

## Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmer Success

**Situation** - According to the 2012 USDA Ag Census the average age of farm operators in Maryland continues to rise from 55.9 in 2002, to 57.3 in 2007 to 59.0 in 2012. In Maryland, there are now seven times more principal farm operators 65 and older than 34 and younger. The diversity of agriculture in Maryland provides many opportunities for

successful farm enterprises, including many Direct-to-Consumer channels. 22% of beginning farmers participate in direct-to-consumer marketing channels according to the USDA 2012 agriculture census. Maryland has over 130 farmers markets listed in the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Farmers Market Directory for the 2014-2015 season (MDA 2014).



**Project Goal** – The Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmer Success will increase the number of successful beginning farmers and acreage farmed by them in Maryland, with an emphasis on practical training for beginning farmers.

★ Explore: Farming options, understand the components of a successful farm operation, and make decisions about what

enterprises best fit their interest.

- ★ Refine: Farm interest, understand the requirements and strategies of different farm enterprises and begin developing plans for assessing resources needed to implement a farm plan.
- ★ Develop: Skills necessary to develop specific farm production and business plans and obtain needed resources to begin a farm enterprise.
- ★ Implement: Farm plans, start agricultural enterprises and continue as successful beginning farmers.

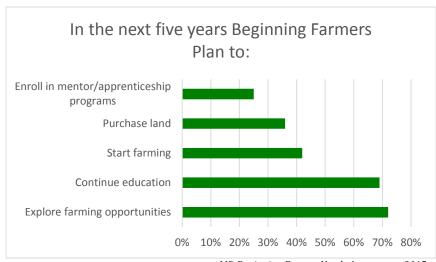
Partners - The Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmer Success joins the University of Maryland with the 1890 sister institution University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a regional nonprofit for sustainable agriculture and an agriculture development commission. The collaborative goal is to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of Beginning Farmers and train them to develop and operate successful farm enterprises. Through workshops, conferences, web materials, mentoring and apprenticeships Beginning Famers have been able to explore, define, refine and implement.



**Need** – Beginning Farmers are concerned most about:

- 1. Avaiable farmland to rent or purchase
- 2. Access to credit and finanicng
- 3. Marketing assistance

"Thankfully, many new farmers have a lot of passion, enthusiasm and drive to be successful "niche" farmers. Unfortunately, many struggle as new farmers because they do not have access to handson knowledge. This is by far the biggest challenge" - participant



MD Beginning Farmer Needs Assessment, 2015

**Actvities** – The Collaborative reaches Beginning Farmers through a variety of educational outlets with events throughout Maryland.

Beginning Farmers Reached – Y1 and Y2	
<b>Education Initiatives</b>	2,162
Coaching	576
Mentoring	22
Land Access	186
Apprenticeships	23
TOTAL	2,969



**Virtual** - The Beginning Farmer website was created in 2012 and has had over 17,000 page views. The site includes production information, resources, news, articles, events, mentoring, apprenticeships and much more. The site also includes links to our YouTube and FaceBook site. There are 16 videos posted with the most popular being *Introduction to Plasticulture and Drip Irrigation* with 503 views.



https://www.facebook.com/beginningfarmersuccess



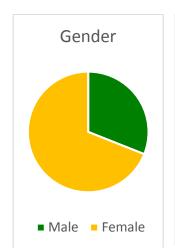
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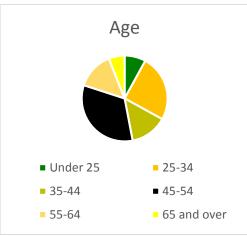


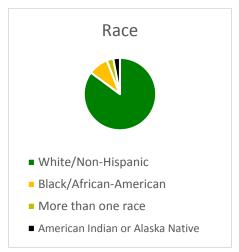


**Professional Development** – In 2014 the Maryland Project hosted a three day Beginning Farmer and Rancher Professional Development Meeting in partnership with USDA-NIFA. The meeting brought together over 30 project directors from around the United States.

**Project Demographics** - The project continues to reach a broad audience with a continued focus on underserved and limited resource audiences.

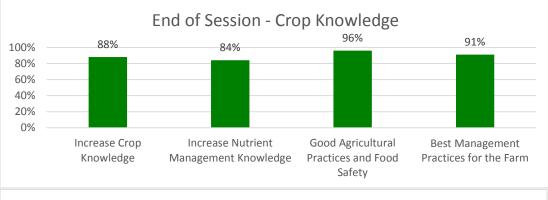




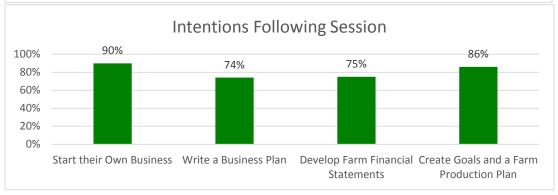


**Results** – The project measures success by evaluating participants following educational events to discover knowledge gained and intentions regaurding business management, crop and livestock production. Results are used to measure goals, plan future events and determine the success of programs. Charts include selected data from evaluations in year 1 and year 2 for end of session and intentions following the program.









MARYLAND

**United States** 

Agriculture

SMADC

Department of

Participant Quotes – "I really admire the efforts put in by the University of Maryland Extension, Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, and other organizations in Maryland, to support farmers. I do feel as if resources are available to me, and there is support if I need it." - 2014 participant

"Broadened my perspective of opportunities outside

National Institute of my area of experience as of Food and Agriculture well as give me a good

ll as give me a good
feel about how realistic my business plan
may be." – 2013 participant

Solutions in your community "This project was supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant #2012-4940-19552. To find more resources and programs for beginning farmers and ranchers please visit UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND www.Start2Farm.gov, a component of the Beginning Farmer and EASTERN SHORE

**FUTURE HARVEST** 

"Do the research, ask questions, if it doesn't work on paper..." – 2013 participant

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