1275 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '04

1276 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials, as  
1277 well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

1278 Due to the increased use of plastic wrap in agriculture, we urge the search for a suitable  
1279 reclamation process. '04

1280 **Tire Fund**

1281 The state Tire Fund collection program for farmers should be expanded to include a  
1282 program that would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state once every four

1283 years. This program should collect all used farm tires as long as the funds are available in the  
1284 Tire Fund without raising fees. '07

1285 We request that the tire recycling fee levied on new tire purchases be used exclusively for  
1286 research into tire recycling and to subsidize actual tire recycling projects.'04

1287

### 1288 **RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS**

1289 When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be  
1290 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.  
1291 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be  
1292 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary as a result of building waterways,  
1293 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible  
1294 and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars and weeds  
1295 by the utility company.'06

1296 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights of way or property lines  
1297 when feasible.'05

1298 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used  
1299 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the underlying  
1300 property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be returned to  
1301 adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee simple, the  
1302 property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first refusal upon  
1303 abandonment. '07

1304 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail use,  
1305 and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will preserve  
1306 the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

1307

### 1308 **RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS**

1309 We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which  
1310 protects the right of the people to keep and bear Arms. '08

1311 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by law-  
1312 abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, longarm, autoloader or manual loader. Furthermore, we  
1313 are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition.'07

1314

### 1315 **RIGHT-TO-FARM**

1316 We support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the privilege  
1317 and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without undue or  
1318 unreasonable restrictions, regulations or harassment from government or the private sector. We  
1319 support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from undue liability and nuisance suits when  
1320 carrying out normal production practices. '05

1321 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law but believe that it should  
1322 be strengthened. '05

1323 We recommend that right-to-farm laws extend to the ag-supported industry, i.e.  
1324 equipment dealers, grain and feed storage, processing, etc. We also urge that it be evaluated and  
1325 amended if necessary to make sure that the use of scare guns (for crop protection) is allowed. '02

1326 Before entering into the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the  
1327 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review in an attempt to settle  
1328 the nuisance complaint between the effected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in  
1329 nuisance complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '09

1330 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead  
1331 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '07

1332



## **RIPARIAN BUFFERS**

1333 We favor voluntary incentive-based programs for establishing riparian buffers. Grass  
1334 species or natural vegetation is preferred. When forest buffers are established provisions should  
1335 be made for the future harvest of such trees without penalty. '07

1337 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis.'07

1338 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural  
1339 use. '09

## **ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE**

### **Road Design**

1343 We suggest the State and County Highway Administration study newly widened as well  
1344 as existing roads and correct any dangerous conditions created by landowners placing objects too  
1345 close to the roadway. (For example: steel objects, reflectors, ornamental fences, or trees). '07

1346 We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments  
1347 consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of  
1348 road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm  
1349 machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other  
1350 on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides  
1351 more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes be  
1352 used where possible and placed off of the main road in new developments. '08

1353 We urge the State Highway Administration to improve access for farm equipment at the  
1354 signalized intersections on Maryland highways. '06

1355 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state  
1356 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and  
1357 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems.'09

1358 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and  
1359 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We encourage  
1360 the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps and median  
1361 strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas. '05

1362 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to  
1363 the curb.'07

### **Road Construction**

1365 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We  
1366 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for  
1367 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of  
1368 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be  
1369 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes.'07

1370 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than  
1371 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1372 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction and  
1373 maintenance only. '03

1374 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the  
1375 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local  
1376 jurisdiction served by the system. '05

1377 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our  
1378 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to insure safe travel, as does the State Highway  
1379 Department. '07

1380 We encourage the State Highway Administration to proceed with urgently needed road  
1381 construction projects. '08

1382 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project  
1383 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land  
1384 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has been  
1385 initiated. '08

1386 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1387 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1388 It difficult to transport wide farm machinery because of the increasing hazard of tree  
1389 limbs hanging in the roadway or on the edge of the roads. We recommend that trees and limbs  
1390 be cut back a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a height of 16 feet on the  
1391 shoulder, with reflective material placed on guide wires and poles that are surrounded or at the  
1392 very edge of the pavement.'05

1393 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the  
1394 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and to enhance scenic views. '05

1395 The government should increase the level of maintenance to insure safe passage of  
1396 vehicles. '04

1397 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public  
1398 education program to teach citizens that trees do not live forever and there is a need to inspect,  
1399 harvest and remove older, hazardous and diseased trees. '10

1400 We recommend that the State Highway Administration send advance notification to  
1401 adjacent landowners whenever plantings are scheduled along the SHA right-of-way. '05

1402 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581)to amend the  
1403 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the trimming  
1404 and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and simplify the  
1405 permit process. '10

1406

1407

**RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM**

1408 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be  
1409 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land  
1410 Preservation Program.'06

1411 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,  
1412 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.  
1413 '07

1414

1415

**SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

1416 **School Standards**

1417 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.  
1418 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse  
1419 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all and  
1420 should be enforced by the school system. '07

1421 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

1422 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging in  
1423 illegal drug activity. '07

1424 **School Lunches**

1425 We urge the local school systems to purchase more locally grown products for the school  
1426 breakfast and lunch programs. '09

1427 We urge the state to establish a farm-to-school program, which would allow for bidding  
1428 exemptions, making it easier for schools and other institutions to buy directly from local farms.  
1429 '08

1430 **School Year**

1431 We oppose a year round and/or a staggered school year. We support a school year that  
1432 starts after Labor Day and ends no later than the first week of June. '05

1433 **School Attendance Policy**

1434 Participation in agricultural activities (e.g. 4-H, FFA and the Miss County or Miss  
1435 Maryland Farm Bureau Programs) should be allowed as an excused absence and should not  
1436 count against the number of allowable absences set by the county school system in question. '05

1437

1438 **SEAT BELTS**

1439 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other vehicles.  
1440 '07

1441 **SEED TESTING**

1442 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a  
1443 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider. '08

1444 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from licensed private facilities.  
1445 '09

1446

1447 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1448 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate their current regulations  
1449 concerning septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue  
1450 economic hardship on landowners.'06

1451 We oppose the mandatory installation of nitrogen removal systems because of the high  
1452 costs and negligible benefits.'10

1453 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1454

1455 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1456 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet  
1457 the federal Class A standard. '07

1458 We support continued research into sludge use to assure proper application rates and  
1459 practices that protect farmland. '04

1460 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term  
1461 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability and  
1462 potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be imported into  
1463 Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1464 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be held  
1465 accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of  
1466 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '08

1467 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a composite  
1468 test be taken and recorded each day.'07

1469 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the  
1470 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1471 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop  
1472 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1473 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids  
1474 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09

1475

1476 **STATE DESIGNATIONS**

1477 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1478 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts to  
1479 change this designation. '07

1480  
1481 **STATE FFA**

1482 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education that a full-  
1483 time permanent position be established to serve FFA youth in Maryland. This position should be  
1484 field-based under the direction of the Vocational Technical Division. '05

1485  
1486 **STRAY VOLTAGE**

1487 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies  
1488 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and  
1489 livestock. '07

1490  
1491 **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

1492 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that  
1493 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

- 1494 1. It has to be profitable for farmers.
- 1495 2. It must work to conserve soil, water and nutrients with voluntary programs.
- 1496 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers.
- 1497 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply.
- 1498 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture. '08
- 1499 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency. '10
- 1500 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic farming practices. '10

1501  
1502 **TAXES**

1503  
1504 **Admission and Amusement Tax**

1505 Recreational activities that are carried out in conjunction with a farm operation should be  
1506 exempt from Admission and Amusement Tax.'06

1507 **Fuel Tax**

1508 We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to  
1509 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level.'10

1510 **Income Tax**

1511 We promote a tax relief by way of a credit and/or a deduction for our senior citizens who  
1512 are on Social Security that would compensate them for any major repair to their residences such  
1513 as a new roof, well or septic system. This relief would help these seniors operating on a fixed  
1514 income to maintain their homes and live within a familiar environment instead of feeling forced  
1515 to consider a nursing home or extended living residence simply because they cannot afford the  
1516 expense of a major repair. It is our desire to see that our seniors remain independent and self  
1517 reliant as long as they feel capable. '05

1518 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal  
1519 tax code. '10

1520 **Inheritance Tax**

1521 First and foremost, we strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '04  
1522 Until then, we support taxing nieces and nephews at the previous lineal tax rate on inherited  
1523 property. '05

1524 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-  
1525 owned agribusinesses. '05

1526 **Health Taxes**

1527 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '09

1528 **Maryland Estate Tax**

1529 We recommend that the estate tax exemption be increased to \$5 million. '10

1530 We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland. '07  
1531 We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and  
1532 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '08  
1533 The Maryland exemption for estate tax (\$1,000,000 in '05) should apply to every estate  
1534 regardless of the size of the estate. '05  
1535 In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use  
1536 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real  
1537 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.  
1538 '06

1539 **Property Tax**

1540 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm or  
1541 agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '05

1542 When a farm joins an Ag Preservation District, a house and lot on that farm have certain  
1543 restrictions placed on it. This house and lot (part of the district) should be taxed at a different rate  
1544 than a single house and lot. '05

1545 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly  
1546 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '08

1547 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings. '08

1548 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health  
1549 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '06

1550 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1551 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and  
1552 related services from the state sales tax. '07

1553 In order to clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases,  
1554 we recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt  
1555 card. '08

1556 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '08

1557 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1558 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family  
1559 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family  
1560 operation or structure. '07

1561 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1562 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as general  
1563 fund enhancements. '04

1564

1565 **TIMBER HARVESTING - STATE AND COUNTY LANDS**

1566 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural  
1567 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest  
1568 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield  
1569 basis. '07

1570 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state and  
1571 county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1572 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '08

1573

1574

**TOBACCO**

1575 **Master Settlement Agreement**

1576 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the  
1577 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at  
1578 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1579 **Tobacco Industry**

1580 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the  
1581 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1582 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland was built entirely using  
1583 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of  
1584 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be  
1585 considered as a secondary use. '06

1586 **Tobacco Taxes**

1587 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09

1588

1589

**TRESPASSING**

1590 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.  
1591 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to  
1592 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate  
1593 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all  
1594 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or  
1595 injury sustained by trespassers. '03

1596 The maximum fine should be raised to \$2000.00 for convictions of trespassing and  
1597 destruction of property. '03

1598 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for  
1599 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs or  
1600 paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission and to  
1601 know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private land. '06

1602 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a jail  
1603 term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine or serve the jail term if a minor is  
1604 convicted. The offender should be required to pay the property owner for any destruction. In a  
1605 case of a minor, the parents or guardians should be required to pay.'06

1606 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using "off road" vehicles on  
1607 property owned by others without written permission of up to \$2,500.00 fine, plus possible  
1608 imprisonment of up to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss.  
1609 Furthermore, violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '02

1610 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other  
1611 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with  
1612 existing laws and regulations.'07

1613

1614

**TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES**

1615 In order to achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1616 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion of this  
1617 program; '08

1618 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient runoff  
1619 into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban areas, as  
1620 well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E. deicing aircraft and  
1621 parking lots); '08

1622 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific research,  
1623 as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately result in the  
1624 Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1625 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with maximum  
1626 cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the purchase of  
1627 equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1628 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay in order to increase  
1629 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '08  
1630 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in  
1631 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08  
1632 We oppose any consideration or action taken by the Patuxent River Commission to invite  
1633 the National Park Service, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Agency, and other federal entities to join  
1634 them in conducting a study of land and water use near the River. '04  
1635

## **TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY**

### **Bicycle Safety**

1638 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the  
1639 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '07

1640 We recommend that scheduled bicycle events should be prohibited on roads without  
1641 shoulders. '08

1642 While more bicycles are using rural roads earlier in the morning and later in the evening,  
1643 we recommend that these bicycles display SMV signs because of the poor visibility during this  
1644 time of day. '08

### **Driver Safety Rules**

1646 We oppose any further restriction (beyond that in place in 2010) on the use of cell phones  
1647 or similar devices in motor vehicles. '10

### **Fines & Surcharges**

1649 We support the concept of allocation of truck fine revenues to the transportation fund. '07

1650 Present law only allows the driver of a truck to appeal a fine or violation against the truck  
1651 or its contents. We recommend that the law be amended to allow the driver or the owner to  
1652 make such an appeal. '06

### **Infrastructure Needs**

1654 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent  
1655 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '08  
1656 Inspections

1657 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of  
1658 motor vehicles. '07

1659 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis. '07

### **Safe Movement of Farm Equipment**

1661 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of farmers.

1662 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the proper  
1663 use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend that a  
1664 mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to aid in  
1665 recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and roads in  
1666 an effort to improve safety conditions. '07

1667 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow moving vehicle signs for any  
1668 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced. '07

1669 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on  
1670 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower  
1671 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are (1)  
1672 properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped approached  
1673 another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the "other driver"  
1674 being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her vehicle. '08

1675 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public  
1676 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and  
1677 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '08

1678 **Truck Regulations**

1679 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent with  
1680 those of neighboring states. '05

1681 We recommend that the allowable weight for tri-axle farm trucks with farm tags be  
1682 increased from 65,000 lbs to 70,000 lbs. '07

1683 We support the Class K Farm Area vehicle registration. We encourage MVA to require  
1684 applicants to show proof of farming activity by providing a copy of their schedule F Tax form.  
1685 '07

1686 Milk trucks should be allowed to be tagged to carry the same weight as a dump truck. '05

1687 We recommend trucks hauling agricultural products that were loaded in fields or other  
1688 off-highway locations be allowed a Gross Vehicle Weight limit tolerance of up to 15% as well as  
1689 a 15% axle weight tolerance.'10

1690 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal but an axle weight is off, enforcement personnel  
1691 should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '04

1692 We urge the issuance of an overload permit program for agricultural vehicles hauling raw  
1693 agricultural products intrastate. '04

1694 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products to  
1695 10 miles. '09

1696 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws.'07

1697 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland. '04

1698 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '08

1699 Vehicles with farm tag registrations should be exempt from the Inner Bridge Formula.  
1700 '07

1701 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage  
1702 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive Maintenance  
1703 Program. '05

1704 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT  
1705 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should be  
1706 established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time periods  
1707 to get them repaired. '08

1708 We support legislation that would increase the maximum length for any combination of  
1709 vehicles with a power unit that is a cargo-carrying vehicle from 55 feet to 65 feet. . '08

1710 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. 08

1711 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within each  
1712 class. '08

1713 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for  
1714 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the  
1715 transportation of farm commodities. '08

1716

1717

1718

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEMS**

1719 **Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority**

1720 We recommend the University of Maryland systems establish an Ag Producers Board of  
1721 Advisors. '03

1722 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,  
1723 but not at the expense of "traditional crop" courses and research. '08

1724 We urge the University of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional research as  
1725 is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support University of  
1726 Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education programs. '04



1727 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to  
1728 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future  
1729 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of members selected from local  
1730 Extension Advisory Committees to represent the different geographic regions of the state.'09

#### 1731 **Funding**

1732 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should  
1733 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural  
1734 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the  
1735 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings  
1736 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses  
1737 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '00

1738 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget  
1739 for funding the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We  
1740 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable funding  
1741 support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the University. We  
1742 also urge that the leadership for the Institute for Government Service be restored to the Extension  
1743 Service. '03

#### 1744 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

1745 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which provides assistance to  
1746 farmers for business plan development. '08

#### 1747 **Law School/Litigation**

1748 We oppose the University of Maryland School of Law filing suits against any farmer or  
1749 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from  
1750 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state clients.  
1751 Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm business  
1752 should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being accepted by  
1753 the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should provide equal  
1754 representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '10

#### 1755 **Plant Protection Center**

1756 We support the creation of and funding for the Maryland Plant Protection Center. '06

#### 1757 **Research and Data**

1758 We support a joint effort by the University of Maryland and the MDA to develop and  
1759 publish information that thoroughly and accurately describes the role of agriculture in the state's  
1760 economy and in protecting and enhancing the state's natural resource base. '07

1761 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state  
1762 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system. '07

1763 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop  
1764 varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase competition  
1765 with other areas of the country. '08

1766 We urge the University to reinstate the "Field Days" at the research farms. '04

#### 1767 **Teacher Preparation**

1768 We urge the University of Maryland System to continue to develop a program to prepare  
1769 teachers for their careers with courses in agri-science as a requirement towards their teaching  
1770 degree. '08

#### 1771 **Tuition**

1772 We believe that tuition increases at the schools within the University of Maryland System  
1773 be limited to the cost of living index. '03

#### 1774 **University of Maryland Extension**

1775 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural  
1776 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them

1777 compete in a competitive market place. The strength of Extension has always been at the local  
1778 level. We recommend that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension  
1779 Agent/Educator. '08

1780 We oppose the regionalization of county extension administrators. '09

1781 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to develop a nitrogen test to use in  
1782 the fall prior to planting small grains. '08

1783 Due to agriculture's ever increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe  
1784 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment  
1785 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension.

1786 We strongly recommend that the University of Maryland maintain adequate staffing to  
1787 write and certify nutrient management plans and to train individual farmers to write their own  
1788 plans. '09

1789 We support maintaining the title "county agent". '08

1790

1791

### WILDLANDS

1792 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly  
1793 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas  
1794 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry  
1795 management plans. '08

1796

1797

### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

1798 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to  
1799 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to  
1800 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident Canada  
1801 geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative impacts on  
1802 agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.  
1803 '09

#### Bird Control

1805 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any  
1806 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and  
1807 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

#### Black Bear

1809 We support a regulated hunting season as a sound wildlife management tool in order to  
1810 manage the State's black bear population in a safe and effective manner. '08

1811 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western Maryland  
1812 to other counties.'07

#### Coyote

1814 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

#### Deer

1816 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of  
1817 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '08

1818 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and  
1819 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These  
1820 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '08

1821 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '08

1822 (2) Allow market and bounty hunting. '08

1823 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting  
1824 seasons. '08

1825 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd  
1826 population count. '08

- 1827 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management  
1828 areas. '04  
1829 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer  
1830 herd.'05  
1831 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '07  
1832 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties  
1833 adjacent to agricultural lands. '09  
1834 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and  
1835 processing harvested deer. '09  
1836 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer  
1837 management. '09  
1838 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an  
1839 approved Forest Management / Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of  
1840 deer population. '09

1841 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '10  
1842 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or  
1843 tenant on private land. '08

1844 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a plan  
1845 to manage and control wildlife populations. '08

1846 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an  
1847 increase in state funding for the program. '08

#### 1848 **Deer Crop Damage**

1849 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer and we support immediate  
1850 enactment:

- 1851 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '08  
1852 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '08  
1853 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop within  
1854 the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '08  
1855 (4) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits  
1856 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use.  
1857 (5) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer  
1858 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not  
1859 disposing properly should be eliminated.  
1860 (6) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to use the weapon of choice  
1861 within county regulations for filling Deer Management permits during deer season.  
1862 '09

#### 1863 **Fox Chasing**

1864 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from landowners  
1865 to conduct the hunt. '08

#### 1866 **Furbearers**

1867 We support the harvesting of foxes. '02

1868 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase a  
1869 stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any fee.  
1870 '08

1871 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

1872 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best  
1873 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture of  
1874 fur-bearing wildlife. '10

1875 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

1876 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is  
1877 taking place. '07

1878 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a  
1879 manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record  
1880 after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

1881 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to  
1882 the maximum extent possible. '06

1883 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

1884 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of  
1885 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management  
1886 regulations. '08

1887 We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands. '10

1888 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all  
1889 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and  
1890 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed  
1891 during that season. '08

1892 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '10

1893 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '10

1894 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state.'07

1895 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner  
1896 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren and employees when hunting only on that property.  
1897 We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and his/her spouse,  
1898 children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural purposes (or a  
1899 sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this farmland. We are  
1900 opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license exemption to persons  
1901 (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under the age of 16.'06

1902 **Waterfowl**

1903 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
1904 Service to take any and all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow  
1905 goose population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

1906 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal  
1907 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

1908 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform  
1909 throughout, starting about November 5th.'09

1910 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an  
1911 increase in bag limits. '08

1912 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

1913 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

1914 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline.

1915 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

1916 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of property  
1917 lines. '08

1918 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

1919 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

1920 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e. recorders or baiters) to  
1921 reduce the snow goose population. '08

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**WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY**

We support the recognition of vineyards and wineries –and their related activities – as agriculture. We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes, wine making, storage of wine, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of wine and related products food service, and other associated activities. '07

We support the recognition of wineries as usage of right in agricultural and rural conservation zones. We support wineries' rights to market their product as broadly and as widely as possible, including in "Farmer's Markets" listed by the Department of Agriculture. We support research and funding in cooperation with MDA and UMD that enhances the viability of commercial viticulture in Maryland. '10

We support the right of wineries to ship their wines to consumers both interstate and intrastate. '10

We support the inclusion of the inventory of grape production in the state in future MDA and NASS agricultural statistical surveys.'10

**YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland through:  
(1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '07

-(2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling them farmland; '10

(3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation easements; '07

(4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

(5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them. '09

We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '09