Vegetables and fruits grown in Maryland represent over 1,132 farms and 33,107 acres of cropland with a market value over $90 million (NASS 2012). In order to provide the most current education and research University of Maryland Extension provides winter meetings for Maryland farmers, crop advisors and agriculture professionals.

The goal of the program is to provide updates on products, research results and regulatory certifications to increase farm vitality through increased yields and profits.

Farmers from the Eastern Shore to Western Maryland participate in annual winter vegetable meetings to increase crop production knowledge, meet regulatory requirements and improve production practices. An average of 100 farmers attend sessions each year. Of those attending 62% have been farming more than 20 years with the average farmer tilling 145 acres.
Over 87% of the participants report that the session will benefit their farming operation and 82% increased knowledge or skills. Participants report information and production practices that will be implemented following the program. These include: Improved pest management practices (58%), Improved fertility management (47%), Improved crop production practices (48%), Use of risk management tools (13%), Regulatory information (25%), A new product or practice (37%).

**Farm Production and Profitability**

Winter meeting participants were asked the expected yield increase due to knowledge and skills gained from Extension programming. The average participant will increase yield per acre between 6.8% and 10.9%.

Participants were also asked the expected profitability increase per acre due to knowledge and skills gained from Extension programming. The average participant increases profitability between $27.44 and $38.11 per acre. Using the average acres farmed per person the overall average profitability is ($32.28*145 acres) = $4,680.60 per person.