



## ***Programs of the Maryland Department of Agriculture***

As the Maryland Department of Agriculture has evolved, so has the way it does business. Programs across the agency, from routine administration to field inspections, have become more efficient and precise with the use of sophisticated technologies and professionally trained and educated staff members. But the core functions – the main services provided, have not changed.

The [Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation](#) (MALPF) is the oldest and among the most successful farmland preservation programs in the nation. The first program in the country to purchase development rights, MALPF has helped preserve more agricultural land in perpetuity than any other state.

Through the years, MDA's [Office of Resource Conservation](#) has provided farmers with the technical and financial assistance needed to enhance farm productivity while protecting soil and water resources.

The [Plant Protection & Weed Management](#) section protects Maryland's second largest agricultural sector – horticulture and nursery.

MDA works with federal and state partners to detect and combat invasive pests and plants and noxious weeds to protect farmers, nurseries and homeowners. Maryland was also the first state to use a dog to detect [honeybee colony diseases](#).



MDA's [Forest Pest Management](#) section protects landscape trees and forests from diseases and insects that can damage and destroy them.

MDA's [Mosquito Control](#) program protects public health by preventing mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. MDA has ultra low volume spray trucks and an airplane that are all highly effective and use minimal insecticide.

The [Pesticide Regulation](#) section enforces pesticide laws and trains and certifies programs to help ensure that only competent individuals handle and apply pesticides. Pesticide Regulation also works closely with schools statewide to implement Integrated Pest Management programs and ensure that pesticides are only used when necessary.

MDA's [Turf and Seed Section](#) tests seeds for farmers, seed dealers and the general public and enforces seed and sod labeling laws to ensure farmers and gardeners begin with quality seed. All the seed analysts are certified in both purity and germination by the **Association of Official Seed Analysts**.

The [State Chemist Section](#) inspects pet food, fertilizer and other materials to ensure they meet safety and labeling standards. From time to time, the State Chemist will place recalls and stop sale orders to remove dangerous or potentially dangerous products from sale.

The [Food Quality Assurance Program](#) protects consumers from food borne diseases by both training and inspecting producers in safe food production



and handling practices. FDA's mandatory egg inspection program was largely based on the inspection protocols MDA developed to address Salmonella E contamination.

The [Weights & Measures Section](#) ensures that weighing and measuring devices in commercial use – like gas pumps and grocery scales – are calibrated properly. Ensuring proper weight and measurement is one of the oldest functions of government. MDA's testing and metrology labs are both accredited at the national level.

The [State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners](#) licenses and sets the standards for veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians, and animal hospital owners across the state. The Board also disciplines veterinary professionals when necessary.

MDA's [Animal Health Section](#) prevents and controls infectious and contagious diseases in livestock and poultry with emphasis on diseases that threaten public health, endanger food supplies or threaten animal industries. Because animal diseases can spread quickly and must be addressed quickly, MDA operates two regional veterinary diagnostic laboratories – one in Frederick and one in Salisbury. Both labs are accredited for meeting international standards when conducting specific diagnostic tests.

MDA's [Marketing Program](#) works to connect producers with consumers with initiatives like [Maryland's Best](#), the **Buy Local Campaign**, the **Ice Cream Trail**, and the [Farm to School Program](#).



MDA initiated the development of farmers markets and the [Farmers' Market Nutrition Program](#). The department also helps farmers find and expand sales overseas for value-added foods, livestock and genetics.

The [Maryland Horse Industry Board](#), founded in 1998, promotes all disciplines within Maryland's equine industry. The Board also inspects and licenses hundreds of boarding, lesson, rental and rescue stables.

There are many other initiatives and recognition programs that MDA runs to recognize agricultural success and farm families like the Governor's [Agriculture Hall of Fame](#) program and the [Century Farm](#) program.

Another important service that someone – but who? – has provided is entertaining the public with the dressing of the MDA cow statutes. The decorated cow statutes are both a tradition and a mystery as it is unknown as to who dresses them in outfits appropriate for the season.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture's mission is to provide leadership and support to agriculture and the citizens of Maryland by conducting regulatory, service, and educational activities that assure consumer confidence, protect the environment, and promote agriculture.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our programs! For questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Department at 410-841-5700.