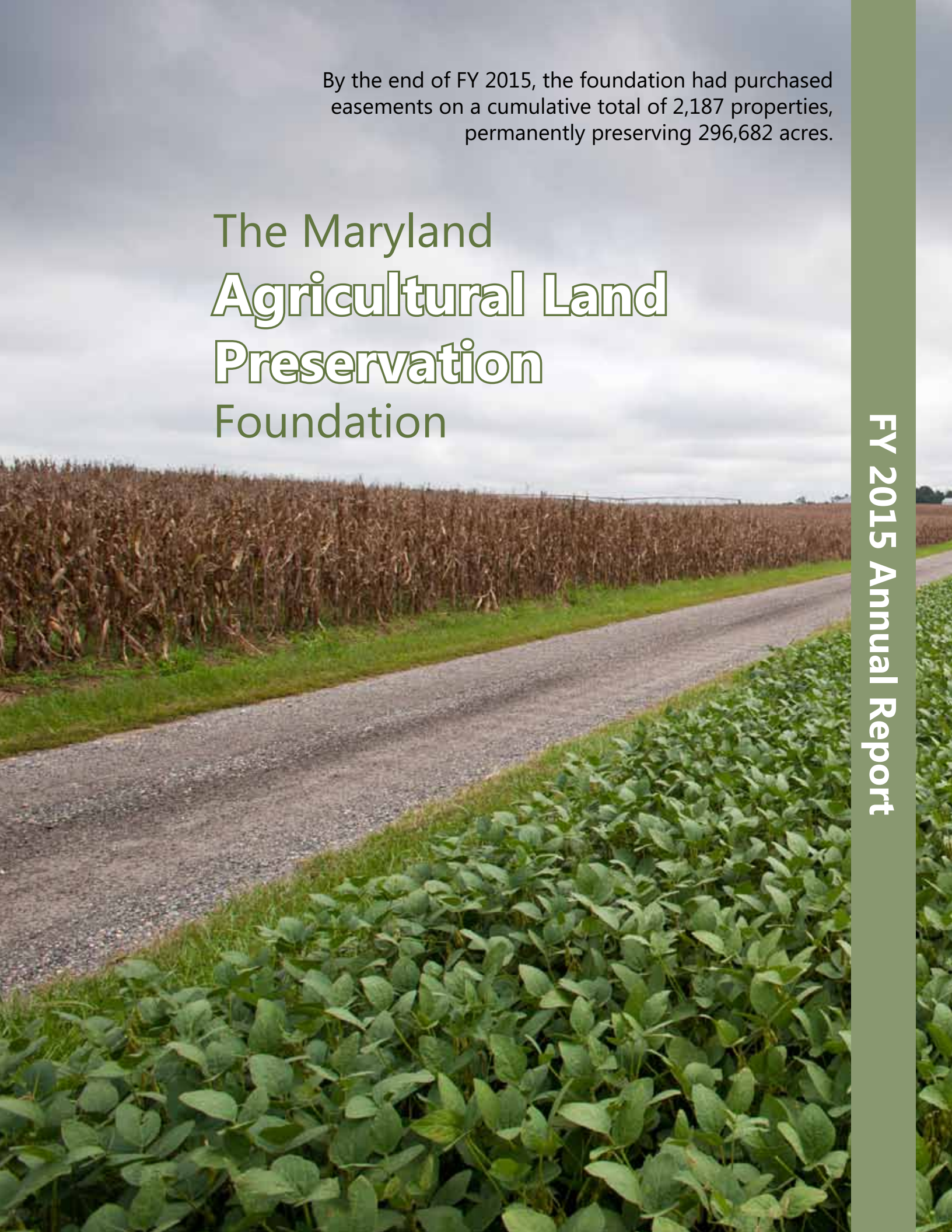


By the end of FY 2015, the foundation had purchased easements on a cumulative total of 2,187 properties, permanently preserving 296,682 acres.

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

FY 2015 Annual Report



From the Executive Director

Carol S. West



As of June 30, 2015, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation has permanently preserved 296,682 acres. That's only 3,318 away from 300,000 acres! Although this is not an official goal, it will be an incredible accomplishment for the staff, board and supporters of the program. We cannot thank the landowners of the state enough for realizing the importance of preserving their land for future generations.

During FY 2015, I had the privilege of participating in LEAD Maryland. LEAD is a rigorous two-year fellowship through the University of Maryland Extension Office that focuses on providing education on public issues that concern agriculture, skills building, leadership development and personal growth. I was a member of Class VIII along with 19 others from around the state and representing many different sectors of agriculture. Completing the course provided me with skills that I use every day as a manager and a deeper, more well-rounded knowledge of agriculture. Our class experience culminated in an 11 day trip to South Africa. While there, we were able to see the many similarities that we share with South African agriculture – and the many differences.

In May, we hosted a program administrators' meeting at our headquarters building in Annapolis. The meeting was attended by eight of the foundation's board of trustee members, seven local advisory board chairs and members, and the county representatives from all 23 counties. The agenda for the meeting covered soils mapping, renewable energy regulations, and the landowner request process, among other things.

For the fourth time, the foundation combined two fiscal years (2015 and 2016) to conduct one easement acquisition offer cycle and to maximize the number of acres to be purchased. We have a total of \$38,033,745 available (\$29,496,393 in state funds and \$8,537,352 in county funds) and are considering 156 approved applications.

By the end of FY 2015, we had purchased easements on a cumulative total of 2,187 properties, permanently preserving 296,682 acres, at a total state investment of just over \$662 million.

How to Get into the Preservation Program

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, in existence since 1977, is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country. Its primary purpose is to preserve sufficient agricultural land to maintain a viable local base of food and fiber production for the present and future citizens of Maryland. The program purchases perpetual agricultural conservation easements on eligible farmland throughout the state. Below are the eligibility criteria and procedures for the sale of an easement.

Size: The minimum easement size is 50 contiguous acres. If a property is less than 50 acres, a landowner may be eligible to apply and should visit our website to review Fact Sheet Five, “Small Properties in the Agricultural Preservation Program,” or confer with the local program administrator. If a property is contiguous to an existing easement, the landowner may apply to sell an easement regardless of the acreage.

Productivity: An easement is purchased on land that is either currently being used for producing food or fiber or has the capability to do so. Woodland management and harvesting operations are eligible to join this program. The productivity of the soil as measured by the USDA’s Soil Conservation Service Land Classification System is a major criterion. Soil requirements for the property to qualify to participate in the program are:

- At least 50 percent of the land shall classify as Class I, II or III soils; or,
- If the land is wooded, 50 percent of the land is classified as Woodland Group 1 or 2 soils; or,
- If the reason the land could not meet the above conditions was because of flood-plain or wetland soils, those areas could be excluded as a percentage of land; or,
- If there is an insufficient percentage of Class I, II or III soils alone and there is an insufficient percentage of Woodland Groups 1 and 2 soils alone, the land would qualify if the combination of the two exceeded 60 percent; or,
- Land with lower soil capabilities may qualify under certain conditions.

Location: Land that lies within the boundaries of a ten-year water and sewer service area plan is generally not eligible unless it has extraordinary productive capability and is of significant size.

Local Criteria: The criteria listed above are the minimum eligibility standards set by the state. The program is administered by county and state in an equitable partnership. The county may impose criteria which could be in addition to or more stringent than the state criteria.



Landowners' Corner:

Passing Down More than Just a Name

It was on a beautifully crisp and windy fall day when Kim Hoxter and I drove from Annapolis to Pocomoke City in Worcester County to visit with a family that has been on their family farm for well over 100 years. In 1892, William E. Redden purchased the farm. Since then, it has been passed down through three generations and today is on track to survive for at least three more generations of Redden ownership.

The property's entrance is adorned with a two-toned sign designating it as one of **Maryland's Century Farm** Program honorees. Just below that sign is a **Preserved Farmland** sign, showing all who pass by that the 140-acre property is permanently preserved in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program.

Standing amidst the brown, crunchy remains of a recently harvested corn field, we met with Willis Dan (Dan), Willis Edward, Sr. (Willis), and Willis Edward, Jr. (Will). Four-year-old Willis Edward III had been summoned to his job at the pre-school and couldn't join us.

Farming for the Reddens is more than just a way of life; it's a tradition. Dan started farming with his father when he graduated high school. He is now retired. He and Willis purchased the family farm from their cousin's estate in 1999 and placed it into the agricultural land preservation program. Willis and Will currently farm the land which is usually planted in a rotation of corn and soybeans. Cover crops protect the vital soils in the off-season. Dan and Willis own four and six farms, respectively, including the farm upon which we met. Willis is able to boast, however, that a second of his properties is also an ag land easement property. Will has yet to acquire a farm of his own, but is well on his way to becoming another of the Eastern Shore's many up-and-coming young farmers.

When asked what the biggest obstacle to farming was, Willis responded curtly, "the regulations are getting tougher." Paperwork has become so burdensome that they have had to hire someone to come in and do their nutrient management plan, an expense they didn't have a few years ago. Willis also believes that farmers are sometimes unfairly accused of harming the environment. "Farmers were the first



L-R: Willis Edward Redden III, Willis Edward Redden, Jr., Willis Dan Redden, and Willis Edward Redden, Sr.

Picture courtesy of Dan Redden

environmentalists,” he said. **“We take care of our land and we leave it in better shape than we found it. We want clean water and do all we can to keep it clean.”** He feels that farmers have done a lot in the last 20 years to preserve the environment.

One of their properties has operated as a poultry farm since 2000. To prevent the potential spread of high path avian influenza, a virus carried by migratory waterfowl, Kim and I chose not to meet with the family on that farm. There are currently six chicken houses, with three more in construction. The chickens have replaced what was once a thriving pig operation which has been scaled down to just a few head due to changes in the market. Regulations for construction of poultry houses have changed so much that the Reddens now have to hire a consultant to obtain the necessary permits.

“I’ve seen some good years and some so-so years. I think it’s a good future and I’m very pleased with my son and grandson for following in my footsteps.”
- Dan Redden, farmer

Willis told us that 10 or 11 years ago, they were in a “hot zone” for the avian influenza. Someone about two miles away had the flu on their property, and the Reddens took every precaution to keep it away from their flock. They are fully aware that it could be a nightmare if someone gets it again, with so many chicken houses in close proximity on the Delmarva. He is working hard to teach Will the lessons he has learned.

I asked the Reddens how it feels for farming to be a “family thing” and passing it down generation after generation. Will spoke up and proudly claimed, **“I never met my great-great grandfather and I think it’s neat that I’m farming the same land as he did. It just sends a good feeling through my body and I’m hoping to one day pass it on to my son. There aren’t many careers you can do that with.”** He went on to say that it is unfortunate that it takes so much to get into farming. Without his heritage, he would never be able to afford it. Willis said that “it’s hard work, but not like in the old days. Now we’re sitting in tractors with air conditioning and a computer to help out.”

Dan added that he has always enjoyed farming and if he had to live his life over again, he would do it the same. “I’ve seen some good years and some so-so years. I think it’s a good future and I’m very pleased with my son and grandson (and eventually, great-grandson Willis III) for following in my footsteps.”

Well said, Redden family. And well done.

-Article by Carol S. West, Executive Director

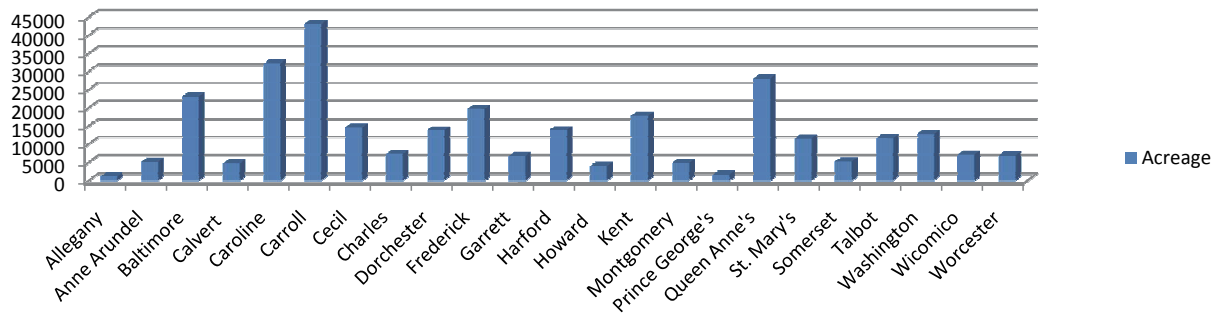
Easement Acquisition Costs - FY 2015

FISCAL YEAR	NO. OF FARMS	ACQUISITION COST	ACRES
FY 1977 - FY 2006	1,708	\$342,801,295	236,245
FY 2007	70	\$40,297,919	9,592
FY 2008	106	\$78,270,208	13,810
FY 2009	79	\$68,588,962	9,787
FY 2010	68	\$52,814,641	8,816
FY 2011	14	\$6,783,740	1,527
FY 2012	41	\$20,621,139	4,692
FY 2013	16	\$7,095,516	1,771
FY 2014	52	\$25,746,552	6,117
FY 2015	33	\$19,569,931	4,324
TOTAL	2,187	\$662,589,903	296,682

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COUNTY PARTICIPATION

As of June 30, 2015



Charts on pages 6-7 may include easements that were in the process of being settled on June 30, 2015.

Easement Acquisitions - FY 2015

COUNTY	NUMBER OF EASEMENTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES	ACQUISITION COST		AVERAGE FARM SIZE IN ACRES
			AVERAGE PER ACRE	TOTAL	
Allegany	1	157	2,484	389,913	157
Anne Arundel	1	155	9,975	1,545,760	155
Baltimore	1	180	9,937	1,792,910	180
Caroline	2	446	2,755	1,229,320	223
Carroll *	2	158	3,005	474,810	99
Cecil	1	47	6,387	297,500	47
Charles	5	527	3,578	1,886,666	105
Dorchester	1	75	2,650	198,333	75
Harford	2	241	5,217	1,254,730	120
Howard	1	71	29,310	2,070,975	71
Kent	2	464	2,072	961,062	232
Prince George's	1	108	3,200	347,069	108
Queen Anne's	2	658	3,630	2,387,130	329
St. Mary's	3	270	8,502	2,296,262	90
Somerset	1	110	2,582	282,841	110
Talbot	3	219	4,106	899,152	73
Washington *	1	41	0	0	41
Wicomico	1	117	4,049	472,000	117
Worcester	2	283	2,770	783,498	141
TOTALS	33	4324	4,526	19,569,931	131

* 1 donated easement in Carroll County. 1 donated easement in Washington County.

Easement Violations



Avoid the common errors

Approved in June 2015, the new Violations Policy is assisting foundation staff in prioritizing and resolving easement violations. Once an issue is identified as a violation, it is ranked as low, medium or high priority. A violation notice is sent to the landowner and a period of time is given to resolve the violation as defined by the priority level.

Common Violations and How to Avoid Them:

- 1. Agricultural Subdivisions** – When an easement is placed on your farm, it is considered whole, no matter how many parcels make up the easement. All parcels must remain under common ownership. Avoid conveying any subpart. If you convey a property, convey the whole easement property.
- 2. Activities on an Easement** – If you plan on doing anything other than normal agricultural practices on an easement property, contact your county program administrator to see if further direction or approval is needed.
- 3. Soil Conservation Plan** – Plans need to be updated every 10 years. If you are not sure when you last updated it, contact your local Soil Conservation District to check on your plan date.
- 4. Forest Stewardship Plan** – Check your easement if you have a lot of woodland to see if a forest stewardship plan is needed. These plans need to be updated every 15 years.
- 5. Junk and Debris** – Easement owners are expected to be good stewards of the land; please keep your property neat and tidy and free of rubble.



County Certification of Local Ag Land

For counties with effective preservation programs

Certification of Local Agricultural Land Preservation Programs (“Certification Program”) was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1990, and is jointly administered by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation and the Maryland Department of Planning.

The goals of the Certification Program include:

1. Preserving the important role agriculture plays in maintaining the state’s high environmental quality;
2. Encouraging development of county agricultural preservation programs which complement the foundation’s preservation efforts; and
3. Employing agricultural land preservation as a tool to manage growth.

Counties able to demonstrate that they have an effective program to preserve agriculturally viable farmland and forested areas are eligible to participate in the Certification Program. Local preservation programs are comprised of any one or a combination of preservation tools such as agricultural zoning, transfer of development rights programs, right-to-farm policies, and the designation of agriculture as the best use of certain lands.



To qualify for and retain certified status, counties are required to designate a Priority Preservation Area into which efforts and funds can be concentrated to preserve large contiguous blocks of agricultural and forested land.

Certified counties enjoy the benefit of retaining 75 percent of their collected agricultural transfer tax revenue, while non-certified counties retain 33 percent. All retained revenue must be spent or encumbered for qualifying land preservation expenditures within three years of collection, or those collected funds revert to the foundation. The increase in participating counties’ share of the agricultural transfer tax helps to support and enhance their preservation programs in ways that best meet local goals and needs. Participation in the Certification Program by interested counties is voluntary.

As of June 30, 2015, the following counties are participating in the Certification Program: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Harford, Kent, Montgomery, Prince Georges, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Talbot, Washington, and Worcester.

County Programs

Chair of County Agricultural Advisory Boards Listed in Italics

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Allegheny County Government
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Georgene McLaughlin

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Gail Ensor

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Hagner Mister

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Health & Public Services Bldg.
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Chair: Kelly Callahan

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Noah Schaeffer

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Trent Jackson

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Chair: Richard Grossnickle

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David O. Scott

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Sidney Tucker

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David Denny

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William Michael Dryden

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Sandra Frazier

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Chair
Michael Calkins
Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.
Donald T. Moore
James B. Norris, Jr.
Jonathan Quinn
Patricia A. Langenfelder
Craig Highfield

Ex-Officio Members

Honorable Nancy K. Kopp,
State Treasurer
Honorable Peter Franchot,
State Comptroller
Honorable Joe Bartenfelder,
Secretary
Maryland Department of
Agriculture
Honorable David R. Craig,
Secretary
Maryland Department of
Planning

Foundation Staff

Carol S. West, Executive
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Diane Chasse, Administrator
Michelle Cable, Administrator
Chana Turner, Administrator
Kim Hoxter, Administrative
Officer
Tamekia Dent, Office Assistant

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

Maryland Department of Agriculture
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CHANGING
Maryland
for the Better

Governor Larry Hogan
Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford
Secretary Joseph Bartenfelder
Deputy Secretary James P. Eichhorst

