

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN GREATER WASHINGTON

A Brief Overview

Brian LeCouteur

Principal Environmental Planner / Urban Forester / Agricultural Programs
Manager

Lindsay Smith

Regional Food Systems Value Chain Coordinator

FARM Ad Hoc Committee New Member Orientation
November 13, 2020

Regional Agricultural Trends (prior to COVID-19)

- On-going decline in number of farms, land in farms
- Overall trend of lower production levels and dairy is in crisis
- Grain and forage dominate production
- Continued growth: on-farm craft beverage, agritourism, urban agriculture, direct sales
- Modest increase in net farm income since 2012
- Increasing interest in healthy soils for carbon sequestration



Montgomery County Ag History Farm Park,
Derwood, MD. (Lindsay Smith/COG)

Agriculture's Economic Impact (prior to COVID-19)

Washington, D.C.

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

Maryland

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

Virginia

\$2.23 billion in economic impact
Agriculture & Forestry ³



Photo credit: Richard Sullivan/Walsh Family Wine

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



Virginia Farm to Table

Healthy Farms and Healthy Food for the Common Wealth



Persistent disparities in food access and food security, particularly in low-income and communities of color

A growing number of local, state, and regional plans, studies, policies, food policy councils, “collaboratives,” etc., supporting food system improvements in the COG region and larger Chesapeake Bay Watershed over last 10+ years.

28

MODELS

SUSTAINABLE DC PLAN

When Healthy Food is Out of Reach

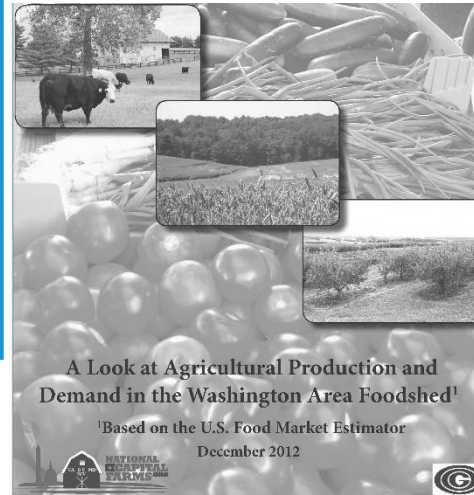


An Analysis of the Grocery Gap in the District of Columbia - 2010 -



D.C. Hunger Solutions
Ending hunger in the nation's capital

SocialCompact



A Look at Agricultural Production and Demand in the Washington Area Foodshed¹

¹Based on the U.S. Food Market Estimator
December 2012



URBAN AGRICULTURE



A Tool for Creating Economic Development and Healthy Communities in Prince George's County

SEPTEMBER 2012

Prince George's County Planning Department
The Economic Services, Public and Planning Commission
www.pgc.org

016



GOOD FOOD FOR ALL
AN ASSESSMENT
OF FOOD SYSTEM EFFORTS IN
THE CHESAPEAKE FOODSHED



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Food and Agriculture During Covid-19

Agriculture: Impacts vary significantly by sector

- New appreciation for local

Food insecurity increased dramatically, concerns about additional growth

- Lack of access is key driver

Some examples of local/regional investments to support systemic approaches and resiliency include:

- Montgomery County, District of Columbia, others
- World Central Kitchen
- Mid-Atlantic Food Resilience & Access Coalition (MAFRAC)
- Dreaming Out Loud
- Future Harvest



Chris Bradshaw, Executive Director of Dreaming Out Loud on the cover of Washington City Paper: The Food Issue. DOL started a Black Farmer CSA during the pandemic. (Darrow Montgomery/Washington City Paper)

Food and Agriculture at COG



Left: Chef Todd Gray of Equinox was one of the first farm to table restaurants in Washington, D.C. Here he talks with participants (Right) at COG's Working Lands II Forum in 2010 at the Frederick County, MD Fairgrounds. (COG)



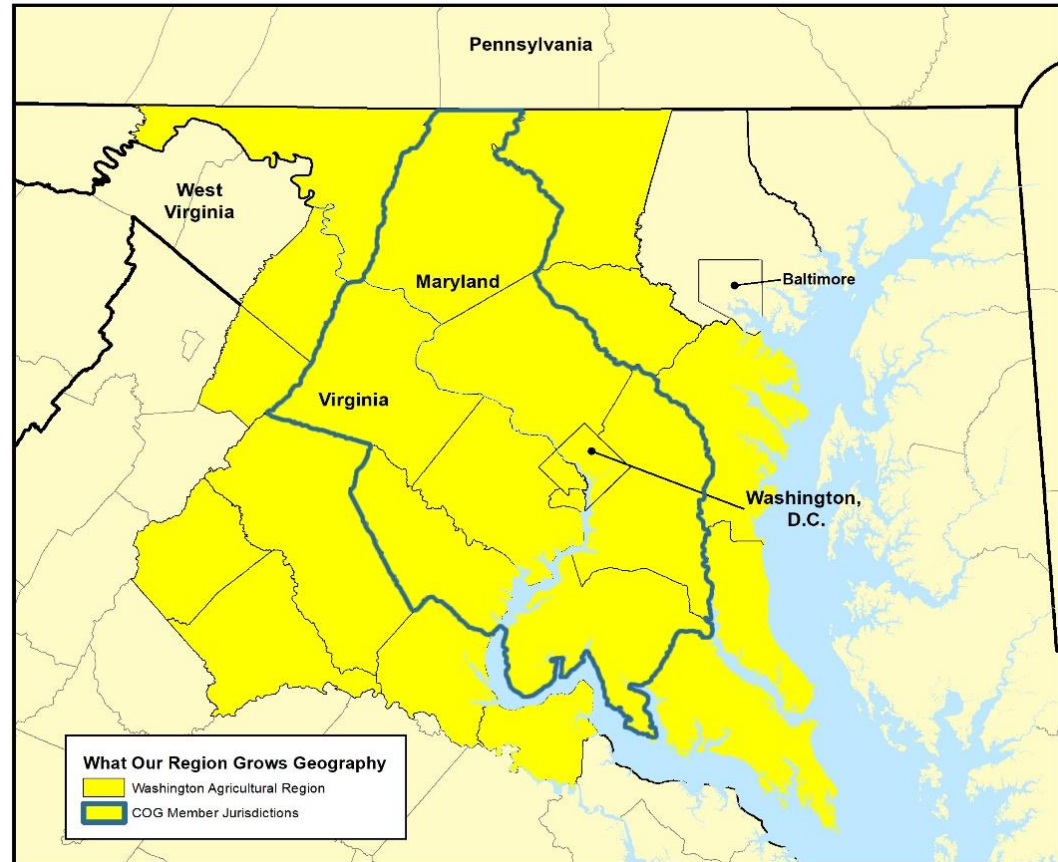
What Our Region Grows

WHAT OUR REGION GROWS

To Eat and Drink

Agriculture's Past, Present, and Future In and around the Metropolitan Washington Region

January 2019

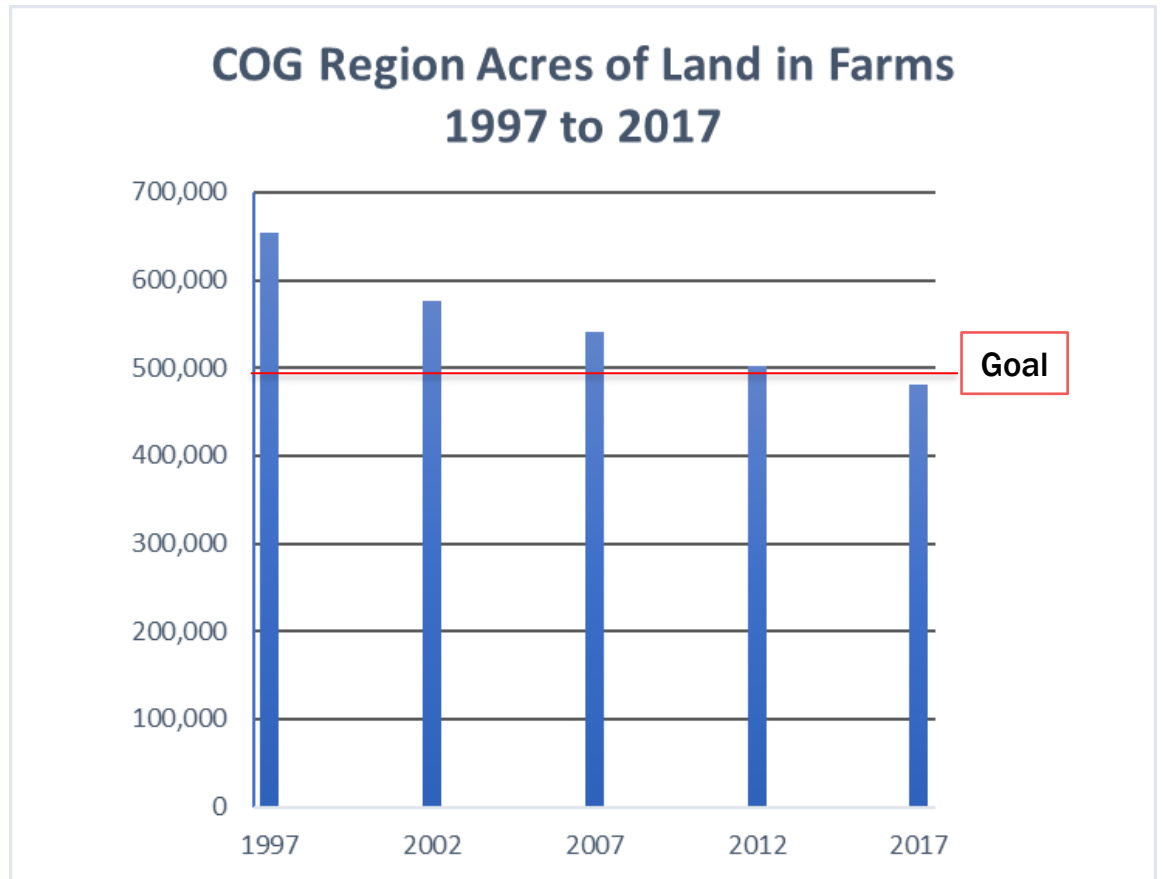


Left: The Regional Ag Work Group published *What Our Region Grows* for the second time in 2019. Right: Here is the geography that *What Our Region Grows* covers for many, but not all data points. The Regional Ag Work Group has long recognized that our foodshed is larger than the COG region.

Land in Farms: COG Region

**Region Forward:
Maintain more
than 497,500
acres of land in
farms**

Data released in
April 2019:
480,281 acres for
the COG Region



COG's Regional Food Systems Program

Initial Priorities

- Foster Local Food and Agriculture Business Connections
- Expand Market Opportunities
- Increase Access to Local Food
- Support Food and Agriculture Policy and Infrastructure

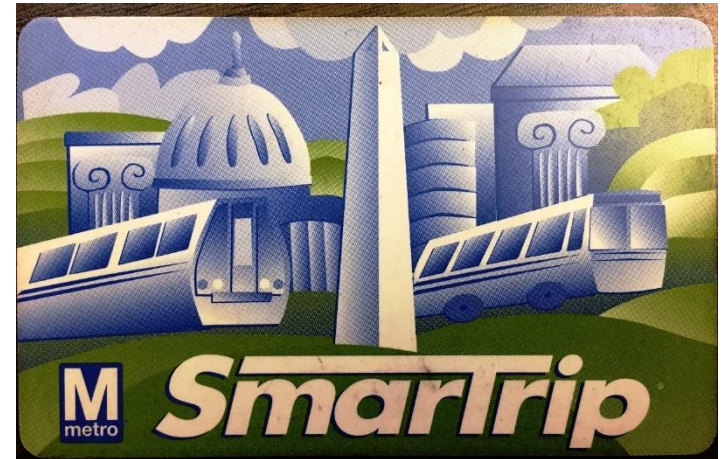


Photo: Season Extension at Even' Star Organic Farm



Expand Market Opportunities

Example: Employee Community Supported Agriculture
Incentive: “The Farm Card”



Support Food and Agriculture Policy and Infrastructure

Top: A visit to UMD's Terp Farm in Prince George's County, MD with Regional Ag Work Group and Food Policy Council members in 2017. (Allison Tjaden/University of Maryland).
Bottom Left and Right: A Local Food Distribution Work Group with Corbin Hill Food Project's Executive Director Dennis Derryck at Busboys and Poets in 2018 (Sonia Keiner)



Regional Food Systems Program: COVID-19

Weekly/Biweekly regional calls with local leaders to share food security and food assistance issues, needs

Food supply chain monitoring

Food assistance mapping with DHSPS and NCR GDx

Committee service and technical assistance to local governments



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
- Food security
- Environmental benefits of agriculture
- Quality of life
- Access to local food



Three Part Harmony Farm in Washington, D.C.
(Tyler Grigsby/ Tyler Grigsby Photography)

Tom Gates

Deputy Executive Director
(202) 962-3393
tgates@mwkog.org

Steve Walz

Director, Environmental Programs
(202) 962-3205
swalz@mwkog.org

Brian LeCouteur

Principal Environmental Planner / Urban Forester /
Agricultural Programs Manager
(202) 962-3393
blecouteur@mwkog.org

Lindsay Smith

Regional Food Systems Value Chain Coordinator
(202) 962-3307
lsmith@mwkog.org

mwkog.org

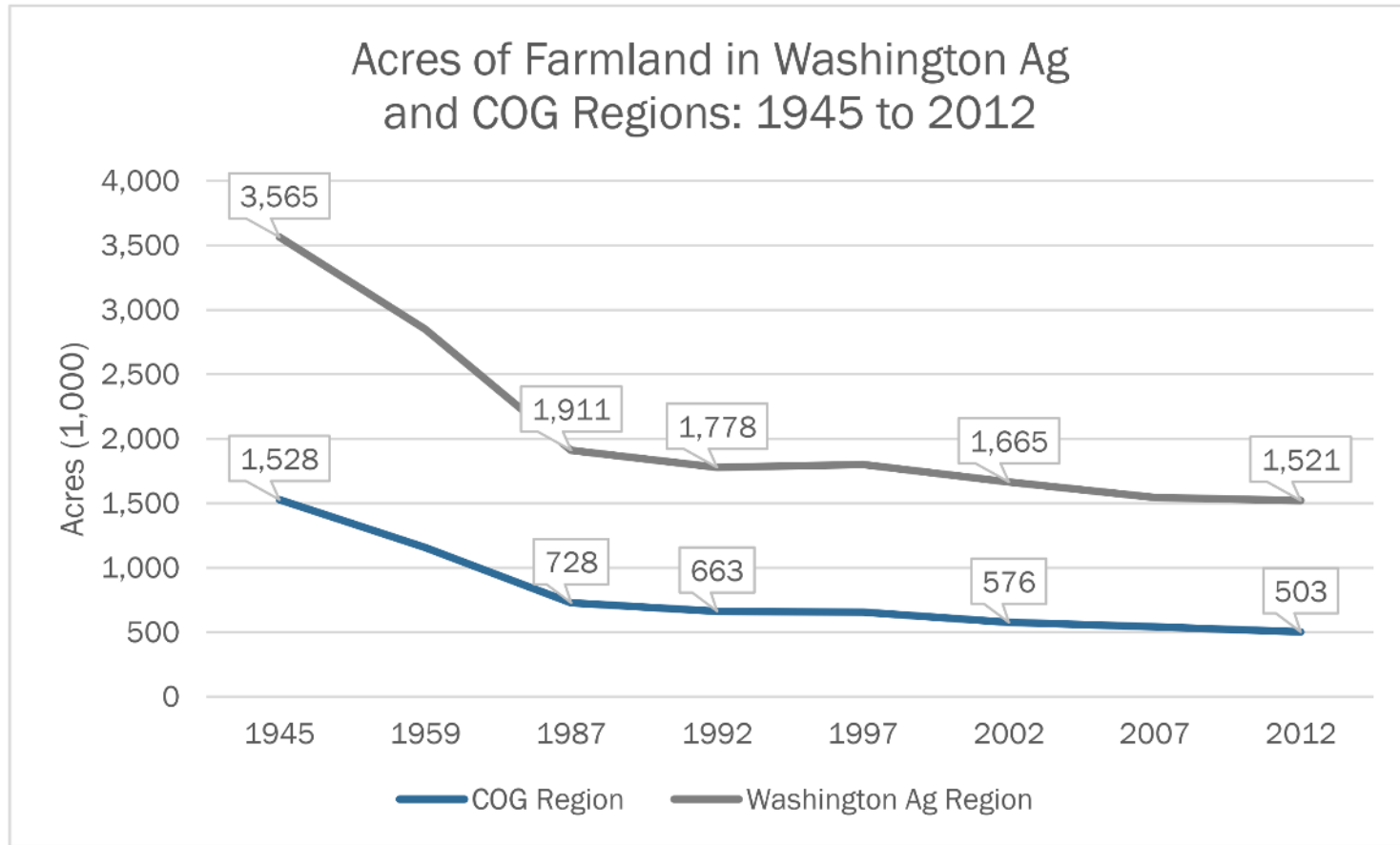
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002



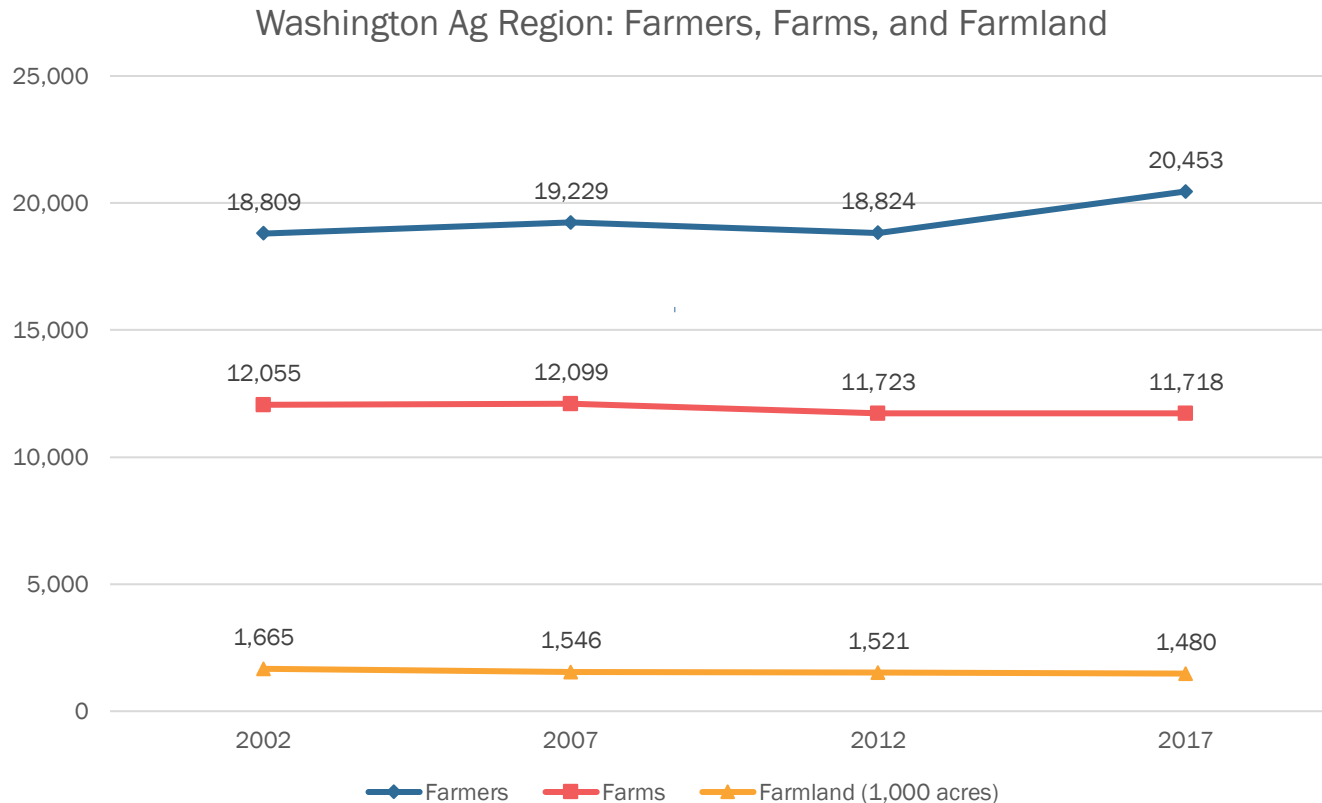
Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Rapid Farmland Declines Post WWII

Figure 3. Acres of Farmland in Washington Ag and COG Regions, 1945-2012



Farmers, Farms, Farmland since 2002



Farmland: Multiple Benefits



Benefits of Healthy Soils

- Improved water holding capacity
- Sequester carbon and reduce GHG emissions
- Functions as a biological system; habitat for important soil organisms
- Long-term sustainability of agriculture
- Enhance crop quality
- Improve resistance to weeds and pests

Source: COG



Farmland: Multiple Stressors



Record rainfall in 2018 challenged even the best managed soils.

Photo credit:
The Farm at
Sunnyside

