

**THE DILEMMA OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL RESERVE:  
Competing interests of agricultural and open space preservation**

**Public  
Desires**

*Disconnect*

**Economic and  
Regulatory  
Environment**

*Disconnect*

**Agriculture  
in the  
County**

**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](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.**