Public Recommendations and Desires

The nonfarm community:
- Wants the Benefits of Agriculture Without the Sacrifice: Noise, Dust, Odors, Traffic
- Wants to Reduce Rooftops/Housing to Preserve Viewsheds
- Wants More Farmers Markets
- Wants More Opportunities to Buy Local, and from CSAs
- Wants More Locally Grown Organic Products
- Is willing to Pay a Premium Price for Fresh/Local Products (according to 2007 Policy Choices Survey: http://scpp.ubalt.edu/pdfs/SCPP_Fall_07_12607.pdf)
- Has interest in the Environment and Sustainable Agriculture
- Has a View of Farm Animals that is Incompatible with Modern Food Production

The public’s desires are not being fulfilled because of...

The Economic Reality of Farming

Few people want to enter the direct agricultural marketing business because of:
- Availability/Cost of Land, Labor and Housing
- Excessive Federal, State and County Regulations
- Hard Work - Disillusionment
- Low Return on Investment, Meaning that Farmers Seek Off-Farm Income
- Rising Cost of Production – Fuel, Fertilizer, Insurance, Taxes
- Weather Constraints and access to water
- Cost of Pests/Disease/Deer Control
- Difficult Organic Certification Process
- Demand for New Technical Assistance, Education/Outreach for Direct –Market Products
- Demand for Support Structures – RS Service Zone and Housing

Because of these challenges, the County’s agricultural industry has difficulty attracting new farmers. There is a conflict between open space preservation and agricultural preservation. Open space will only be preserved if agriculture remains economically viable.

The Current Agricultural Environment

Montgomery County has:
- An Aging Demographic – Average Age of County Farmers is 57 years old
- 14 Farmers Markets – Downcounty/Not on Farms (see reverse)
- 15 Farm Markets – Upcounty/On Farms
- 4 CSAs
- 50 total fruit/vegetable producers
- 10 direct-market livestock operations

The County does not have enough producers to support its current farmers markets. Many of the County’s 50 direct producers have reached production capacity and cannot participate in farmers markets.