

A Look at *Maryland* Agriculture

Capital: Annapolis

Population: 6,045,680

Founded: April 28, 1788 (7th)

State Bird: Baltimore Oriole

State Tree: White Oak

State Flower: Black Eyed Susan

Number of Counties: 23 , plus

Baltimore City

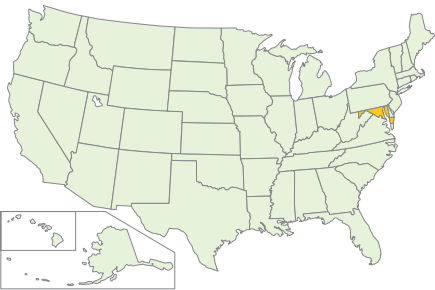
Largest City: Baltimore - 593,490

Nickname: Little America

Number of Farms: 12,429

Average Farm Size: 161 acres

Total Farmland: 2 million acres



www.agclassroom.org/md

Climate & Soil

- The mean annual air temperature is 45°F in the northern parts of the state compared to 42°F in the southern parts of the state.
- Sassafras series consisting of very deep, fine-loamy, siliceous, semiactive, well drained, moderately permeable soils formed in sandy marine and old alluvial sediments of the Coastal Plain.
- These soils are categorized as prime farmland and best suited to construction, onsite effluent disposal, and recreational development.
- Mean annual precipitation 35"-50" and frost free period 130-250 days.

Crops & Livestock

- 32% of Maryland's land is in agriculture – over 1.9 million acres - with the majority of that as cropland.
- Extensive research and work is done by farmers to implement best management practices that protect our land & the Chesapeake Bay Watershed while providing the food and fiber products necessary for our existence.
- Known as "America in Miniature", Maryland agriculture is as diverse as that of the nation.
- Grain represents the largest commodity grown by acreage in Maryland. This includes corn, wheat, barley, and hay (including alfalfa).
- Maryland growers produce 2.8 billion pounds of corn each year, which is mostly used for livestock, feed, and industrial uses.
- Apples, peaches, plums, and cherries are among the popular fruit tree varieties grown in Maryland, as are berries, grapes, figs, and currants.
- Exotic plants and spices are a growing niche sector in the state, with 14 different spice companies in Maryland.
- Poultry is Maryland's number one agricultural industry with over 1,900 farms. Eggs and poultry make up \$1.2 billion in sales in the state.
- Maryland has over 101,000 horses in the state, more than any other state! Horses and the horse racing industry have always played a major role in Maryland's heritage, economy and recreation.
- Despite blue crabs being Maryland's most popular aquaculture industry, mollusks, like oysters, actually bring the largest income at \$11.5 million. There are 55 aquaculture farms in all in Maryland, 35 of them mollusk operations.
- Poultry, nursery and turf production, seafood, dairy, corn, soybeans, racing and pleasure horse industries now dominate Maryland agriculture.

General

- Maryland's Food & Fiber production industries (agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture) account for \$19.66 billion in economic activity and 83,619 jobs.
- 70% of all farms in Maryland are smaller, between 1-99 acres each.
- 83% of Maryland farms are owned by families or individuals with an average farmer age of 57.
- The number of principle female farmers has increased in Maryland by nearly 33% from 2012, now totaling 8,148.
- While Maryland has many sprawling urban and suburban areas, including the 10 or more cities across the state with a population greater than 20,000, it's important to note that over 50% of its land consists of farms and forests. Specifically, of Maryland's 6.3 million total acres, 3.5 million of that is working farmland and forest land.