

Preservation News

A Newsletter about the Calvert County Land Preservation Program

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Calvert Reaches 25,000 acres Preserved!

Maryland's smallest county continues to rack up impressive acreage of lands preserved. In 2003 Calvert reached 20,000 acres permanently preserved. By the end of 2007 Calvert had permanently preserved over 25,000 acres, a 25% increase in just four years.

In recent years, state preservation programs languished due to lack of funding and the County's programs preserved the lion's share of protected land in the County. Currently the State's picture looks brighter. In his last year of office, Governor Ehrlich restored most of the state land preservation money and Governor O'Malley maintained the state level of support in FY '08. It is hoped that the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program and the Rural Legacy program will not be victims of the state's current budget woes in FY '09.

It should come as no surprise that the property that pushed the County over the 25,000 acre threshold was owned by John Crane. Mr. Crane has been the most prolific individual protector of farm and forest land in the County. He began in the 1980s by protecting his home place, and then reaching out to protect other properties in his community that came up for sale. As years have gone by he has purchased and protected many properties throughout the County.

Calvert's land preservation successes have finally provided some stability to farm communities. In previous decades subdivision development in farming communities threatened their viability. In the last few years the County has seen very few farms being converted into major subdivisions in Priority Preservation Areas. Many threatened properties have been protected by land trusts or conservation buyers such as Mr. Crane.



Calvert County Land Preservation Tools	Acres Preserved as of Dec. 2007
Transferable Development Rights	13,260
Purchase And Retirement (PAR) Fund	3,486
Leveraging and Retirement (LAR) Fund	1,880
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program	4,691
Maryland Rural Legacy Program	1,580
Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)	825
Total	25,710

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Just the Facts:

Acres in APDs – 32,106

Acres Preserved – 25,710

Acres Preserved by TDR sales – 18,626

Maximum sale price - TDR -

\$11,000

Rebuilding Farming From the Ground Up *by Greg Bowen*

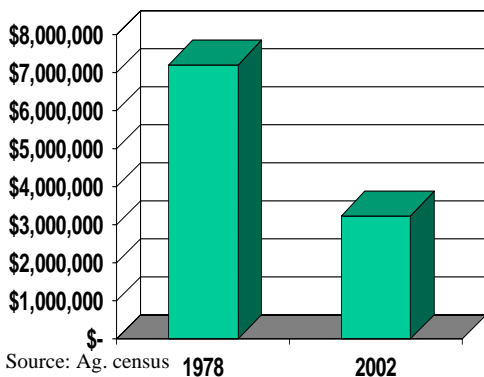


I remember the day in the early 1970s when my father and uncle said that the mill they sold their corn to would no longer accept ‘corn on the cob.’ It had to be shelled corn. Our one-row corn picker did not shell corn. As Earl Butz, the Secretary of Agriculture in the early 1970’s would say, “get big or get out.” My father and uncle got out. At that time many small corn farmers got out of corn. Those who bought the big grain combines continued to farm the lands for others who couldn’t.

I remember that we raised both sheep and cows. Some other farmers raised pigs, for profit. However, as more major agribusiness corporations took over the meat markets, the low profit margin squeezed many small animal farmers out of business. The cost of tougher health regulations forced local slaughter houses out of business, increasing the hauling costs for the remaining animal farmers. Our farm turned its full attention to tobacco. Of course, the tobacco buyout eliminated most tobacco production in the last decade.

Earl Butz’s mantra, “get big or get out,” has permeated farm policy for the last generation. It has changed the landscape of Calvert County and the State of Maryland, just as it has changed the farm belt in the midwest. Farmers sold out near urban areas and developers moved in, purchasing cheap land and creating suburbs located far from places of employment. When farmers sold out in the mid west, towns in the farmbelt began to dwindle in size. One farm family would purchase and manage thousands of acres with supersized tractors. Schools closed and main streets shut down.

Calvert Farm Sales



Source: Ag. census

No doubt, “get big or get out” policies have produced cheaper foods for Americans, and it has helped American agribusiness compete in the global economy. Americans only spend 10% of their disposable income on food, down from 25% in the 1950s. But our farm policy and globalization have a negative cost as well. We have pushed young farmers off their farms in the last few decades. Migrant workers and third-world farming have lowered the price of farm labor to levels most American farmers would not tolerate and could not afford. We are relying heavily on energy consumption to transport our food—broccoli from California, apples from Peru and China. Quoting farm philosopher Wendell Berry, “Living as we now do in almost complete dependence on a global economy, we are put inevitably into a position of ignorance and irresponsibility.” We don’t know how things are grown, and we may not want to know.

Changes resulting from high energy costs and global climate change may place more emphasis on local production of food and goods. We’ve seen the challenges related to \$100 per barrel oil. What will be the impact of \$200 per barrel oil? Already, buying ‘green’ is being seen as buying locally. Groups such as the ‘slow food’ movement and the ‘locavores’ are pledging to consume local foods. Big challenges remain - including:

- how do we convince consumers to buy farm products at a living wage price?*
- how do we re-teach our new farmers to farm?*
- where will we find our farm labor?*
- do we actively encourage farmers to raise produce organically?*

Calvert County has preserved more land than all of its neighbors. Now we need to ensure that that land can stay in production and save/reclaim farming. As shown in the graph, farm sales in Calvert dropped from \$7.2 million to \$3.2 million from 1978 to 2002. The Board of County Commissioners has asked staff to begin to work with farmers and consumers in the development of a plan for farming in Calvert. It is time to rebuild farming from the ground up.

APD signs available for free!

If you have preserved your property and are interested in posting a sign, please contact Veronica Cristo at 410-535-1600 x. 2489



How do we Start a 'Buy Local' Movement? By Greg Bowen

How much does an average family in Calvert spend on local food? They probably spend less than 1% of their food budget. A rough estimate -- assume a household spends at least \$100 on food per week -- shows County residents spend at least \$160 million on food every year. Yet there were only \$2.2 million dollars in farm sales that could have been attributed to local consumption according to the last Agriculture Census in 2002.

Slow Food USA and other groups in the country are trying to encourage citizens to buy local food products. The *Slow Food USA* website www.SlowFoodUSA.org states that "Slow Food is about coming together as a food community—connecting producers and co-producers, coming together on the farm, in the market, and at the table—to create and enjoy food that is good, clean and fair." There are currently 170 chapters, including one in Maryland and two in Virginia. Other groups are advocating "buy local" to reduce energy consumption, to strengthen local economies, and to protect U.S. food production from terrorist threats.

According to John Cloud, "Nearly a quarter of American shoppers now buy organic products once a week, up from 17% in 2000. But for food purists, 'local' is the new 'organic,' the new ideal that promises healthier bodies and a healthier planet. Many chefs, food writers and politically minded eaters are outraged that 'Big Organic' firms now use the same industrial-size farming and long-distance-shipping methods as conventional agribusiness." ("Eating Better Than Organic" *Time Magazine*, March 2007.)

According to Marian Burros "those who think this is another harebrained scheme of the food fringe may be surprised to learn that locavores are poised to move into the mainstream ("Preserving Fossil Fuels and Nearby Farmland by Eating Locally" *New York Times*, April 25, 2007). In her article Ms. Burros mentions Barbara Kingsolver's book published last spring about eating locally, titled "**Animal, Vegetable, Miracle**" (HarperCollins). It recounts her family's adventures during the year they spent eating food raised in their corner of southwest Virginia. "We undertook this project because it brings together so many compelling issues of the moment: carbon footprint, global warming, the local economy, the nutritional crisis and community," Ms. Kingsolver reported to Marian Burros: "Community is very important to me and every book I've ever written is on this subject: what is the debt of the individual to the community? We wanted to see if we could show that it's possible and even a lot of fun, not just an experiment in sacrifice," she said. "It was so much more fun than we expected it to be."



In December, 22 County residents met at the Calvert County Library to discuss Barbara Kingsolver's book. Participants shared concern about food safety and about the energy waste from eating food from California that could be produced locally. Most in attendance expressed their willingness to buy local food if the markets are readily available.

Thirty years ago, Calvert County residents had just secured enabling legislation for the first land preservation program in the state. At that time, many residents questioned if this land preservation effort was really needed. The last three decades have proven both the need and the success of Calvert's early efforts. Now is the time to start connecting farmers with consumers.

Please tell us your ideas. How can we encourage locavores in Calvert County?
bowenga@co.cal.md.us



Selling your property? Conveying to your children?

Please proceed with caution. If your land is in an Agricultural Preservation District (APD), then there are special considerations. **TDRs always convey with the land . . . unless you make other arrangements.** There should be a reservation in the deed specifying that the TDRs are being retained by you. There should also be a separate conveyance of the TDRs to yourself to trigger the Recording of Covenants while you still own the land. New owners and mortgage companies may have different views on preservation than you do. Your TDRs will be useless if there are no covenants. Discuss these issues with your attorney. If you (or your attorney) have questions or concerns, please contact the County as early in your negotiations as possible.



Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board
C/O Board of County Commissioners
175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678



The deadline for applications to the MALPF Program is April 30, 2008.
The deadline for applications to the Leveraging Program is June 30, 2008.
The deadline for applications to the PAR Program is December 31, 2008.
Contact the Department of Planning and Zoning for applications, 410-535-2348.

Funds Still Available for Barn Repair

The Tobacco Barn Restoration Fund is accepting applications for projects to repair tobacco barns. Eligible projects include stabilization of endangered barns, roof repairs, timber, framing and siding repair or replacement. Over the past two years eight barns in Calvert County have received grants for major repairs. Property owners and nonprofit organizations may apply for the funds. To get an application form, contact: Joshua Phillips, Director of Preservation Services at Preservation Maryland, 24 W. Saratoga Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-4227. Call: (410) 685-2886 or email: jphillips@preservationmaryland.org

Applications for 2008 funds must be postmarked by March 14, 2008. For more information you may also call Kirsti Uunila, Historic Preservation Planner for Calvert County at (410) 535-1600 x2504 or email: uunilak@co.cal.md.us Preservation Maryland administers the fund with support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Maryland Historical Trust, and local partners. The grant program was funded by a substantial grant from the Save America's Treasures through the efforts of Congressman Steny Hoyer.



Phipps barn with recent repairs and new siding.

Upcoming Events:

Calvert County Agricultural Commission – (410) 535-4583 (Economic Development)

- Establishing & Managing Horse Pastures Seminar March 18 @ 6:30 at 301 Main Street, Prince Frederick
- Calvert Farm Tour October 19th, 1-4 pm - Farms TBD

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – (301) 274-1922

- Acidified Foods Course March 28-29 at the College of Southern Maryland
- Equine Conference April 1-3 – Lexington Park
- Buy Local Challenge Week July 19-27

