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We are pleased to present the 2008 edition of the Agriculture in Maryland Summary. This publication represents the collaborative efforts of the Maryland Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). It contains statistics covering a wide range of subjects relating to crop production, livestock and poultry numbers, and general economic information.

USDA has a rich history of collecting and distributing agricultural statistics, dating back over 140 years. Each year, the employees of NASS conduct hundreds of surveys and prepare reports that impact every facet of Maryland's agricultural community. Our mission, to provide timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture, would not be possible without the voluntary coop-

eration of Maryland farmers that took valuable time over the past year to respond to our surveys. We are grateful to the continued support provided by our producers.

In 2008, producers completed and returned thousands of Census of Agriculture report forms. Conducted every five years, the Census of Agriculture is the only source of consistent and comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation. It is an opportunity for local farmers to demonstrate the importance and strength of Maryland agriculture and help shape our communities for future generations. Look for the 2007 Census of Agriculture results at www.agcensus.usda.gov.

Special thanks to our partners at the University of Maryland Extension, our federal partners at the local Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, and to all the dedicated employees of the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Appreciation is also expressed to our office staff for their hard work and dedication in compiling the statistics included herein. Last, but certainly not least, we owe a heart-felt THANK YOU to our "front-line", our field and office enumerators, for their perseverance and skill in collecting survey data throughout the year.

Please visit our Web site at http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Maryland/ to view this publication and other reports. If you would like additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail, telephone, or personal visit; your comments regarding our programs and publications are always welcome. Our staff is dedicated to serving the Maryland farm community and providing the highest quality service possible for our data users.