



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary
Julianne A. Oberg, Deputy Secretary

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
www.mda.maryland.gov

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

410.841.5880 Baltimore/Washington
410.841.5914 Fax
800.492.5590 Toll Free

October 27, 2021

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker
Maryland House of Delegates
State House, H-101
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President
Maryland Senate
State House, H-107
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Report Required by EX ORD 01.01.2006.06 – MSAR - # 6028

Dear Governor Hogan, Speaker Jones and President Ferguson:

EX ORD 01.01.2006.06 states, “Reporting. The [Governor's Intergovernmental] Commission [for Agriculture] shall report to the Governor by October 1 of each year with recommendations to support a coordinated State agricultural strategy.”

I have included 2021 report. I hope you find the information contained in this report useful. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Cassie Shirk, Director of Legislation and Government Affairs, at cassie.shirk@maryland.gov or 410-841-5889.

Sincerely,

Joseph Bartenfelder
Secretary, Department of Agriculture



Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture

2021 Annual Report

Maryland Department of Agriculture

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The Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA) was established by Executive Order under Governor Ehrlich on June 29, 2006, to “promote the economic profitability of agriculture in the state by ensuring that all appropriate state agencies work in a cooperative, coordinated manner with local government and industry groups in planning, implementing, overseeing, and evaluating intergovernmental initiatives related to agricultural affairs of the state.”

The first meeting of calendar year 2021 took place on June 30. A number of things were discussed at the meeting, including: a presentation by Grow & Fortify on their economic study of Value-Added Agriculture in Maryland; a discussion with the Maryland Department of Health regarding Cottage Food Regulations; a briefing by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) on seasonal farm stays; and a conservation by MDA about the GICA toolkit being outdated and shifting more towards an agriculture resource directory.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- In February 2020, Grow & Fortify released the first economic study of Value-Added Agriculture in Maryland (VAA) including challenges, opportunities and recommendations for the industry.
 - VAA has been defined as altering a raw agricultural product in a way to increase its worth to the consumer, which brings more revenue to the farmer, producer or processor.
 - VAA is important because:
 - Increases farm product value
 - Can be accomplished on smaller parcels
 - Stimulates job creation
 - Engages and educates the public
 - Increases farm value
 - Keeps farms as farms
 - VAA industry supports close to 74,000 jobs and brings a total economic impact of over \$20.6 billion annually to the state’s economy. This level of economic activity, in turn, adds nearly \$875 million to the State’s fiscal resources
- MDH discussed Maryland Cottage Food Business
 - A cottage food business (or a home-based business) is a business that a) produces or packages cottage food products in a residential kitchen; and b) has annual revenues from the sale of cottage food products in an amount not exceeding \$25,000.
 - A cottage food product is a non-potentially hazardous food that is sold in Maryland directly to a consumer from a residence, at a farmers market, at a public event, by personal delivery, or by mail delivery; or directly to a retail food store.
 - Several new resources for businesses were discussed including:
 - Guidelines for Cottage Food Businesses
 - Approved Foods List
 - Foods Not Approved

- Cottage Food Business Labeling Guide
 - Cottage Food Business Checklist
- SMADC provided an overview on what a farm stay is, which is defined as any type of accommodation on a working farm. Some farm stays may be interactive. Some are family-focused, offering children opportunities to feed animals, collect eggs and learn how a farm functions. Others don't allow children and instead offer a peaceful retreat for adults. For the accommodations, guests normally pay rates like area bed & breakfasts or vacation rentals, although pricing varies considerably.
 - Positive Points:
 - Farm Stays are great resource for additional farmer income, tourism dollars for the local community, a use of green space, and education.
 - Agritourism is on the rise, and farm stays are in demand.
 - Challenges:
 - Zoning/permitting;
 - Toilets- septic, porta john, compostable, pumped tank;
 - RV self-contained;
 - Seasonal & Year-Round designations; and
 - Occupancy
 - GICA discussed how to address some of the challenges farm stays in Maryland are encountering including the need for a statewide definition of an Agritourism Farm Stay.
- For several GICA meetings there have been discussions about the need to update the GICA Toolkit for Local Communities, which was first created in 2011. After reviewing the toolkit and what we believe the needs are for the industry, we've decided that an agriculture resource directory would be more useful and beneficial to the agriculture community. The agriculture resource directory is housed on the MDA website and serves as a resource to help connect them with agriculture contacts around the state.