



Agricultural Resource Council  
Program and Outreach Plan  
January, 2017

**Introduction** - The Maryland Agricultural Resource Council (MARC) is a 501c3 nonprofit facilitating the programming and educational outreach delivered at the Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture (Ag Center). These services are provided in collaboration with the property owner, Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks, the Ag Center tenants, and many other partners.

**2017 Strategic Planning Meetings** - a planning committee composed of MARC Board members, past Board members and interested individuals met two times to review MARC's program successes and deficiencies through the past six years. The outcomes from these meetings include the following valuable conclusions and statements.

- **Mission:** After careful reflection and consideration the 2017 strategic planning committee recommended, and the MARC Board approved, to re-avow the mission statement as written in the 2010 Strategic Plan.
  - *MARC is organized to enhance the rural economy and to foster conservation of agricultural and natural resources through educational and technical services for the benefit of the citizens of Maryland.*
- **Outreach Priorities** - the 2010 Strategic Plan identifies four strategic goals. The planning committee recommended, and the Board agreed, to combine priorities 3 & 4 into one area and define a second priority as described below:
  - 1) **Educate the public in the region about agriculture.**
    - a) Promote citizen's understanding of, and appreciation for, agricultural businesses and their impact on the lives of all people and the environment in which they live, within the focus of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
    - b) Help children and families of diverse backgrounds develop a personal connection to agriculture through tangible, hands-on experiences.
  - 2) **Conduct Farm Operations** - that demonstrate innovations, best management practices and are supportive of the educational programs.



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**Program and Event Planning and Delivery** - review of MARC's past years of service proved to be very instructional. In general, it was determined that balance is a key component to success. The need for balance includes reaching intended audiences, utilizing available experts, and providing audiences and forums for experts with valuable skills, information, or resources to share.

- **Paid Staff** - recognizing the challenges of supporting staff financially, MARC will hire staff only as can be supported financially by reliable service revenues and reasonable fundraising tactics.
- **Volunteers** - a core group of volunteers will continue to support MARC's educational outreach, events, and organization management while cultivating and mentoring new volunteers to support programs.
- **Contracted Services** - contractors can often deliver specific programs and exhibitions much more successfully and efficiently than MARC while still achieving the goals of the mission. The Farmer Stan program is an example of a successful contractor program working in collaboration with MARC.
- **Facilitation** - one of MARC's least expensive and most beneficial strengths has been organizing and marketing instructional programs and events that are delivered by experts who otherwise have limited access to public and Ag industry audiences.

**Management in 2017** - at their meeting of January 3, 2017 the Board of Directors approved hiring a managing director who is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Council. The managing director will work at the direction of the MARC president or designated Board director and following the programming directives outlined in this report and as defined by the program committee.

**Program Committee** - Accompanying this report is a spreadsheet generally outlining the program committee's proposed programs to be offered in 2017. The spreadsheet indicates the intended audience, the priority area the program or event addresses, the time of year, the operator, and the site facility being used.

**Farm Initiatives and Activities** - Accompanying this proposal is a report outlining the farm committee's proposed programs to be offered in 2017. The report indicates the intended audience, the priority area the program or event addresses, the time of year, the operator and the site being used.

**Website & Communication** - the MARC website, e-newsletters and other technology and print based tools will be used to extend the educational and promotional outreach complimenting the site-based activities and initiatives.



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**Assurances** - Lacking formal authorization permitting MARC to operate programming at the Ag Center and use buildings and land, certain assurances are requested. These assurances will help MARC execute the programs in a safe, organized, and professional manner that is beneficial to the public and the land.

- **Program Authorization** - MARC will submit to the County a schedule of programs and events indicating the programs, scheduled dates, target audiences, who is delivering the program, and facility and land needs. The schedule will also allow for the County representative's initial beside each line item for the purpose of authorizing the programs as proposed and acceptance of the associated liability.
- **Contract Services Authorization** - in general, MARC will need assurance from the County that MARC is permitted to seek and secure contract services as may be appropriate for advancing the mission. The County would be a co-signatory on each program contract as is already the practice with the Farmer Stan agreement.
- **Land Use and Farm Services Authorization** - upon the County's approval of the farm management, demonstration and crop production plan at the beginning of the season MARC and its committees will be solely responsible for the execution of these plans for the entire season.