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**ORIGIN & FUNCTIONS**


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Since agriculture is vital to Maryland's economy, the main purpose of the Department of Agriculture is to help farmers produce high-quality commodities. To this end, the Department eradicates disease in livestock and poultry, controls insect pests and weeds which threaten field crops, inspects seeds and fertilizers to ensure maximum yields, and disseminates market reports and statistics to help farmers plan farm production. The Department also protects the environment by regulating the use of pesticides, implementing sound soil conservation methods, and preserving valuable agricultural land. To protect consumers, the Department inspects and grades agricultural commodities, oversees the practice of veterinary medicine, and inspects the weighing and packaging of a wide range of products. In addition, the Department promotes Maryland agriculture, seeks out new markets, and implements new initiatives such as aquaculture.

*Maryland Agricultural College.* The Department of Agriculture traces its origin to the Maryland Agricultural College, chartered in 1856. After the federal Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 offered each state proceeds from sales of federal lands to fund a college teaching agriculture and mechanical arts, the College became Maryland's land-grant institution in 1864. While certain agricultural duties were assigned briefly to the Superintendent of Labor and Agriculture in 1867, they later became the responsibility of the College (Constitution of 1867, Art. 10). As the State agricultural agency, the College regulated fertilizers (1886), and live stock sanitation (1888), and inspected nurseries, trees, feeds, tobacco, seeds, honeybees, and fruit. The College acquired an agricultural experiment station under the federal Hatch Act of 1887. Professors of the College and Experiment Station served as State Entomologist, State Pathologist, and State Horticulturalist to identify and eradicate insect pests and diseases (Chapter 289, Acts of 1898). Farmers' institutes were held during winter months until replaced by the Agricultural Extension Service, created by federal and State laws in 1914.

*State Board of Agriculture and Board of Regents of the University of Maryland.* In 1908, the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Agricultural College became ex officio the State Board of Agriculture (Chapter 161, Acts of 1908). When the College merged with the University of Maryland in 1920, the University's Board of Regents assumed the responsibilities of the State Board of Agriculture. Although duties of the former trustees of the Agricultural College were solely concerned with agriculture, the Board of Regents became responsible for an entire university of diverse interests.

*Department of Agriculture.* To respond to the special needs of agriculture, the State created the Department of Agriculture in 1972 (Chapter 342, Acts of 1972). All regulatory and advisory functions were reorganized and transferred to the new Department, while agricultural research functions and the Extension Service were retained by the University of Maryland.

The Department is organized into four main offices: Administrative Services; Food Safety and Consumer Services; Plant Industries and Pest Management; and Resource Conservation. The Department also is served by the Board of Review and the Maryland Agricultural Commission.

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**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**


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Lewis R. Riley, *Secretary of Agriculture*

50 Harry S Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, MD 21401 (410) 841-5880

The Secretary of Agriculture is the chief executive officer of the Department. The Secretary is appointed by the Governor with Senate advice and consent. Responsible for daily operations, the Deputy Secretary is appointed by the Secretary with the Governor's approval. The Secretary of Agriculture also appoints the State Chemist, the State Veterinarian, and the Chief of Weights and Measures.

The Secretary serves on the Governor's Executive Council; the Governor's Council on the Chesapeake Bay; the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission; the Chesapeake Bay Trust; the Governor's Pesticide Council; and the Board of Re-

gents, University of Maryland System. The Secretary also serves on the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation; the Task Force on Maryland's Dairy Industry; the Maryland Food Center Authority; the Seafood Marketing Advisory Commission; the State Soil Conservation Committee; the Scenic and Wild Rivers Review Board; the State Use Industries Advisory Committee; the Maryland Winery and Grape Growers' Advisory Board; the Interagency Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Committee; and the Interdepartmental Advisory Committee for Minority Affairs.

The Office of the Secretary includes the principal counsel; intergovernmental and public information functions; internal audit; Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Programs; Marketing and Agricultural Development; and Aquaculture Development and Seafood Marketing (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 2-101 through 2-108).