



GREETINGS

It's been an exciting and challenging year for Maryland agriculture. We had both record-setting high commodity prices and one of the most severe droughts in recent history. The affects of these issues remind us how important unbiased statistical information is to farmers, public policy-makers, and agriculture-related businesses and how fortunate we are to have the Maryland Office of the National Agricultural Statistic Service as a resource.

Governor Martin O'Malley was able to use information provided by NASS in his successful request for a USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation. Farming businesses look to these numbers to help plan investments. And the Maryland Department of Agriculture uses the information to help address the industry's policies of ensuring an adequate base of well-managed farmland, enhancing profitability, and advancing research, education and the advocacy of agriculture.

This year, the National Agricultural Statistics Service conducted its largest and its most important every-five-year survey, the 2007 Census of Agriculture. We thank each farmer for his or her response and congratulate NASS for a job well done. We look forward to the release of the data. The census data, along with weekly crop weather reports and many other releases of information, help to inform the public about the importance and condition of agriculture.

We thank Maryland State Director Barbara Rater and Deputy State Director Dale P. Hawks and their entire staff for all of their hard work and for all of their hard work and for the assistance they provide us. We will use this report and others as we work together to maintain and strengthen agriculture, Maryland's most important industry.

Roger L. Richardson
Secretary