

*Baltimore County – June 2004*

**Certification of County Agricultural Land Preservation Programs**  
**Re-Certification Request – Baltimore County**  
**(Report Summary dated June 22, 2004)**

**ATTRIBUTES OF LOCAL PROGRAM**

- The County has a local Purchase of Development Rights program (PDR).
- The County has consistently participated in MALPF's Matching Funds Program.
- The County offers a 100% tax credit on agricultural land, not including any improvements located in agricultural land preservation districts.
- The County offers supplemental payments to certain State easement purchases.

**QUALIFYING EXPENDITURES AND USE OF CERTIFICATION FUNDS**

- The County meets the certification requirements for qualifying expenditures and use of certification funds and has provided a record of revenues and expenditures.

**PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD**

- In 2003, Baltimore County reached the milestone of having preserved 40,000 acres through its land preservation programs. This represents the halfway mark in reaching the goal of 80,000 acres set in the 2010 Master Plan.
- During the reporting period of FY 01, FY 02 and FY 03, easements were purchased on 24 farms totaling 2,333 acres through MALPF in Baltimore County.
- Through FY 03, 17 farms, totaling 3,168 acres, have been preserved through the County's local program.
- Baltimore County leads the State in easement participation in the Maryland Environmental Trust Program. The County also has more land trusts than any other County in the State. At the end of the calendar year 2003, there were 12,859 acres protected on 216 properties.
- Baltimore County leads the State in the number of State-designated Rural Legacy Areas and in the amount of money committed to preservation of land through this program. The total amount of land preserved through the State and County Rural Legacy Program efforts as of 2003 is 5,307 acres.

**EVALUATION OF COUNTY'S ANNUAL REPORT**

- The County uses MALPF and local PDRs and is exploring a TDR program. The County's RC-2 zoning is among the most protective in the State. The RC-7 Zone, created during Certification, is also most protective. Much of the RC-4 land (originally with a density ration of 1:5) was down-zoned to 1:25.

**PROGRAM EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**Land Preservation Element:**

- The County will continue to seek to preserve farmland through participation in MALPF, the County Program, Rural Legacy, Land Trusts, Federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, etc.
- The County will target the acquisition of agricultural easements inside the Agricultural Preservation Areas.
- The County will continue to encourage landowners to donate easements.
- The County will continue to support the development of local land trusts.
- The County will develop alternative funding sources.
- The County will develop additional tools to preserve land.
- The County will evaluate the current goal of 80,000 acres.
- The County will continue its concern for good land stewardship and favorable public relations.
- The County will continue regular easement monitoring via aerial photographs and site visits.

**Land Use Management Tools:**

- Identify APA areas.
- Maintain low density in the APA and down-zone lands that are at a low density inconsistent with preservation.
- Review uses permitted within the agricultural zone.

**Agricultural Industry Strategy:**

- Evaluate the rate of preservation versus rate of development in the Agriculture Preservation Area.
- Monitor the economic changes in the agricultural industry.
- Provide buffers to agricultural easements.

**COUNTY'S FOCUS ON PRESERVING AGRICULTURAL LAND**

- Baltimore County's 2010 Master Plan strengthens the 1989 Master Plan and lists specific actions for an agricultural preservation goal of 80,000 acres. The County recently reached the 40,000 acre milestone in 2003.
- The County first adopted legal measures to protect its agricultural land, watersheds, and rural landscapes in the 1970's.
- The 1979 Master Plan established the goal of maintaining two-thirds of the County as rural and directing growth to the remaining one third of the County.
- The 1989 Master Plan strengthened the agricultural preservation provision of the 1979 Master Plan by designating 130,000 acres as the focus of preservation efforts.
- The County has protected 129,188 acres with the restrictive zoning of one subdivision per 50 acres agricultural zone.
- Through FY 2004, the County has preserved a total of 42,000 acres through all preservation programs.

**FOUNDATION STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

- The County program appears likely to be successful in supporting viable agricultural operations and preserving agricultural land in perpetuity. Staff recommends approval of re-certification for another two year term.