

# Why Should I Support and Encourage Agricultural Land Preservation in Carroll County?

## Why is agriculture important to Carroll County?

### Agriculture...

- ...covers just over ½ of Carroll's land area\*
- ...is an essential part of our heritage, tourism, and scenic landscape
- ...produces local food for farm-to-table sales
- ...offers valuable environmental benefits
- ...creates jobs and incomes
- ...returns money to the local economy
- ...generates tax revenues for Carroll County
- ...maintains lower tax rates for property owners
- ...provides cost effective best management practices, improving water quality in local water bodies and the Chesapeake Bay

- ...supports concentrating development in our municipalities where facilities and services are more cost effective
- ...generates >\$110 million in direct sales in Carroll County (2017), including ~\$72.5 million in crops/ greenhouse sales and ~\$38 million in livestock sales\*
- ...consists of crops and livestock totaling (2017)\*:

Acres of Crops	Livestock
Harvested Cropland: >96,700	Cattle & Calves: >21,900
Corn: >37,000	Beef Cows: 5,000
Wheat: 8,000	Dairy Cows: 7,000
Soybeans: 29,000	Other Cattle: 10,000
Hay: 23,000	Horses: >2,500
	Sheep: 4,000

## Agricultural Land Preservation in Carroll County provides many *additional* benefits.

### Economy

- Provides additional money to farmers to help minimize debt and expand farming operations
- Helps to sustain local agribusiness (equipment, seed, fertilizer, buildings, labor, and other farm services)
- Supports agritourism, such as corn mazes, wineries, and other educational/recreational activities on an active farm
- Helps sustain economic activity attributable to agricultural land preservation, ~\$413-460 million from 1980 to 2017 (not including tax revenues, increased property value, contribution to tourism, etc.)\*

### Food, Farming, and Families

- Ensures enough connected farmland for continued food production
- Supports continued extended family operations, such as produce stands, farmers' markets, and opportunities to buy a weekly 'share' of a local farm's products (known as "community supported agriculture" or CSA)
- Makes continued family farming more affordable for future generations, as many current farmers retire in the next 20 years and thousands of acres could change hands

### Natural Resources

- Provides an estimated \$70 million per year in overall environmental benefits\*

- Improves and recharges groundwater
- Adds water quality measures to support the health of the Chesapeake Bay and the streams that flow into it, valued at ~\$44 million per year\*
- Protects wildlife habitat and corridors
- Conserves high-quality soil for agriculture production
- Improves air quality, the value of which is estimated at over \$26 million per year from preserved farms (cost of air pollution removal and carbon removal/storage)\*
- Helps to mitigate downstream flooding
- In Carroll County, creates 50-foot stream buffers, Forest Stewardship Plans (if timber harvesting), and Total Resource Management Plans (consisting of nutrient management plans and soil and water conservation plans), and groundwater recharge easements

### Open Space and Vistas

- Sustains Carroll County's cherished heritage, both its rural character and scenic qualities

### Managed Growth

- Supports Carroll County's goal of concentrating growth and development in our designated growth areas
- Keeps property taxes down and demand for public services lower (cows don't go to school)
- Mitigates increases in traffic congestion

***Agricultural Land Preservation helps to sustain these benefits by preventing the conversion of agricultural land to other uses.***

## For More Information About the "Ag" Land Preservation Program in Carroll County:

- ◆ Visit online at <https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/government/directory/land-resource-management/agricultural-land-preservation/>
- ◆ Call Carroll County Agricultural Land Preservation Program at 410-386-2214
- ◆ Email Carroll County Agricultural Land Preservation Program at [carrollagpres@carrollcountymd.gov](mailto:carrollagpres@carrollcountymd.gov)



\*Figures from "An Analysis of the Economic Impact of the Farmland Preservation Program in Carroll County, Maryland" by Tom Daniels, March 31, 2020.