

# Maryland Farm Bureau Policy 2010



State policy as approved by the voting delegates at the  
94<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Maryland Farm Bureau  
on December 9, 2009

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## **FOREWORD**

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

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

Farm Bureau policies stem from the people on the land. Farm families discuss issues, talk them over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from these community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies herein were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm Bureau policy for 2009 as set by voting delegates during the 94<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the Maryland Farm Bureau on December 9, 2009.

## **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 53 AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

54 We support state level legislation to grant an exemption to all county Agricultural Fairs  
55 from the provisions of noise control regulations that establish ambient noise levels and  
56 equipment performance standards. '02

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

### 62 AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

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

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

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

### 77 Ag Preservation Funding

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

81 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '09

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 95 Appraisals

96 We urge the state to use local appraisers who should base their appraisals on the recent  
97 sale or transfer of property in the immediate vicinity. We also believe that the appraisers should  
98 be required to successfully complete a course of study specifically on agricultural land appraisal

101 approved by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. Furthermore, appraisers  
102 should be required to take into consideration the value of standing timber, the subdivision value  
103 of any property, as well as the uniqueness of the metropolitan areas when making their  
104 appraisals. '05

#### 105 **Mapping**

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

#### 109 **Maryland Agland Preservation Foundation**

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

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

#### 134 **Other Methods to Preserve Agland**

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

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

#### 142 **Soil Surveys**

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

#### 145 **Transfer Development Rights**

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

#### 147 **Zoning**

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

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

### 153 AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

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

156 We encourage and support the passage of legislation to help resource-based industries  
157 and alternative or value-added enterprises. We encourage the state to coordinate laws and  
158 regulations with contiguous states. '03

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

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

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

### 171 AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION

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

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

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

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

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

186 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture’s right to use water for irrigation.  
187 '04

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

### 190 AIR QUALITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

211

212

### **ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES**

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

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

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

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

222

223

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

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

227 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy  
228 resources.'07

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

### **Corn Starch**

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

241

242

### **ANIMAL CARE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 265 **Antibiotic Feed Additives**

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

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

270

### 271 **ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES**

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

274 We urge Maryland Department of Agriculture to fund and fill the un-staffed positions  
275 without delay. '02

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

280

281

282

### 282 **AQUACULTURE**

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

289

### 290 **AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD**

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

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

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

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

307

### 308 **BEEKEEPING**

309 MDA should give regulatory approval to effective miticide products used to protect  
310 beehives. '07

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

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

318

### 319 **BROWNFIELDS**

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

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

324

### 325 **CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP**

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

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

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

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

338 We urge Maryland's legislators to consider the financial and practical impact on the  
339 state's diverse agriculture when imposing new laws and regulations. '07

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

343 We recommend that industry, urban run-off, wastewater treatment plants, etc. be given  
344 the same time limit as agriculture to reduce the impact of pollution on the Chesapeake Bay.  
345 Emphasis should be placed on municipal, urban and industrial areas regarding water quality,  
346 nutrient management and solid waste disposal. '07

347 We recommend that greater attention and research be given to what is happening in the  
348 water column of the Bay itself. The filter feeders and small aquatic life will have to be a part of

349 the long term solution for the Bay cleanup. Harvesting moratoriums, restrictions on harvesting  
350 methods, Asian oyster introduction with proper safeguards and other measures should be  
351 considered. '07

352 State funding should be dramatically increased for revival of oysters, targeting surface  
353 raised oysters and other filter feeders. '05

354 **Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up**

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

358

359 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

360

361 **Farmers' Markets**

362 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers markets. '07

363 **Grain Dealers**

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

368

369 **Labeling Requirements**

370 Since the risk of illness from unpasteurized cider is no greater than the risk of illness  
371 from any other food source, we do not support any labeling of cider beyond whether or not it is  
372 pasteurized. '07

373 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

374 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise. We  
375 urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's efforts to  
376 improve marketing services. We support the "Maryland's Best" marketing program. '09

377 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that  
378 serve all citizens. '07

379 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Economic Development to continue  
380 its policy of providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries. '06

381 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of  
382 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. '05

383 **Deep Water Terminal**

384 We support a viable grain export terminal. '07

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

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

388 **Roadside Markets**

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

391 **Roadside Signs**

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

395 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

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

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399 **Value Added**

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

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**CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

404

405 **Best Management**

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

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

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

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

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

426 **Conservation Practices**

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

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

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

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

442 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

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

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

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

452 Our proposed changes include the following:

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

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

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

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### **COVER CROP PROGRAM**

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

- 481 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
- 482 (2) The per acre cost share rate should be increased to reflect current costs. '07
- 483 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '07
- 484 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is  
485 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
- 486 (5) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain  
487 crops and hay acreage. '07
- 488 (6) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
- 489 (7) It should allow variable planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '07
- 490 (8) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast seeding.  
491 '07
- 492 (9) Aerial seeding should be funded at the same rate as all other methods of seeding. '07
- 493 (10) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it  
494 on the farm. '08
- 495 (11) The annual signup date for the program should be the first two weeks of August. '09
- 496 (12) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested  
497 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09

498  
499 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign up for the cover crop program.  
500 '09

### **CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **CROP PROTECTION**

#### **Chemicals**

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

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

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

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

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

531 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The  
532 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an  
533 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to  
534 farm his property. '07

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

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

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

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

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

546 **Environmental Surcharge**

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

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550

**DAIRY INDUSTRY**

551 We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the MD Dairy  
552 Industry Association and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a program that will  
553 enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk prices, and increase the  
554 stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. '09

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

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

558 **Milk Marketing**

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

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

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

563 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

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

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

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

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571

**DREDGE SPOIL**

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

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

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

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578

**EFFLUENT TRADING**

579 We oppose any form of government mandated and controlled effluent trading for the  
580 compliance for nutrient reductions from point sources of pollution in lieu of Biological Nutrient  
581 Reduction (BNR) upgrading or delaying of any sewage treatment facility upgrades. '07

582 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient reduction that allows farmers to receive  
583 fair compensation for nutrient removal and/or reductions. '02

584

585

**ENDANGERED SPECIES**

586 We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide  
587 incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species.'05

588 Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by the  
589 Endangered Species Act.'07

590 We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered) that  
591 might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere.'06

592 Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal  
593 law. '07

594 Any plant or animal that is taken as a result of an agricultural practice shall be considered  
595 an incidental taking. '07

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## **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 a statewide ban on Methyl 1 Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) because of water quality concerns raised in scientific studies and documented in this state. We encourage the use of ethanol in its place. '04

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

### **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

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

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

We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and turbines to help offset farm energy costs. '09

### **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

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

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING**

We recommend no changes be made to Maryland's "Standing Law," which negatively affects the state's economy and the private property rights of individuals. '07 We support the reversal of any laws to increase standing to special interest groups. '09

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**EQUINE INDUSTRY**

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

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

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

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

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

**FAMILY VALUES**

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

**FARM SERVICE AGENCY - COUNTY COMMITTEES**

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

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

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

**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 reforesting lands cleared for development and afforesting, 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

695 Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural  
696 lands under the state of Maryland's conservation or land use programs. '08  
697  
698

### **GAMBLING**

700 We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the  
701 purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks  
702 and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources be  
703 used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar value  
704 of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into other  
705 forms of gambling such as table games and sports book should benefit the equine industry  
706 similar to Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs). '09  
707

### **GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS**

709 We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of  
710 government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits and environmental  
711 benefits of GMOs. '07  
712

### **GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS - STATE GOVERNMENT**

#### **Regulatory Reform**

715 We urge consideration be given to the economic impact upon farmers and landowners as  
716 local, state, and federal legislators and agencies develop laws, regulations and policies. '06  
717

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Elected Officials**

743 We recommend that any proposed pay increases for policy making elected officials shall  
744 be placed on the general elections ballot in an electoral year in which a candidate for Governor is

745 on the ballot and shall not become effective until ratified by the electorate. In addition, no  
746 retirement benefits shall accrue to any policy making elected official as a result of service in that  
747 position. '05

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

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

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

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

#### 755 **Ethics**

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

#### 758 **State and Local Agencies**

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

761 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the  
762 state. '08

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

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

#### 773 **Maryland Agricultural Commission**

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

#### 776 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

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

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

#### 782 **Government Spending**

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

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

#### 786 **Procurement**

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

#### 789 **State Owned Farmland**

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

793

794 **GREENWAYS - RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

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

801 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any  
802 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the  
803 opportunity for input. Also the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail use  
804 on the safety, health, security, privacy and economic interests of the adjacent landowners and  
805 determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail  
806 sponsor should be required to be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of  
807 noxious weeds, maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the  
808 railway for the use of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way  
809 are developed for recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers. '02

810 **GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

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

815 **INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

816 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow industrial hemp as an agricultural  
817 crop.’07

818 **INSURANCE**

819 **Crop Insurance**

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

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

823 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

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

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

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

834 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent  
835 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.’06

836 **Insurance Rates**

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

843 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry as a result  
844 of claims that are considered “Act of God” incidents. '03

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

847 **Liability Insurance**

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

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

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**JOHNE'S DISEASE**

853 It is imperative that a Johne’s testing protocol be immediately developed for Maryland  
854 and that total funding be provided. The protocol should be designed after those of the  
855 surrounding states. The protocol should be farmer-friendly, designed and directed toward use as  
856 an on-farm management tool. '03

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

858 We acknowledge that the Maryland Department of Agriculture has made progress with  
859 the Johne’s program and request continued support for it. '05

860

861

**LABOR STANDARDS**

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

864

865

**LAND STEWARDSHIP**

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

868

869

**LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING**

870 **Annexation**

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

873 **Growth Management**

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

876 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.

877 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural  
878 counties. '08

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

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

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

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

892 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO)  
893 that would properly regulate the growth in each county. '05

894 **Permitting**

895 We support the continued exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building  
896 permits and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the zoning code. We further support  
897 the inclusion of specific language in the building code to permit public access to existing,  
898 structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated upgrades to the full current codes.  
899 '05

900 **Reverse Set-backs & Buffers**

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

904 **Zoning**

905 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their efforts  
906 to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners involved  
907 should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria changes.  
908 Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall provide for just  
909 compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning on agriculture land.  
910 '07

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

912 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '08

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

915

916

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

917 **Penalties & Confinement**

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

920 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We  
921 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on  
922 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and support  
923 and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of persons  
924 confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a constructive role in  
925 society. '06

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

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

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

935 **Judicial Process**

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

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

941 **Investigation of Crimes**

942 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between  
943 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. '07  
944 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who  
945 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

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

946  
947  
948 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law  
949 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

#### **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

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951  
952 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public  
953 monies.'06

#### **LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

954  
955  
956 Government officials and inspectors must be required to follow stringent biosecurity  
957 practices and respect private property rights at all times when visiting farms. '08

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

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

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

961  
962  
963 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

#### **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

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965  
966 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the  
967 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as necessary,  
968 including the purchase of needed equipment.'07

#### **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

969  
970  
971 We oppose the present definition of Nontidal wetlands as set forth in the 1989 "Federal  
972 Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands." This definition would designate many acres of  
973 marginal wetlands that possess minimal wetlands values. It would also include many acres of  
974 cropland that has been farmed historically. '05

975 We support the revision of the "Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands"  
976 to exclude:

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

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

981 This definition should also be used for any existing or proposed state legislation. It is  
982 imperative that the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the  
983 Natural Resource Conservation Service review the definition of Nontidal wetlands and evaluate  
984 its implications on agriculture. Furthermore, it is our belief that all three of the criteria should  
985 exist before land is considered a wetland and we hope the manual will be amended accordingly.  
986 '05

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

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

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

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

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

997 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that  
998 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of  
999 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost  
1000 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. '08

1001 We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands.'07

1002

1003

## **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

### **Noxious Weed List**

1005 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, asiatic tearthumb,  
1006 kudzu, multi-flora rose (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry), and mile-a-  
1007 minute placed on the noxious weed list. '04

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

1009 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments abide by the noxious weed  
1010 control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '02

### **Enforcement**

1012 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the  
1013 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,  
1014 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's  
1015 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '07

1016 We re commend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators  
1017 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are  
1018 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it  
1019 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or  
1020 non crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all of the control methods outlined by the  
1021 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '05

1022 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other  
1023 conservation programs so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.  
1024 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '09

### **Public Education**

1026 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the  
1027 general public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of thistles, multi-  
1028 flora rose, johnsongrass, poison hemlock, shatter cane and autumn olive.'07

### **Weed Control Methods**

1030 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of  
1031 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and  
1032 eliminate these noxious weeds. Until these materials are developed, MDA should ban ornamental  
1033 grasses such as eastern gamma grass from being introduced in Maryland. '05

1034 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious  
1035 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will  
1036 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination.'05

1037

## NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

### Nutrient Management for Farms

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

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

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

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

- a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations. '05
- c. Allow the use of nutrient standards for manure established by the University of Maryland if so desired. '05
- d. Prevent yield capping.
- e. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of Maryland or other public and private sources. '07
- f. The elimination of the Nutrient Management Voucher requirements. '06

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

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

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

### Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality

We oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately-written nutrient management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government entity. Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date they should be properly destroyed. '08

### Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education

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

### Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery

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

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

Assets and personnel should be redeployed through the University of Maryland Extension to provide: (1) Adequate nutrient management planning staff in each county to

1088 service all farmers who request assistance; (2) Permanent Extension positions with competitive  
1089 salaries and benefits for nutrient management planners; (3) training for all farmers who desire to  
1090 write their own nutrient management plans. '06

1091 We request that funding for nutrient management education and plan development go  
1092 directly to University of Maryland Extension in order to hire and maintain adequate permanent  
1093 nutrient management advisors.'06

#### 1094 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1095 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately  
1096 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. We strongly oppose additional requirements, such as the  
1097 proposed Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised Confined Animal  
1098 Feeding Operation permit by MDE. '08

1099 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations  
1100 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1101 We oppose EPA's proposal to rewrite the state-level CAFO permit and Total Maximum  
1102 Daily Load (TMDL) to "expand the universe of regulated operations" to include as many  
1103 livestock operations as possible. '09

#### 1104 **Manure and Litter Management**

1105 We strongly urge MDA to review the requirements and procedures for the manure  
1106 transport program. The process should be made more user-friendly. '03

1107 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for crop  
1108 production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '04

1109 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be  
1110 based on sound science recommendations. '08

#### 1111 **Soil Testing**

1112 We recommend that a public soil testing lab at the MD Department of Agriculture be  
1113 opened and available to Maryland farmers/landowners. '08

1114 We believe MDA should work with the University of Maryland and the soil testing labs  
1115 used by area farmers to develop a soil test report and recommendations that can be directly  
1116 included in a certified plan. '03

1117 We request adequate funding to fund the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to  
1118 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '04

1119

1120

#### 1120 **POULTRY LITTER**

1121 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a cost-  
1122 share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the mandatory  
1123 covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '07

1124 We oppose any effort to move ALL poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '08

1125 We oppose burning poultry litter for energy generation. Poultry litter is an excellent  
1126 fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be replaced with an expensive non-  
1127 renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere in the world and shipped to  
1128 Maryland farms. '08

1129 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research based guidelines for field  
1130 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in  
1131 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '08

1132

1133

#### 1133 **PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1134 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property  
1135 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner.'07

1136 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production of  
1137 an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07

1138 Any government action that diminishes an owner's right to use his property constitutes a  
1139 taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should provide due process and  
1140 compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been diminished. The just basis for  
1141 compensation must be at least fair market value. '08

1142 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and state  
1143 levels.

1144 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the party  
1145 disputing any property lines. '06

1146 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to notify  
1147 all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified letter,  
1148 in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '03

#### 1149 **Eminent Domain**

1150 We believe the recent Supreme Court Kelo decision violates the basic principles and  
1151 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent  
1152 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public  
1153 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We  
1154 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and  
1155 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of  
1156 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local  
1157 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop. '06

1158 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without  
1159 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real property.  
1160 '09

1161 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.  
1162 '06

1163 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for the  
1164 purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original landowner  
1165 or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other than for which  
1166 it was originally acquired. '05

1167

#### 1168 **PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS**

1169 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same  
1170 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of parkland being purchased in this  
1171 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend  
1172 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation  
1173 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to use  
1174 part or all of their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of  
1175 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.  
1176 '05

1177 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of  
1178 present parkland rather than the acquisition of new land. '06

1179

#### 1180 **PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS**

1181 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of  
1182 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding. '07

1183 Also we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property owners  
1184 of the easement rights of the PDA. '06

1185

1186 **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

1187 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick borne diseases (ehrlichiosis)  
1188 present to the general public of the state. We urge the State and County Health Departments to  
1189 gather as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs and  
1190 treatment of these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information.  
1191 '06

1192 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick  
1193 problem in order to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state.

1194 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural  
1195 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

1196  
1197  
1198 **PUBLIC OWNED LAND**

1199 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in  
1200 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '06

1201 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to  
1202 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to  
1203 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by  
1204 willing sellers only. '07

1205 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the  
1206 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges and wildlands to  
1207 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate the  
1208 sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '09

1209 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or  
1210 other recreational uses in an effort to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and  
1211 administering these lands.'09

1212 **Timberland Management**

1213 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use  
1214 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting  
1215 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '07

1216  
1217 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1218 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome and most affordable food in the  
1219 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the  
1220 media unless substantiated and accurate.

1221 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.  
1222 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based  
1223 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors and  
1224 subsequent retailers.

1225 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and  
1226 information regarding the local farm community.

1227 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the  
1228 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland  
1229 agriculture to the public through various media outlets.

1230 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that  
1231 would:

- 1232 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1233 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1234 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the  
1235 environment.

1236 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals and educational displays.

1237 5. Include a speakers bureau.'08

1238

1239 We encourage state, county and local government officials to take a more active role in  
1240 supporting, promoting and defending agriculture. '09

1241

1242

### **RAILROADS**

1243 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action  
1244 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including  
1245 adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1246

1247

### **RECYCLING**

1248 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury to  
1249 animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that would  
1250 require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we recommend that a  
1251 sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for recycling. '05

1252 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we  
1253 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1254 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '04

1255 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials, as  
1256 well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

1257 Due to the increased use of plastic wrap in agriculture, we urge the search for a suitable  
1258 reclamation process. '04

### **Tire Fund**

1260 The state Tire Fund collection program for farmers should be expanded to include a  
1261 program that would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state once every four  
1262 years. This program should collect all used farm tires as long as the funds are available in the  
1263 Tire Fund without raising fees. '07

1264 We request that the tire recycling fee levied on new tire purchases be used exclusively for  
1265 research into tire recycling and to subsidize actual tire recycling projects.'04

1266

1267

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

1268 When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be  
1269 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.  
1270 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be  
1271 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary as a result of building waterways,  
1272 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible  
1273 and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars and weeds  
1274 by the utility company.'06

1275 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights of way or property lines  
1276 when feasible.'05

1277 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used  
1278 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the underlying  
1279 property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be returned to  
1280 adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee simple, the  
1281 property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first refusal upon  
1282 abandonment. '07

1283 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail use,  
1284 and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will preserve  
1285 the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

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**RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS**

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

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

**RIGHT-TO-FARM**

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

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

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

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

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

**RIPARIAN BUFFERS**

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

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

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

**ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE**

**Road Design**

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

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

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

1334 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state  
1335 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and  
1336 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems.'09

1337 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and  
1338 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We encourage  
1339 the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps and median  
1340 strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas. '05

1341 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to  
1342 the curb.'07

#### 1343 **Road Construction**

1344 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We  
1345 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for  
1346 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of  
1347 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be  
1348 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes.'07

1349 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than  
1350 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1351 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction and  
1352 maintenance only. '03

1353 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the  
1354 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local  
1355 jurisdiction served by the system. '05

1356 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our  
1357 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to insure safe travel, as does the State Highway  
1358 Department. '07

1359 We encourage the State Highway Administration to proceed with urgently needed road  
1360 construction projects. '08

1361 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project  
1362 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land  
1363 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has been  
1364 initiated. '08

1365 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

#### 1366 **Road Maintenance**

1367 It difficult to transport wide farm machinery because of the increasing hazard of tree  
1368 limbs hanging in the roadway or on the edge of the roads. We recommend that trees and limbs  
1369 be cut back a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a height of 16 feet on the  
1370 shoulder, with reflective material placed on guide wires and poles that are surrounded or at the  
1371 very edge of the pavement.'05

1372 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the  
1373 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and to enhance scenic views. '05

1374 The government should increase the level of maintenance to insure safe passage of  
1375 vehicles. '04

1376 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public  
1377 education program to teach citizens that trees do not live forever and there is a need to inspect,  
1378 harvest and remove older, hazardous and diseased trees. '04

1379 We recommend that the State Highway Administration send advance notification to  
1380 adjacent landowners whenever plantings are scheduled along the SHA right-of-way. '05

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**RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM**

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

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

**SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

**School Standards**

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

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

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

**School Lunches**

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

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

**School Year**

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

**School Attendance Policy**

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

**SEAT BELTS**

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

**SEED TESTING**

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

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

**SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

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

We oppose the mandatory installation of nitrogen removal systems because of the high costs and negligible benefits. '07

1429  
1430 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1431 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet  
1432 the federal Class A standard. '07

1433 We support continued research into sludge use to assure proper application rates and  
1434 practices that protect farmland. '04

1435 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term  
1436 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability and  
1437 potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be imported into  
1438 Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1439 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be held  
1440 accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of  
1441 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '08

1442 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a composite  
1443 test be taken and recorded each day.'07

1444 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the  
1445 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1446 We recommend that a nutrient management plan be required before sewage sludge is  
1447 applied and that the plan is followed and routinely updated. '04

1448 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop  
1449 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1450 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids  
1451 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09

1452  
1453 **STATE DESIGNATIONS**

1454 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1455 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts to  
1456 change this designation. '07

1457  
1458 **STATE FFA**

1459 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education that a full-  
1460 time permanent position be established to serve FFA youth in Maryland. This position should be  
1461 field-based under the direction of the Vocational Technical Division. '05

1462  
1463 **STRAY VOLTAGE**

1464 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies  
1465 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and  
1466 livestock. '07

1467  
1468 **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

1469 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that  
1470 there are five key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

- 1471 1. It has to be profitable for farmers.
  - 1472 2. It must work to conserve soil, water and nutrients with voluntary programs.
  - 1473 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers.
  - 1474 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply.
  - 1475 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture. '08
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## TAXES

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### Admission and Amusement Tax

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

### Fuel Tax

We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level. '02

### Income Tax

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

### Inheritance Tax

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

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

### Health Taxes

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

### Maryland Estate Tax

We recommend that the Maryland estate tax regulation be re-coupled to the Federal estate tax deduction level. '07

We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland. '07

We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '08

The Maryland exemption for estate tax (\$1,000,000 in '05) should apply to every estate regardless of the size of the estate. '05

In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate. '06

### Property Tax

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

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

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

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

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

### Sales and Use Taxes

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

1527 In order to clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases,  
1528 we recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt  
1529 card. '08

1530 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '08

1531 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1532 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family  
1533 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family  
1534 operation or structure. '07

1535 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1536 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as general  
1537 fund enhancements. '04

1538

1539 **TIMBER HARVESTING - STATE AND COUNTY LANDS**

1540 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural  
1541 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest  
1542 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield  
1543 basis.'07

1544 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state and  
1545 county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1546 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '08

1547

1548 **TOBACCO**

1549 **Master Settlement Agreement**

1550 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the  
1551 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at  
1552 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1553 **Tobacco Industry**

1554 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the  
1555 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1556 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland was built entirely using  
1557 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of  
1558 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be  
1559 considered as a secondary use. '06

1560 **Tobacco Taxes**

1561 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09

1562

1563 **TRESPASSING**

1564 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.  
1565 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to  
1566 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate  
1567 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all  
1568 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or  
1569 injury sustained by trespassers. '03

1570 The maximum fine should be raised to \$2000.00 for convictions of trespassing and  
1571 destruction of property. '03

1572 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for  
1573 all legal purposes should be considered “private” and “posted”, with no need for posted signs or  
1574 paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission and to  
1575 know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private land. '06

1576 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a jail  
1577 term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine or serve the jail term if a minor is  
1578 convicted. The offender should be required to pay the property owner for any destruction. In a  
1579 case of a minor, the parents or guardians should be required to pay.'06

1580 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using "off road" vehicles on  
1581 property owned by others without written permission of up to \$2,500.00 fine, plus possible  
1582 imprisonment of up to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss.  
1583 Furthermore, violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '02

1584 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other  
1585 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with  
1586 existing laws and regulations.'07

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### **TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES**

1589 In order to achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1590 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion of this  
1591 program; '08

1592 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient runoff  
1593 into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban areas, as  
1594 well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E. deicing aircraft and  
1595 parking lots); '08

1596 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific research,  
1597 as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately result in the  
1598 Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1599 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with maximum  
1600 cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the purchase of  
1601 equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1602 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay in order to increase  
1603 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '08

1604 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in  
1605 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1606 We oppose any consideration or action taken by the Patuxent River Commission to invite  
1607 the National Park Service, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Agency, and other federal entities to join  
1608 them in conducting a study of land and water use near the River. '04

1609

1610

### **TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY**

#### **Inspections**

1612 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of  
1613 motor vehicles.'07

1614 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'07

#### **Bicycle Safety**

1616 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the  
1617 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '07

1618 We recommend that scheduled bicycle events should be prohibited on roads without  
1619 shoulders. '08

1620 While more bicycles are using rural roads earlier in the morning and later in the evening,  
1621 we recommend that these bicycles display SMV signs because of the poor visibility during this  
1622 time of day. '08

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

1624 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of farmers.

1625 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the proper  
1626 use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend that a  
1627 mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to aid in  
1628 recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and roads in  
1629 an effort to improve safety conditions. '07

1630 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow moving vehicle signs for any  
1631 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced.'07

1632 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on  
1633 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower  
1634 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are (1)  
1635 properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped approached  
1636 another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the "other driver"  
1637 being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her vehicle. '08

1638 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public  
1639 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and  
1640 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '08

#### 1641 **Truck Regulations**

1642 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent with  
1643 those of neighboring states. '05

1644 We recommend that the allowable weight for tri-axle farm trucks with farm tags be  
1645 increased from 65,000 lbs to 70,000 lbs. '07

1646 We support the Class K Farm Area vehicle registration. We encourage MVA to require  
1647 applicants to show proof of farming activity by providing a copy of their schedule F Tax form.  
1648 '07

1649 Milk trucks should be allowed to be tagged to carry the same weight as a dump truck. '05

1650 We recommend that trucks hauling new raw agricultural products be allowed both the  
1651 gross weight tolerance of 1000 lbs. and the 15% axle weight tolerance before any fines are  
1652 levied. '07

1653 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal but an axle weight is off, enforcement personnel  
1654 should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '04

1655 We urge the issuance of an overload permit program for agricultural vehicles hauling raw  
1656 agricultural products intrastate. '04

1657 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products to  
1658 10 miles. '09

1659 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws.'07

1660 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland. '04

1661 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '08

1662 Vehicles with farm tag registrations should be exempt from the Inner Bridge Formula.  
1663 '07

1664 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage  
1665 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive Maintenance  
1666 Program. '05

1667 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT  
1668 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should be  
1669 established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time periods  
1670 to get them repaired. '08

1671 We support legislation that would increase the maximum length for any combination of  
1672 vehicles with a power unit that is a cargo-carrying vehicle from 55 feet to 65 feet. '08

1673 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. 08

1674 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within each  
1675 class. '08  
1676 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for  
1677 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the  
1678 transportation of farm commodities. '08

1679 **Fines & Surcharges**

1680 We support the concept of allocation of truck fine revenues to the transportation fund. '07  
1681 Present law only allows the driver of a truck to appeal a fine or violation against the truck  
1682 or its contents. We recommend that the law be amended to allow the driver or the owner to  
1683 make such an appeal. '06

1684 **Infrastructure Needs**

1685 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent  
1686 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '08

1687  
1688 **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEMS**

1689  
1690 **Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority**

1691 We recommend the University of Maryland systems establish an Ag Producers Board of  
1692 Advisors. '03

1693 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,  
1694 but not at the expense of "traditional crop" courses and research. '08

1695 We urge the University of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional research as  
1696 is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support University of  
1697 Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education programs. '04

1698 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to  
1699 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future  
1700 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of members selected from local  
1701 Extension Advisory Committees to represent the different geographic regions of the state.'09

1702  
1703 **Funding**

1704 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should  
1705 continue to financially support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural  
1706 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the  
1707 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings  
1708 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses  
1709 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '00

1710 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget  
1711 for funding the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We  
1712 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable funding  
1713 support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the University. We  
1714 also urge that the leadership for the Institute for Government Service be restored to the Extension  
1715 Service. '03

1716 **University of Maryland Extension**

1717 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural  
1718 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them  
1719 compete in a competitive market place. The strength of Extension has always been at the local  
1720 level. We recommend that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension  
1721 Agent/Educator. '08

1722 We oppose the regionalization of county extension administrators. '09

1723 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to develop a nitrogen test to use in  
1724 the fall prior to planting small grains. '08

1725 Due to agriculture's ever increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe  
1726 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment  
1727 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension.

1728 We strongly recommend that the University of Maryland maintain adequate staffing to  
1729 write and certify nutrient management plans and to train individual farmers to write their own  
1730 plans. '09

1731 We support maintaining the title "county agent". '08

### 1732 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

1733 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which provides assistance to  
1734 farmers for business plan development. '08

### 1735 **Plant Protection Center**

1736 We support the creation of and funding for the Maryland Plant Protection Center. '06

### 1737 **Research and Data**

1738 We support a joint effort by the University of Maryland and the MDA to develop and  
1739 publish information that thoroughly and accurately describes the role of agriculture in the state's  
1740 economy and in protecting and enhancing the state's natural resource base. '07

1741 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state  
1742 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system. '07

1743 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop  
1744 varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase competition  
1745 with other areas of the country. '08

1746 We urge the University to reinstate the "Field Days" at the research farms. '04

### 1747 **Teacher Preparation**

1748 We urge the University of Maryland System to continue to develop a program to prepare  
1749 teachers for their careers with courses in agri-science as a requirement towards their teaching  
1750 degree. '08

### 1751 **Tuition**

1752 We believe that tuition increases at the schools within the University of Maryland System  
1753 be limited to the cost of living index. '03

1754

1755

## 1755 **WILDLANDS**

1756 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly  
1757 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas  
1758 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry  
1759 management plans. '08

1760

1761

## 1761 **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

1762 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to  
1763 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to  
1764 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident Canada  
1765 geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative impacts on  
1766 agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.  
1767 '09

### 1768 **Bird Control**

1769 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any  
1770 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and  
1771 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

1772 **Black Bear**

1773 We support a regulated hunting season as a sound wildlife management tool in order to  
1774 manage the State's black bear population in a safe and effective manner. '08

1775 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western Maryland  
1776 to other counties.'07

1777 **Coyote**

1778 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

1779 **Deer**

1780 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of  
1781 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '08

1782 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and  
1783 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These  
1784 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '08

1785 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '08

1786 (2) Allow market and bounty hunting. '08

1787 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting  
1788 seasons. '08

1789 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd  
1790 population count. '08

1791 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management  
1792 areas. '04

1793 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer  
1794 herd.'05

1795 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '07

1796 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties  
1797 adjacent to agricultural lands. '09

1798 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and  
1799 processing harvested deer. '09

1800 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer  
1801 management. '09

1802 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an  
1803 approved Forest Management / Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of  
1804 deer population. '09

1805

1806 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or  
1807 tenant on private land. '08

1808 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a plan  
1809 to manage and control wildlife populations. '08

1810 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an  
1811 increase in state funding for the program. '08

1812

1813 **Deer Crop Damage**

1814 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer and we support immediate  
1815 enactment:

1816 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '08

1817 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '08

1818 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop within  
1819 the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '08

1820 (4) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits  
1821 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use.

- 1822 (5) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer  
1823 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not  
1824 disposing properly should be eliminated.
- 1825 (6) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to use the weapon of choice  
1826 within county regulations for filling Deer Management permits during deer season.  
1827 '09

1828  
1829 **Fox Chasing**

1830 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from landowners  
1831 to conduct the hunt. '08

1832 **Furbearers**

1833 We support the harvesting of foxes. '02

1834 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase a  
1835 stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any fee.  
1836 '08

1837 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

1838 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

1839 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is  
1840 taking place. '07

1841 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a  
1842 manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record  
1843 after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

1844 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to  
1845 the maximum extent possible. '06

1846 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

1847 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of  
1848 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management  
1849 regulations. '08

1850 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all  
1851 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and  
1852 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed  
1853 during that season. '08

1854 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '02

1855 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state.'07

1856 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner  
1857 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren and employees when hunting only on that property.  
1858 We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and his/her spouse,  
1859 children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural purposes (or a  
1860 sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this farmland. We are  
1861 opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license exemption to persons  
1862 (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under the age of 16.'06

1863  
1864 **Waterfowl**

1865 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
1866 Service to take any and all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow  
1867 goose population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

1868 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal  
1869 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

1870 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform  
1871 throughout, starting about November 5th.'09

1872 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an  
1873 increase in bag limits. '08

1874 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

1875 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

1876 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline.

1877 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

1878 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of property  
1879 lines. '08

### 1880 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

1881 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

1882 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e. recorders or baiters) to  
1883 reduce the snow goose population. '08

1884

### 1885 **WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY**

1886 We support the recognition of vineyards and wineries –and their related activities – as  
1887 agriculture. We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes, wine  
1888 making, storage of wine, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of wine and related products  
1889 food service, and other associated activities. '07

1890

1891 We support the recognition of wineries as usage of right in agricultural and rural  
1892 conservation zones. We support wineries' rights to market their product as broadly and as  
1893 widely as possible, including in "Farmer's Markets" listed by the Department of Agriculture. We  
1894 support research in cooperation with MDA and UMD that enhances the viability of commercial  
1895 viticulture in Maryland. '07

1896

### 1897 **YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

1898 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland through:

1899 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '07

1900 (2) Reduced capital gains for those selling them farmland; '07

1901 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation  
1902 easements; '07

1903 (4) Offer tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

1904 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them. '09

1905

1906 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture to  
1907 link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '09