

What Our Region Grows

*A Look at Agricultural Production and Demand
in the
Washington Area Foodshed*

**Climate and Energy Policy Committee Meeting
November 28, 2012**



Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

-Final Draft-

What Our Region Grows:

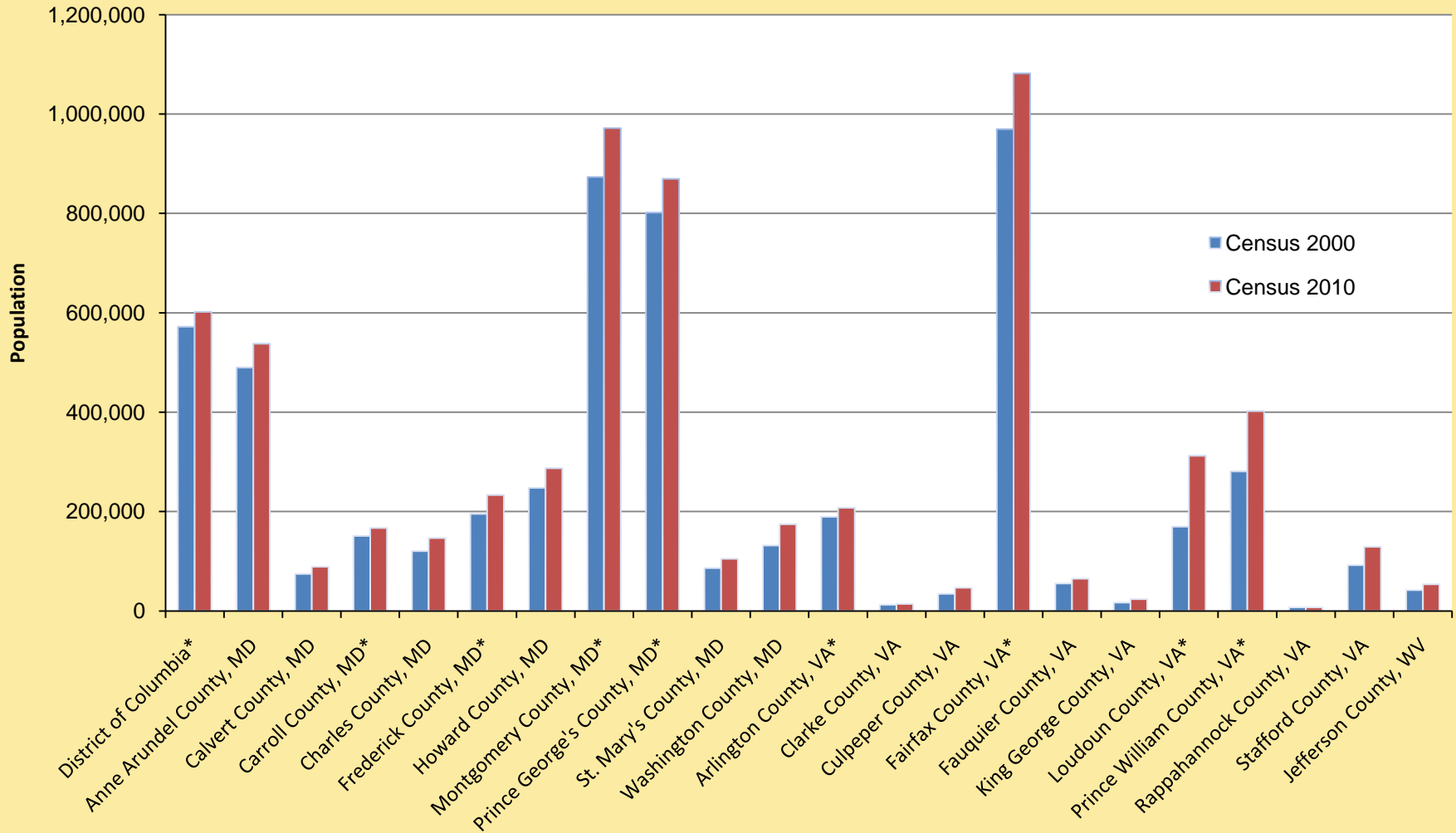


A look at Agricultural Production and Demand in the Washington Area Foodshed¹

¹Based on the U.S. Food Market Estimator



Regional Population Trends



Where Does Our Food Come From?

- 2007 – Total of 12,093 Farms in the Washington Region
- Regionally grown products made up less than 1% of the total food sold
- Top five beef-producing states – TX, MO, OK, TN, KY
- Increasing amounts of imported fruits and vegetables (principally from Mexico, Latin American, Canada & China)

Regional Relationships: Poultry and Grain

- 1.5 million acres in the Washington agricultural region is used for growing corn and soybeans
- The Delmarva poultry industry is the largest consumer of these grains, and in 2009 consumed over 98 million bushels
- The Eastern Shore poultry industry supports Western Shore farming

Local Agricultural Challenges

- High price of land
- Loss of support services (*equipment dealers, meat processing, feed stores*)



Impediments to Agriculture

- Aging farmer population
- Not enough new farmers
- Farmland fragmentation
- Labor (cost, housing & benefits)
- Regulations (environment & health)
- Restrictive zoning
- Water

Opportunities

- ‘Niche’ farming (specialty meats, fruits, vegetables, etc.)
- Local food and wines
- Community supported agriculture (CSA)
- Agritourism

Local Experiences

Four counties featured: Montgomery, Frederick, Prince George's & Loudoun

- Challenges, Top Three Lessons Learned and Snapshots

A Snapshot of Montgomery's Rural Economy:

- 561 farms, 27 percent female principal operator
- 71,622 acres of farmland protected
- Expanding hay industry feeding a growing horse population of nearly 10,000 animals
- Over 1.0 million bushels of corn for grain harvested on 12,675 acres
- 279,039 bushels of soybeans harvested on 11,688 acres
- 244,446 bushels of winter wheat grown on 4,161 acres
- 80 beef cattle farms (ranked 8th among all MD counties in 2007)
- 49 fruit, vegetable, and/or nut farms
- Seven sod farms, 150 landscape, arborist, and lawn care businesses
- **Economic contribution to County's economy - \$243,378,896/year**

Increasing Demand for 'Growing Local'

- Over 150 CSA's in the region, and growing
- Over 100 restaurants serving locally grown food
- From 2002 to 2007, 17% increase in direct to consumer sales

Report Recommendations

- Develop a regional strategic agricultural support plan
- Remove / modify regulatory obstacles
- Create farm incubator training and local processing facilities
- Promote farmer-friendly tax incentives
- Maintain adequate funding for agricultural-related support services

Report Recommendations – *Continued*

- Develop new food hub / aggregator opportunities
- Support agriculture in the school curriculum
- Aggressively market local agriculture
- Expand farmer-mentoring and land leasing opportunities
- Make farming-related loans easier to obtain

Next Steps

- Integrate Report with both Region & Economy Forward Initiatives & Committees
- Presented to Region Forward Coalition October 26, 2012
- Presented Report for CBPC Approval (November 16, 2012)
- Present to the COG Board (January 9, 2013)

For More Information...

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