

WHAT OUR REGION GROWS

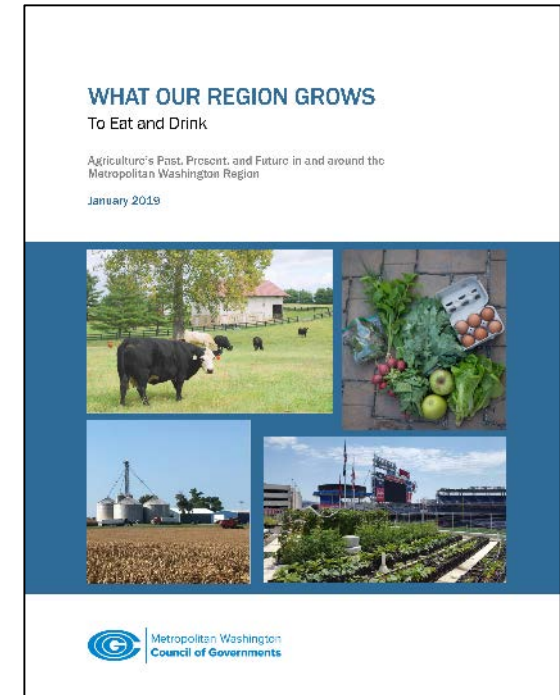
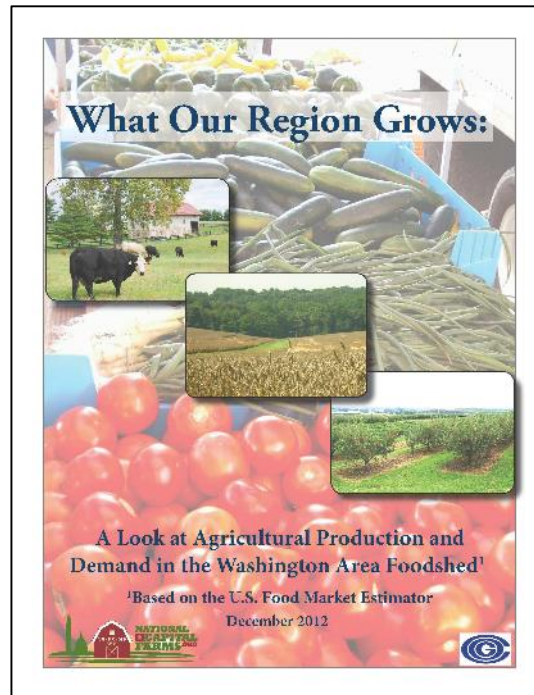
Agriculture's Contribution to Metropolitan Washington

Chris Van Vlack
Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District

Presentation to COG Board of Directors
February 13, 2019

Food and Agriculture at COG

- Coordinated a Regional Agricultural Work Group since 2006
- Released first *What Our Region Grows* Report in 2012
- Agriculture Program reinvigorated into broader Regional Food Systems Program in 2016



Agriculture's Economic Impact

Washington, D.C.

\$5.47 billion in economic impact
Production, Distribution, Grocery,
Restaurants, & Support Industries ¹

Maryland (COG Localities)

\$2.9 billion in economic impact
Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, &
Support Industries ²

Virginia (COG Localities)

\$2.23 billion in economic impact
Agriculture & Forestry ³



Notes

¹ Preliminary findings from DC Food Economy Study

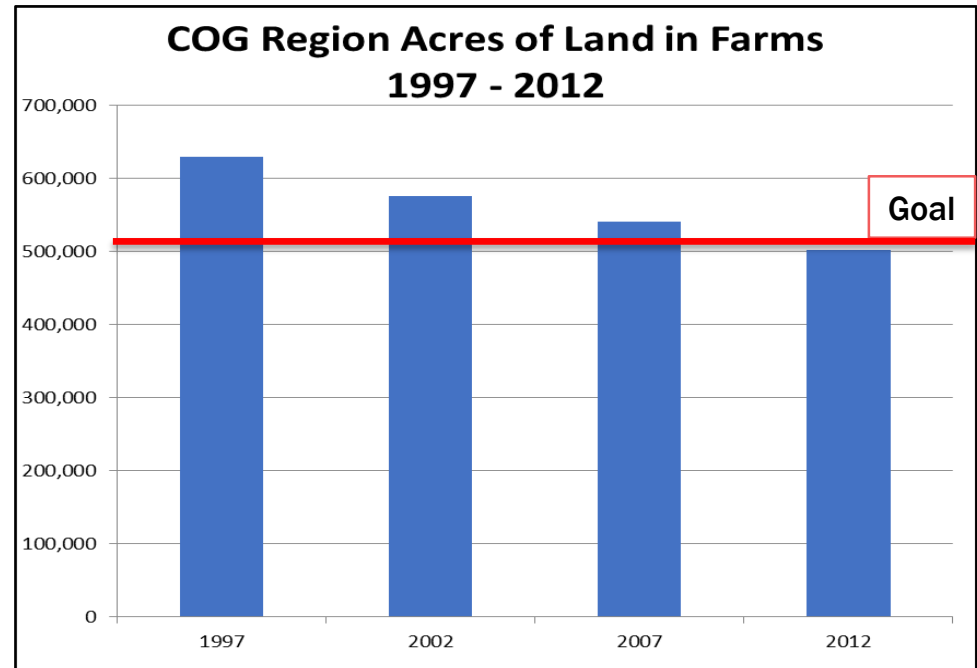
² Economic Impact of Select Resource Based
Industries in Maryland

³ The Economic Impact of Virginia's Agricultural and
Forest Industries

Land in Farms in the COG Region

**Region Forward Goal:
Maintain 489,946
acres of farm lands**

- Most recent, 2012 data shows 502,557 acres of land in farms
- If past trends continue, 2017 data will show the region has dropped below the goal









Regional Trends

- Declining number of farmers, farms, land in farms
- Lower production levels and dairy is in crisis
- Grain dominates production
- Growth in on-farm craft beverage, agritourism, urban agriculture
- Declining agricultural support services
- Increasing interest in healthy soils for carbon sequestration



Local Experiences Example

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA		
 \$5.47 B Economic Impact	 Urban Farms: 18 Farmers: 22 Farmland: 14 acres	 No data
 62 Farmers Markets 7 CSAs	 Community Gardens: 73 School Gardens: 134	 12 Breweries 1 Winery 9 Distilleries 1 Cidery

Every county in COG region, and the District, has a page in report with agriculture “quick facts”

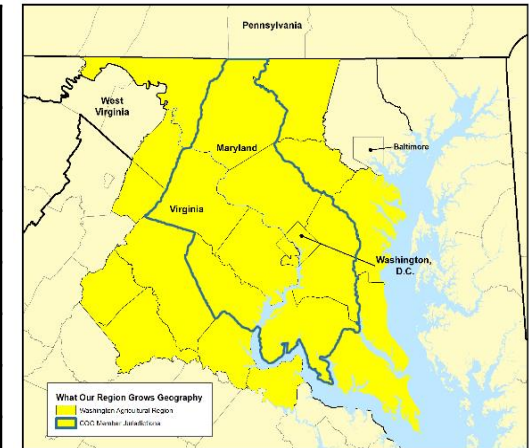
In addition to data shown above, there is information on:

- Major Production Changes Since 2007
- Food and Agriculture Accomplishments since 2012
- Observations and Trends to Watch

Declining Regional Food Production

2012 Food Production and Demand Comparison

Food Product	Production (acres or animals)	Demand (acres or animals)	Percent Demand Fulfilled	Surplus/Deficit (acres or animals)
Apples	1,778	18,655	10%	-16,877
Blueberries	56	3,101	2%	-3,045
Strawberries	34	12,896	0%	-12,862
Beans	2,323	11,365	20%	-9,042
Potatoes	181	28,533	1%	-28,352
Pumpkins	588	3,167	19%	-2,579
Squash	91	3,404	3%	-3,313
Sweet Corn	1,346	24,106	6%	-22,760
Tomatoes	444	35,615	1%	-35,171
Wheat	63,079	238,021	27%	-174,942
Corn	169,121	36,564	463%	132,557
Beef	119,166	722,321	16%	-603,155
Chicken	65,357	74,169,582	0%	-74,104,225
Pork	36,966	1,905,264	2%	-1,868,298
Dairy	44,041	235,067	19%	-191,026



The Region's Food and Ag Future?

What kind of agricultural future do we want?

Currently, a lack of *regional* planning and coordination for:

- Food jobs/workforce, including strong farm and food businesses
- Food security
- Environmental benefits of agriculture (i.e. land preservation, etc.)
- Quality of life
- Access to local food



Recommendations

- Commission and Implement a Strategic Plan for Agriculture
- Create a Regional Committee on Food and Agriculture
- Co-Host regional forums on Farm Viability, Land Preservation, and Next Gen Farmers



Above and Left: Squash planting through harvest and storage at Shlagel Farms in Charles County, a diversified fruit and vegetable farm growing for retail and wholesale markets. (Karl Shlagel/Shlagel Farms)

Next Steps

- Outreach on *What Our Region Grows*
 - Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee on March 15th: healthy soils focus
 - Local press
- Update report with new data
- Continue Regional Food System Program initiatives
- Explore food and ag priorities with COG members
- Assess support for a regional committee



Liked by [cultivatethecity](#), [grr429](#) and 96 others

[loveandcarrots](#) Have a RADish Friday! This week brought an explosion of growth at the [@tenatclarendon](#) rooftop farm. We take pride in sustainably producing organic vegetables for the residents. This is the #futureoffood! ❤️🌍

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