

GREETINGS



Despite the economic downturn, most segments of Maryland agriculture are well positioned for the future and have a positive outlook. Moreover, Governor Martin O'Malley's strong support for farmers and the agricultural community is helping. He has seen first-hand that Maryland farmers are doing good things for the environment, providing more and more of our food locally, supporting the local and rural economy and preserving open space, all of which is key to ensuring a smart, green and growing future for Maryland families.

Unbiased statistical information is essential to farmers, public policy-makers, and agriculture-related businesses to keep our agricultural businesses strong and profitable. We are fortunate to have the Maryland Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service as a resource. 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.

We thank Maryland State Director Barbara Rater and Deputy State Director Dale P. Hawks and their entire staff for their continued hard work and their dedicated assistance they provide us. We will use this report, the 2007 Census and other reports as we work together to maintain and strengthen agriculture, Maryland's most important industry.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl Hance". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Earl F. Hance
Secretary