

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



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