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EASTERN SHORE
UMES EXTENSION

Maryland Agritourism: It's Role in Feeding Our Futures

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**2nd ANNUAL EASTERN SHORE FOOD
SECURITY SYMPOSIUM
WYE MILLS, MD
MARCH 20, 2026**

Disclaimer



National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Aim



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Discuss The Role of Maryland Agritourism to Address Food (in)Security Challenge





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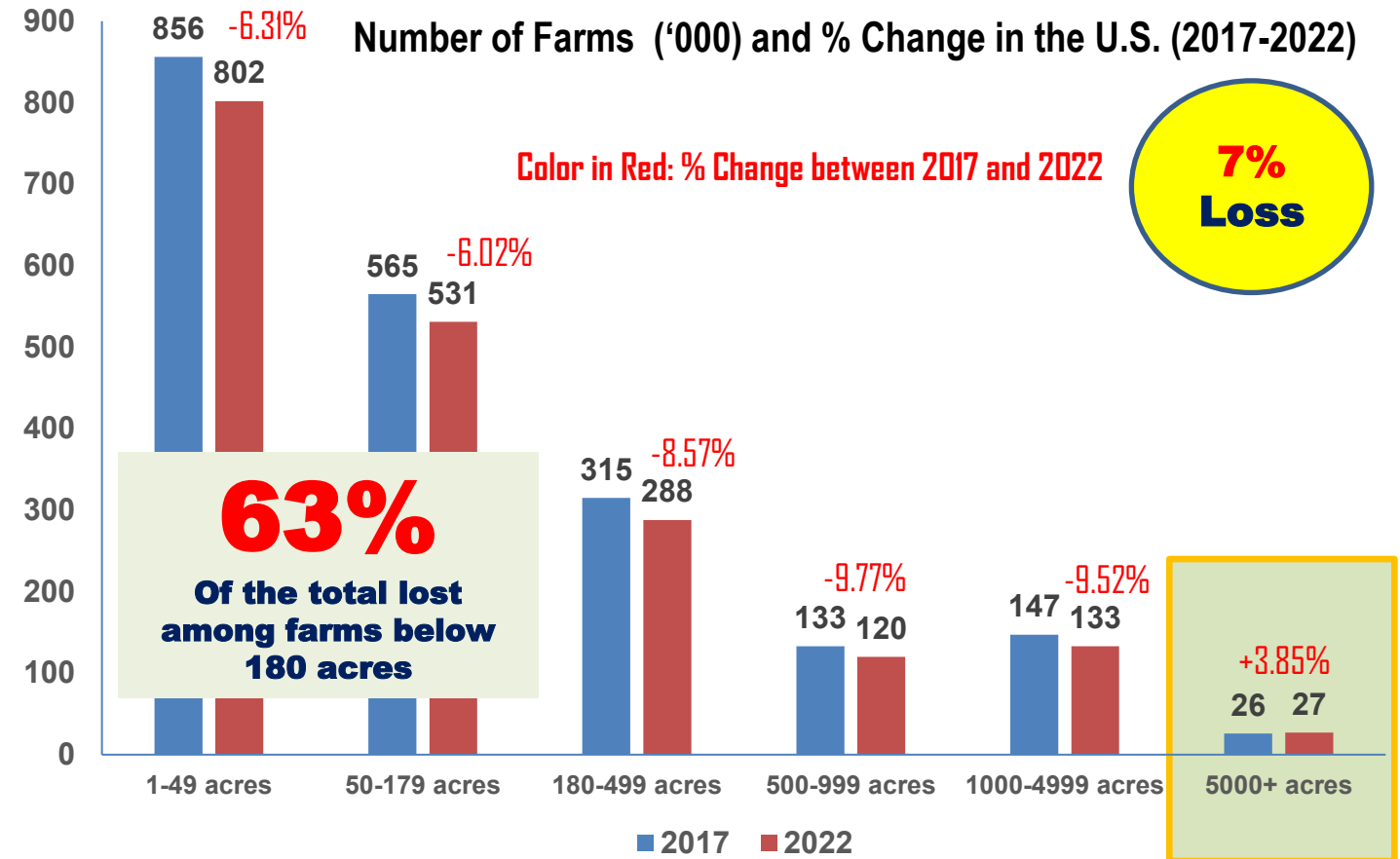
Status of Farming and Food Security

Status of Farms: U.S.



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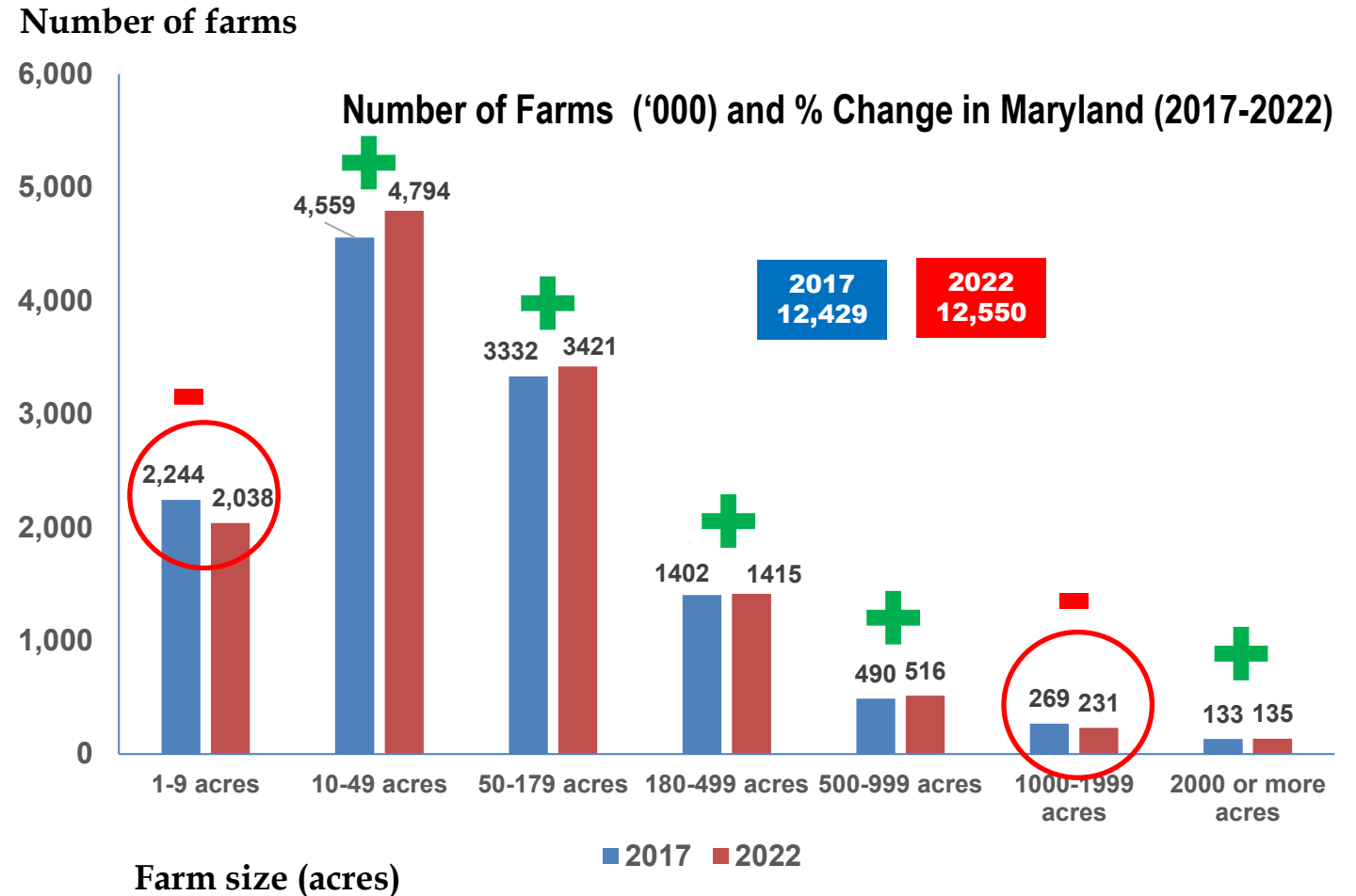
- Small family farms (96%) are the backbone of the U.S. agriculture.
- Despite the fact, in the past FIVE years (2017-2022), the U.S. lost 141,733 farms (over 20 million acres of farmland) with a reduction by 6.9%.



Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022

Status of Farms: Maryland

- Farms with less than 50 acres (55%).
- Farms with less than 180 acres (82%).
- In the past FIVE years (2017-2022), Maryland gained 121 farms.
- However, lost farmers with land below 10 acres and between 1,000 to 1,999 acres.



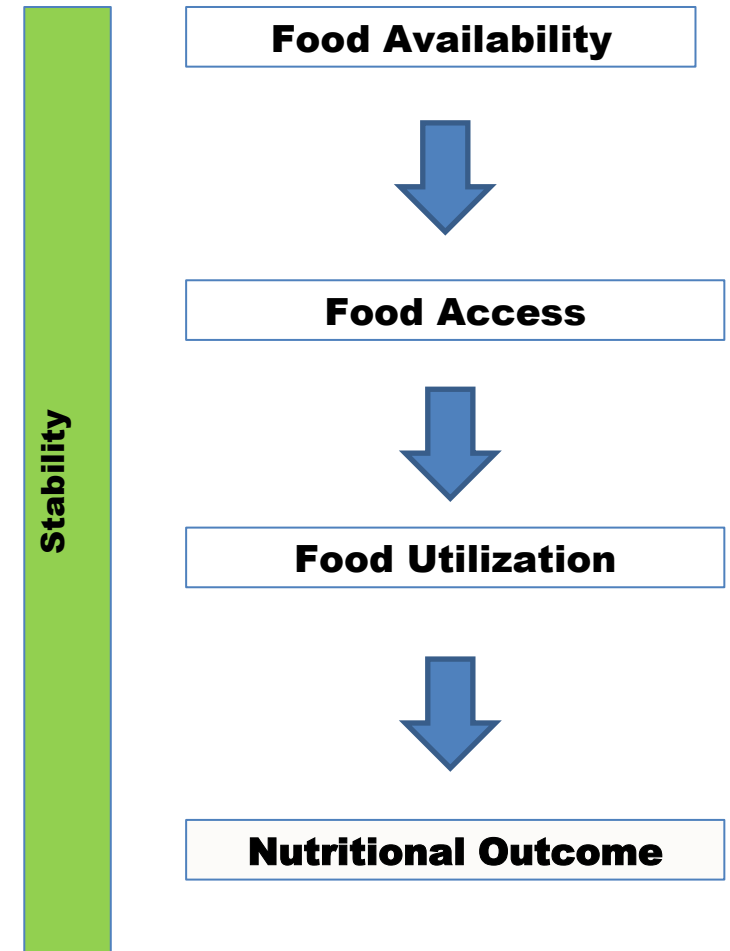
Food Insecurity in Maryland

- Maryland has a diverse population - over 6 million.
- About 1 in 8 persons (12.5%) are food insecure.
- About one-third may face hunger this year.
- Food insecurity higher among Black and Hispanic households, as well as households with children or single adults.

Source: Maryland Food Bank. <https://mdfoodbank.org/hunger-in-maryland/whats-at-stake/>

FAO (2014): Food Insecurity is a lack of **regular access to enough safe and nutritious foods for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life.**

Food Security Dimensions

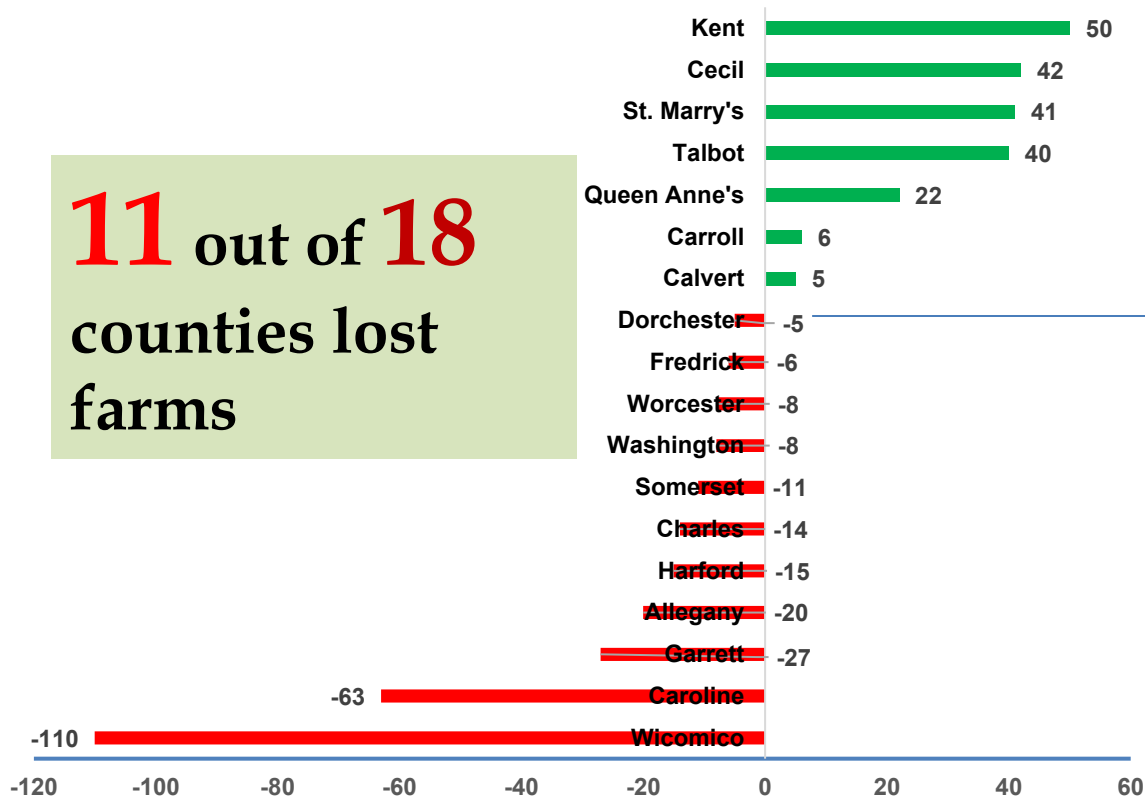


Change in # of Farms by Counties and Food Insecurity – Rural Counties



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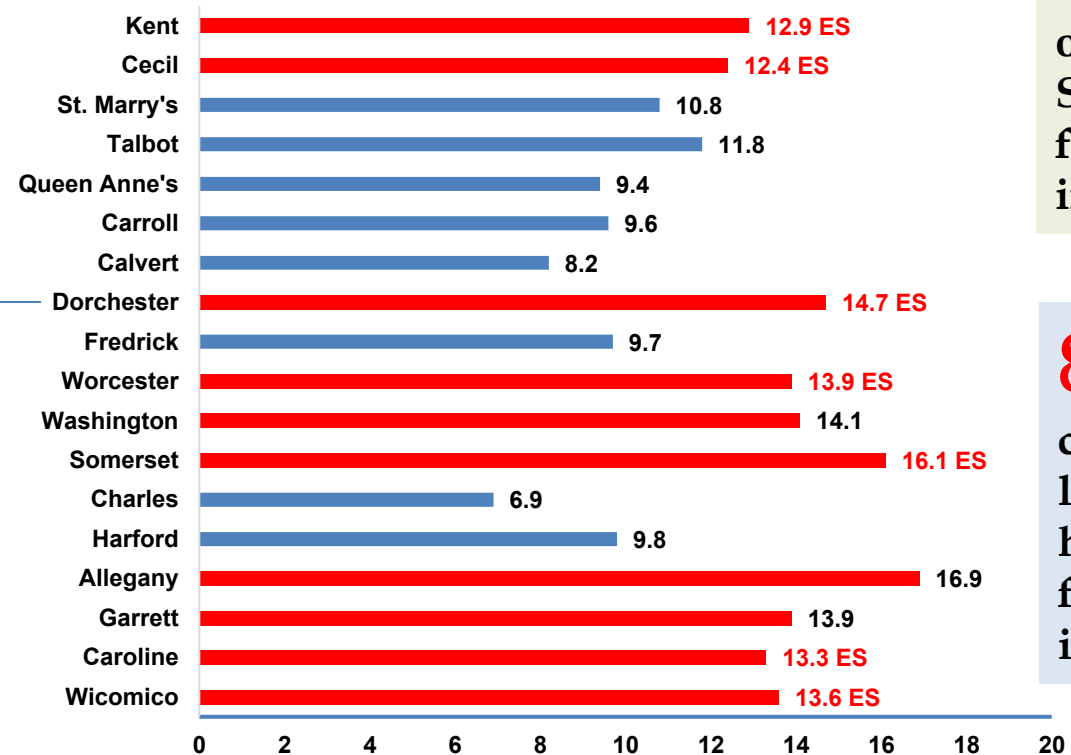
Change in # of Farms in Rural Counties (2017-2022)



11 out of **18**
counties lost
farms

Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022

Food Insecurity (%) in Rural Counties (2019)



7 counties
of the Eastern
Shore - high
food
insecurity

8 out of **11**
counties that
lost farms
have high
food
insecurity

Feeding America: as “a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life.”

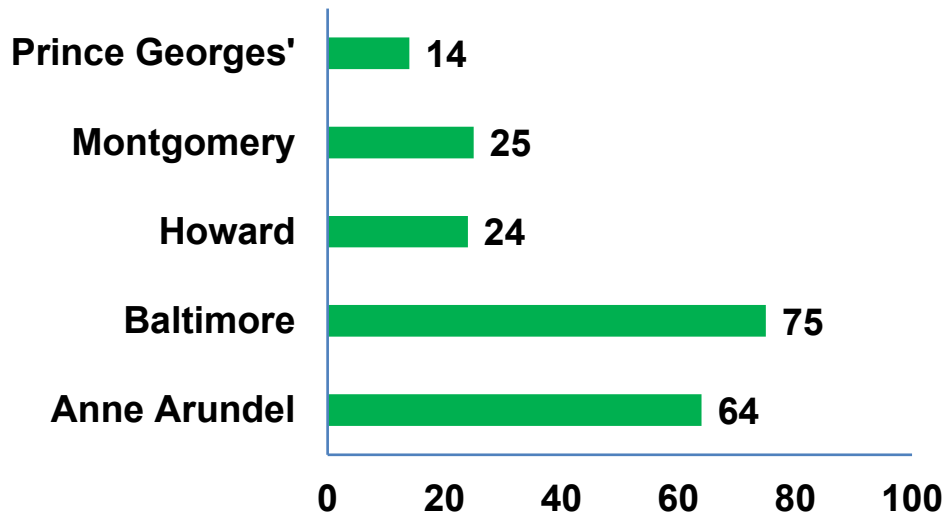
Source: National Newspaper Publishers Association

<https://nnpa.org/counties-with-the-highest-rate-of-food-insecurity-in-maryland/>

Change in # of Farms by Counties and Food Insecurity – Urban/Suburban Counties



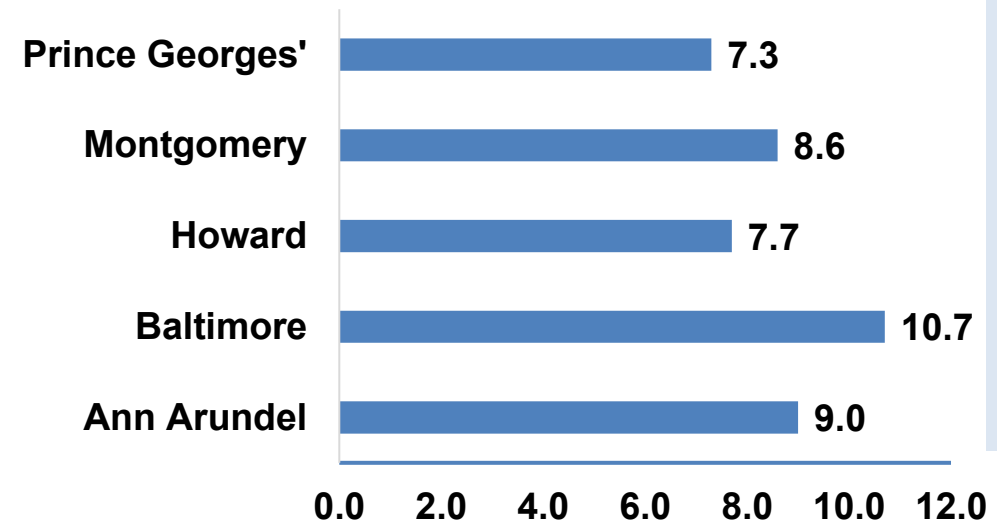
Change in # of Farms in Urban Counties (2017-2022)



All 5 urban counties increased their farms

Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022

Food Insecurity in Rural Counties (2019)



All 5 counties that gained farms have food insecurity below 12%

Feeding America: as “a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life.”

Source: National Newspaper Publishers Association

<https://nnpa.org/counties-with-the-highest-rate-of-food-insecurity-in-maryland/>



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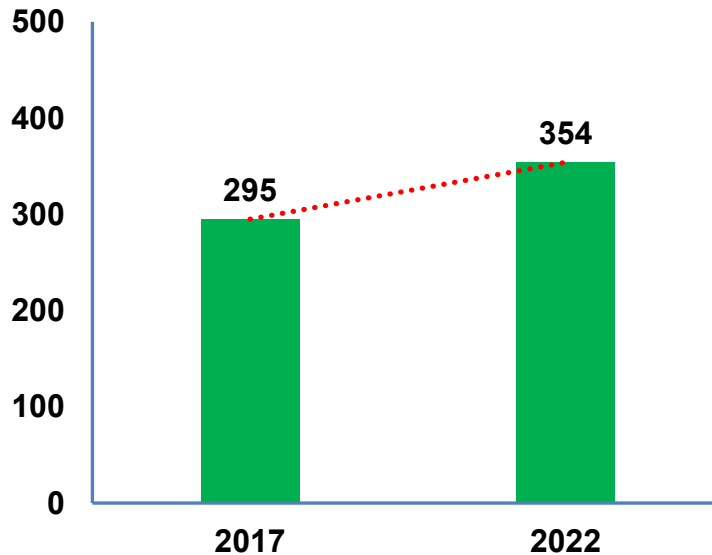
Status of Agritourism and How it Can Address the Food Insecurity Challenge

Agritourism and it's Status in Maryland

- More recently, many small and medium farmers are diversifying their incomes through **AGRITOURISM** for (economic) viability.

Agritourism is: "an activity conducted on a farm offered to the general public or guests for education, recreation, or active involvement in farm operations" ~Md. Code, Land Use § 4-212: Section 4-212 – Agritourism

Number of Farms in Agritourism and Recreation.



Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022



Activities

1. Farm tours
2. Hayrides
3. Corn mazes
4. Seasonal petting farms
5. Farm museums
6. Guest farms
7. Pumpkin patches
8. Pick your own or cut your own produce
9. Camping
10. Incidental outdoor stays
11. Classes related to agricultural products or skills
12. Picnic and party facilities with agritourism activity
13. Farm stays - "camping" and "incidental outdoor stays"

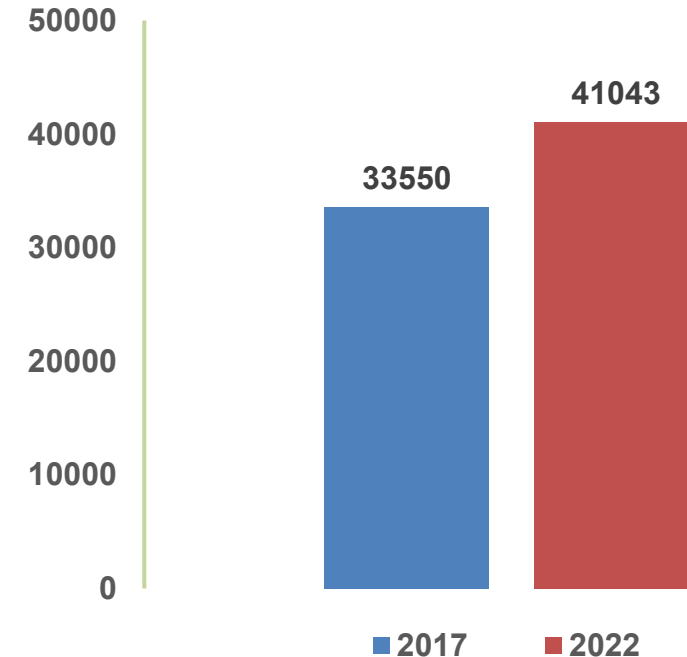
How can Agritourism Address the Food Insecurity Challenge?



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- Producing and selling locally produced fresh produce (fruits, vegetables, eggs,..)
- Producing and selling value-added products
- Organizing events such as entertainment, recreation activities, etc., and expanding incomes through visitor fees
- Providing education to visitors (such as classes and hands-on)
- Employment generation
- More.....

Per Farm \$ from Agritourism and Recreation, MD



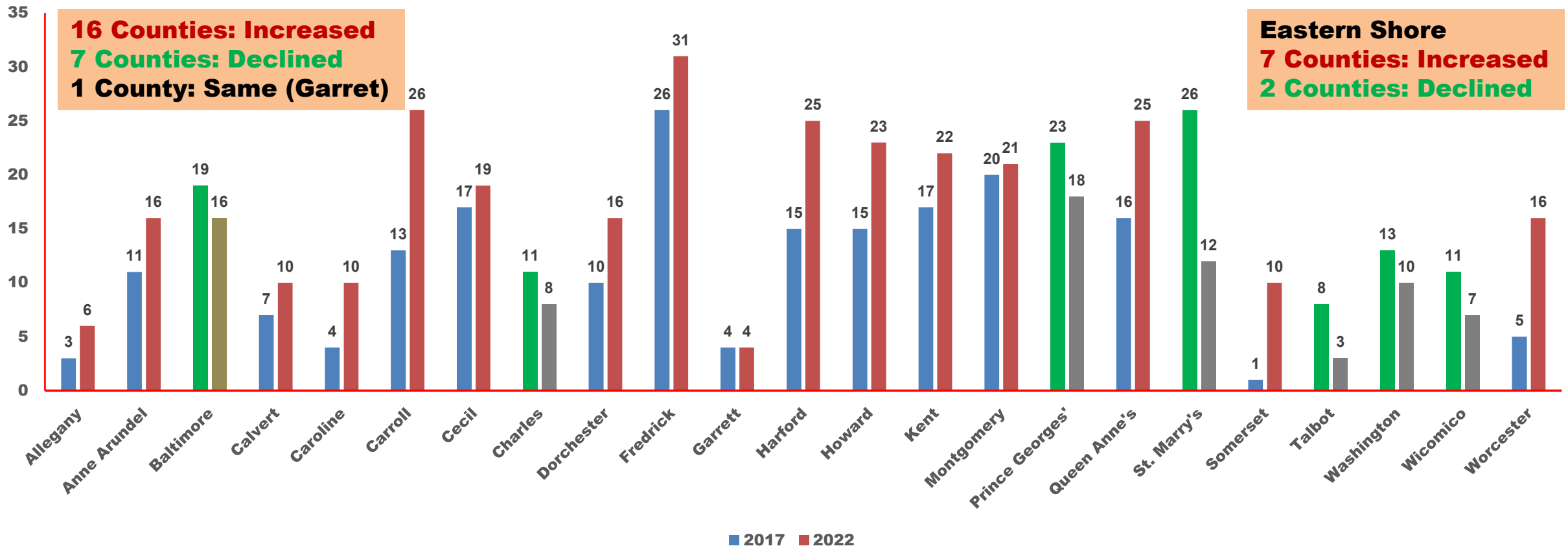
Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022

Status of Agritourism in Maryland by Counties



Maryland: Agritourism and Recreation by Counties

No. of Farms in Agritourism and Recreation, Maryland Counties (2017 and 2022).



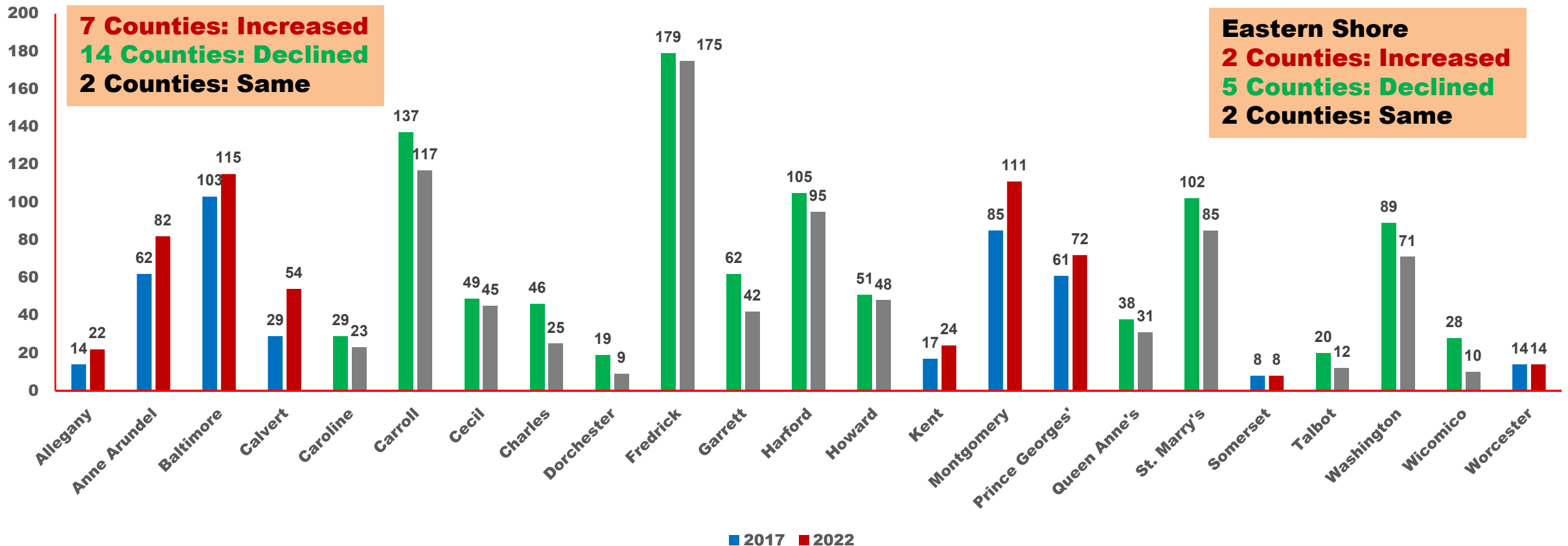
Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022

Status...Maryland by Counties



Maryland: Farms that Sold Food Directly to Customers

No. of Farms that Sold Food Directly to Customers by Counties (2017 and 2022).



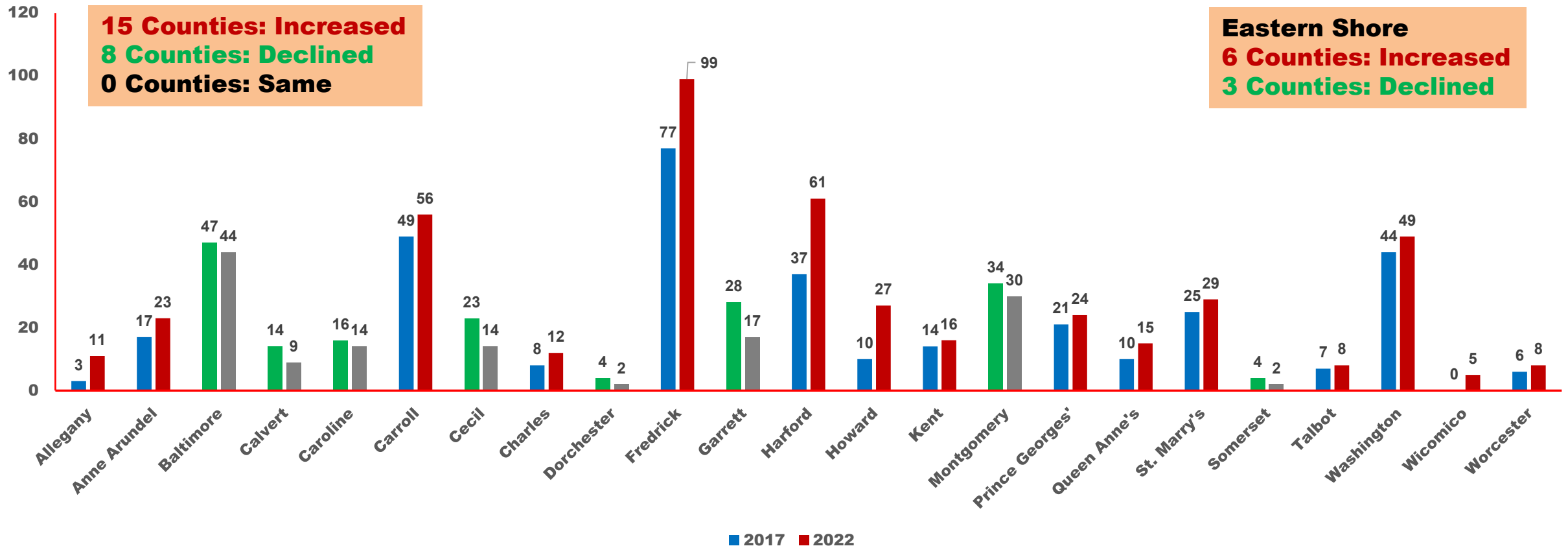
Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022

Status...Maryland by Counties



Maryland: Farms that Produced and Sold Value-Added Products

No. of Farms that Sold Value-Added Products by Counties (2017 and 2022).

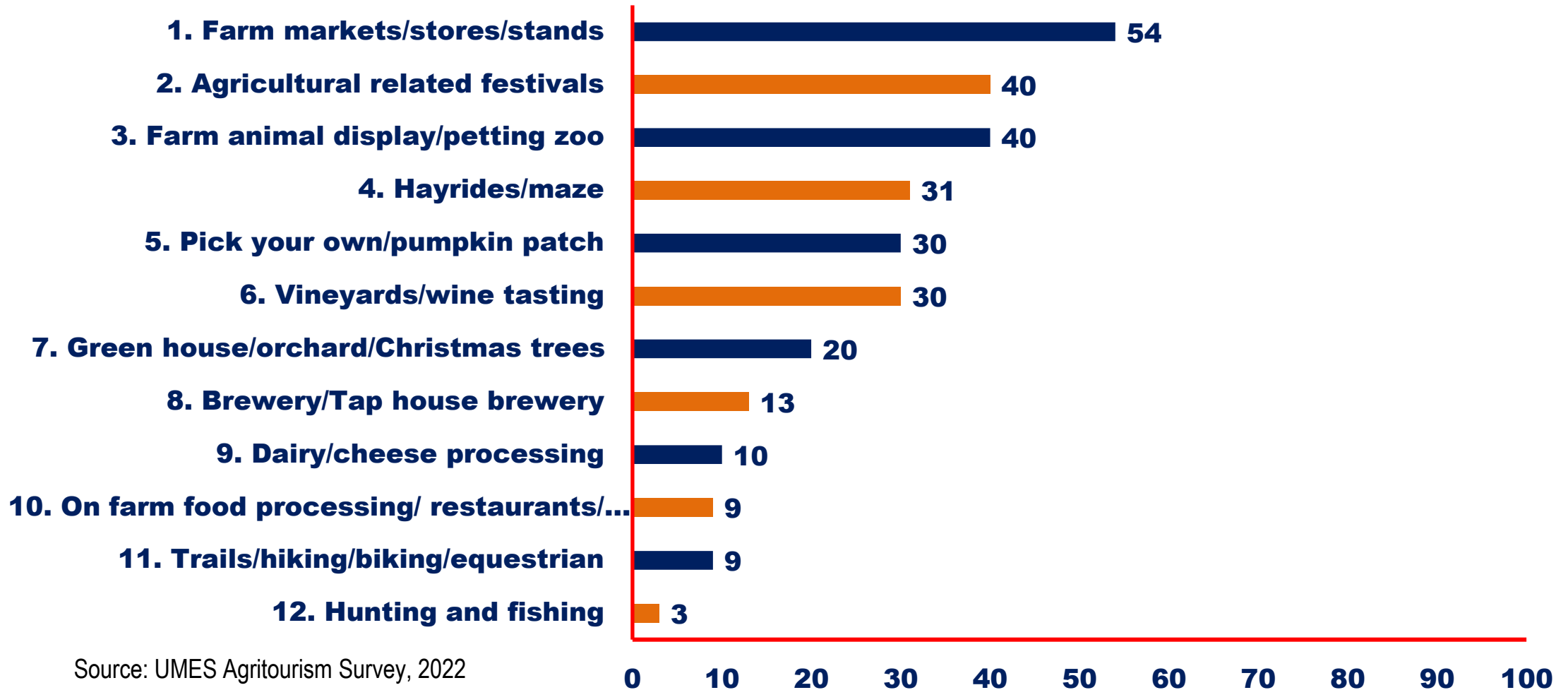


Source: Census of Agriculture, 2022

Offerings/Attractions on a Farm - Maryland



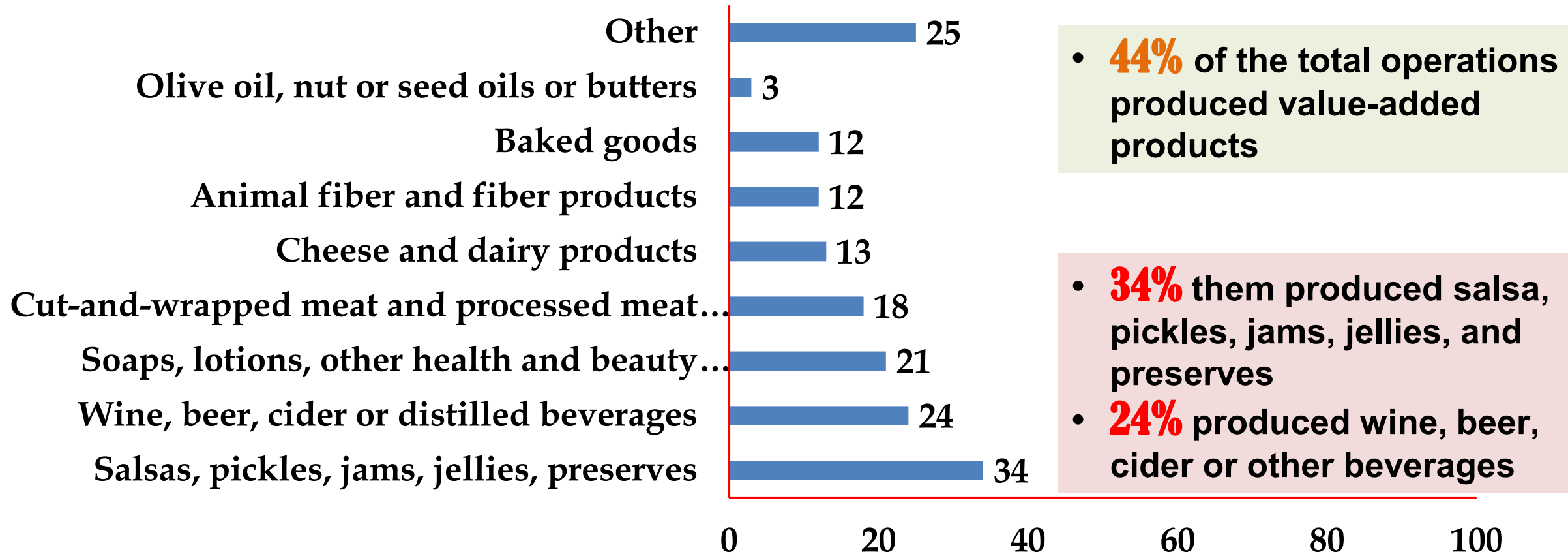
Offerings (% of Farm Operators, n=79)



Source: UMES Agritourism Survey, 2022

Value-Added Products - USA

- **Specific Types of Value-Added Products (%) (n=785)**

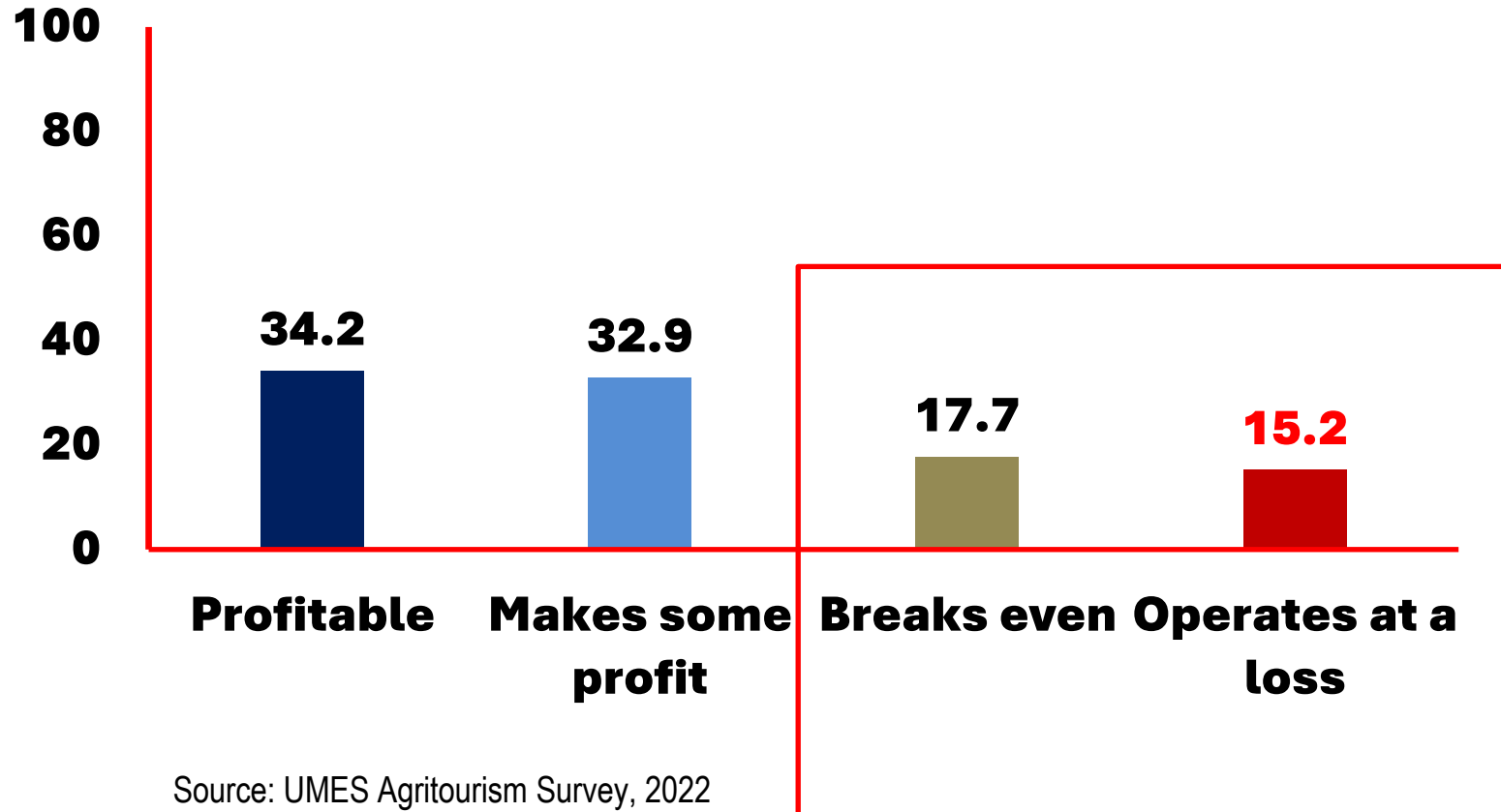


Profitability of Agritourism Operations (n=79)



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Which of the following best describes the economic situation of your farm/agritourism business? (%)



15% at a Loss.

67% Profitable and make some profit

Source: UMES Agritourism Survey, 2022



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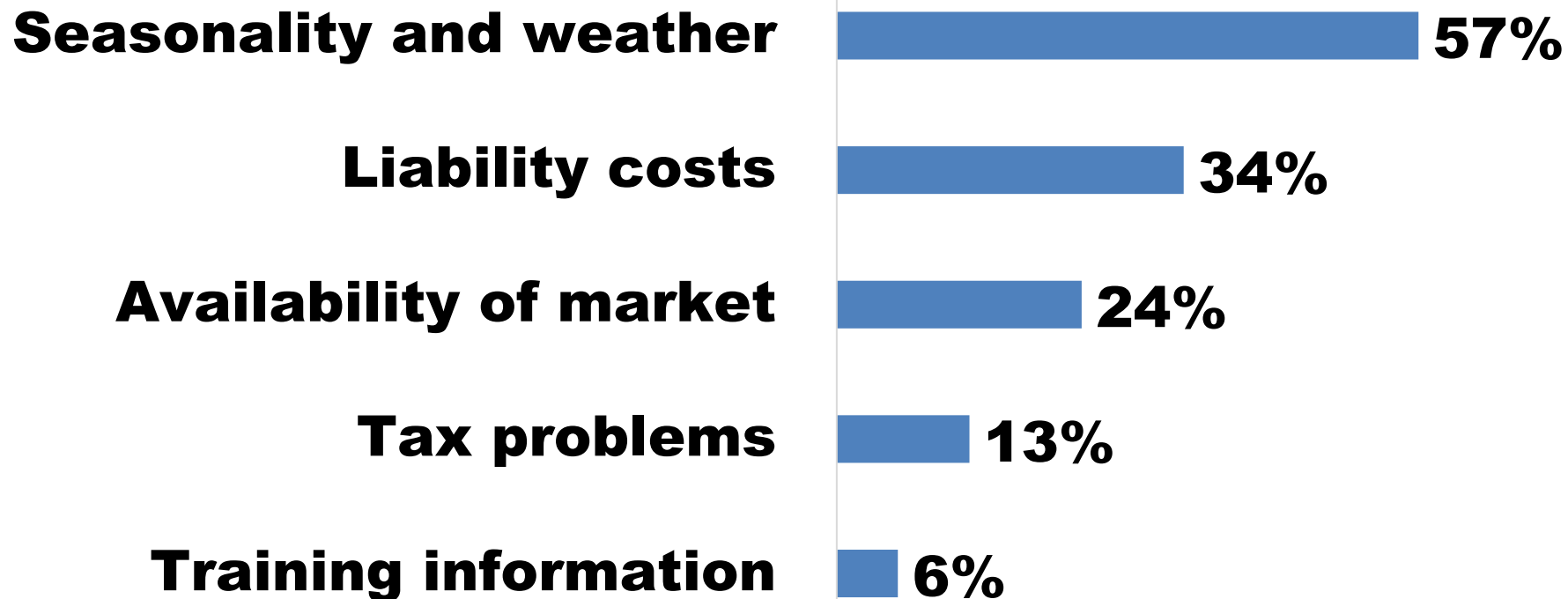
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Challenges

Challenges Facing Agritourism Operators in Maryland



Which of the following do you consider important challenges?
Please check all that apply.



Title

Other Challenges Reported



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- **Advertising/Marketing**
- **Availability of Workers/Labors**
- **Environment - Bees Affected by Pesticides**
- **County Planning & Permitting Interface**
- **Expense & Complications of Regulations/Permits**
- **Farm Presentation**
- **Growing to Accommodate Demand**
- **Ambiguous Regulations**
- **COVID/Pandemic Effect on Tourism**
- **Local County Support & Tourism Support**
- **Neighborhood Support**
- **Product Mix**
- **Regulations around Alcohol Production**



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Opportunities

Opportunities...



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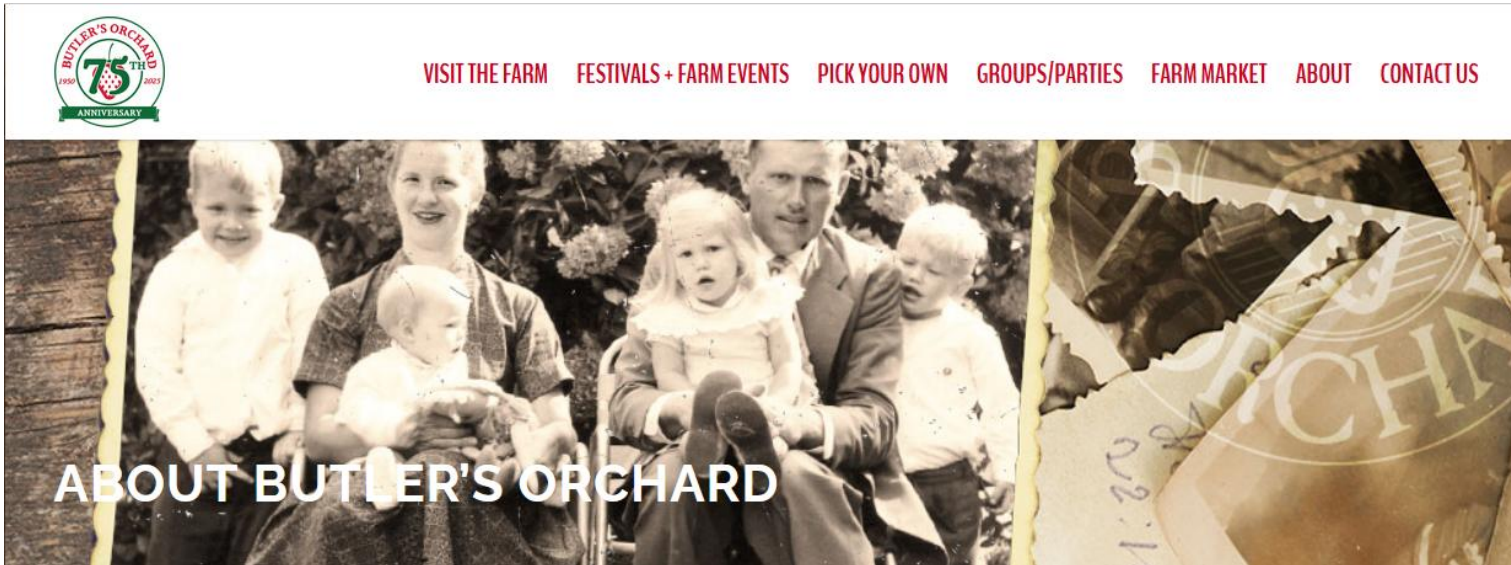
- **Opportunity for a wide variety of activities:**
- **Fruits, Vegetables, Floriculture – U-pick farms, corn maze, value-added products**
- **Animals – Petting zoos, horse riding, creameries,**
- **Farm festivals,**
- **Educational tours,**
- **Farm stays,**
- **Wineries and Breweries,**
- **Lavender and flower farms,**
- **Farm stands/stores,**
- **Farmers' markets,**
- **Trails,**
- **More...**

Opportunities...



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- Maryland's economy is agriculturally based with a legacy of it's over 200 years of rich history and century old intergenerational farms.



Pop's Old Place



Grand Old Barns on the Frederick County
Landmarks Barnstorming Tour

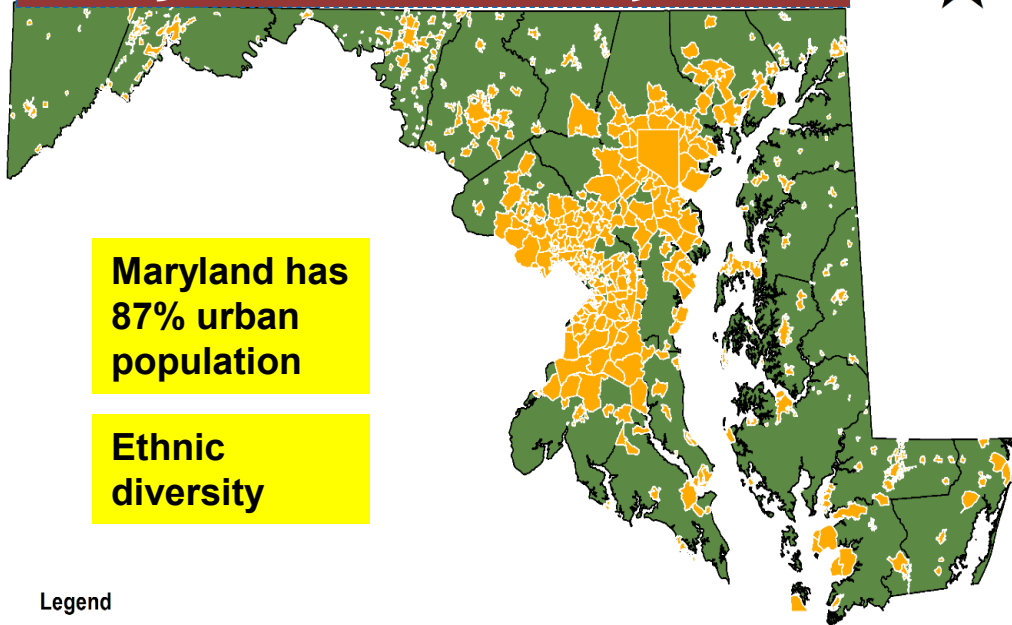
Opportunities...



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- All counties in Maryland are within 2 hours of drive from big population centers of Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Ocean City (summer).


Major cities in Maryland



Maryland has
87% urban
population

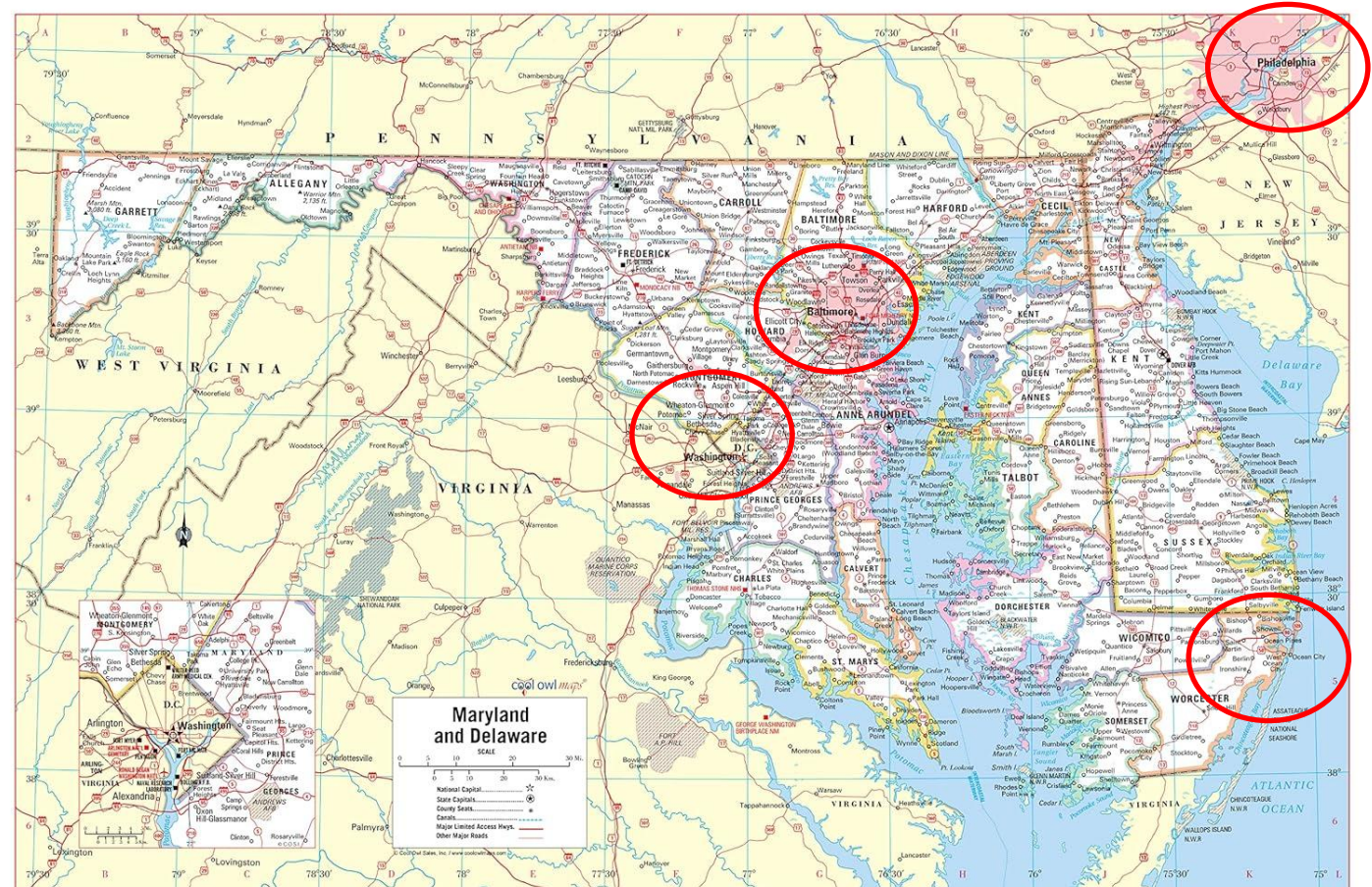
Ethnic
diversity

Legend

 Maryland Cities

DISTANCE TO LARGE POPULATED AREAS

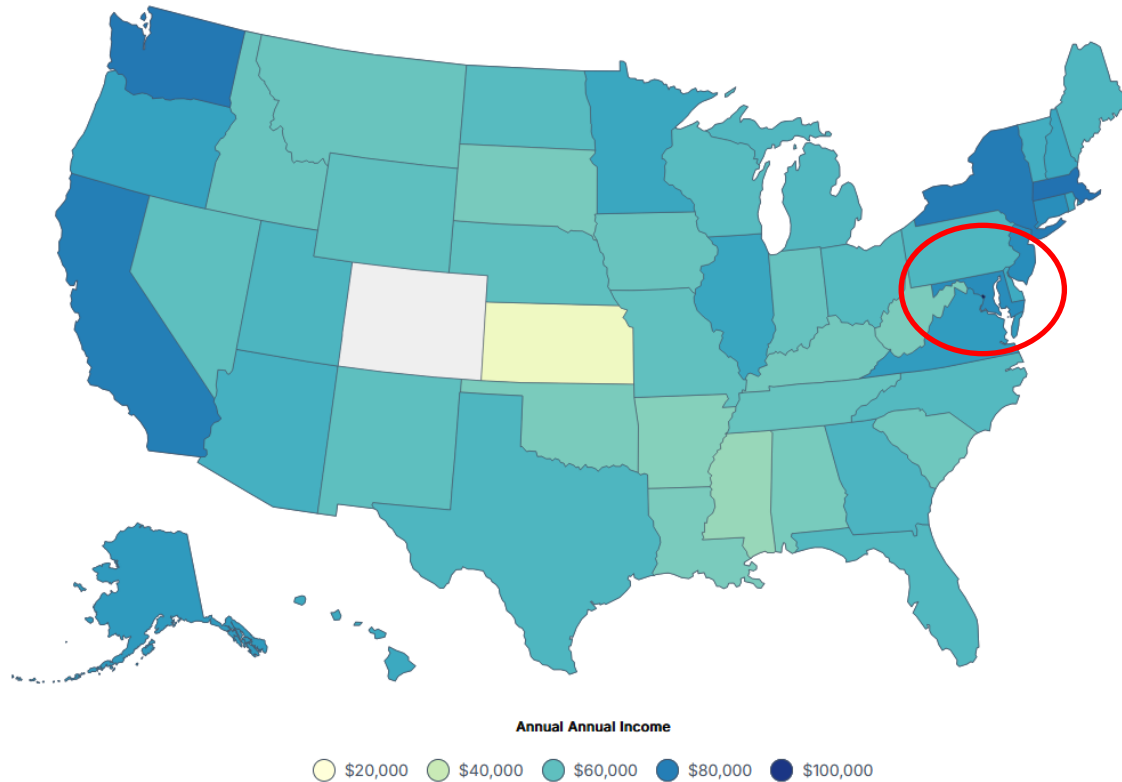
0 10 20 40 60 80
Miles





Opportunities...

- Among the Rich States (Virginia, Maryland, Washington D.C.)
- Disposable Incomes of Residents

Average Income by State 2025



2024 ▾

STATE	ANNUAL ANNUAL INCOME 2024 ↓
 District of Columbia	\$109,420
 Massachusetts	\$83,050
 Washington	\$81,550
 New York	\$80,630
 California	\$79,900
 New Jersey	\$76,320
 Maryland	\$76,130
 Connecticut	\$76,050
 Alaska	\$72,810
 Virginia	\$72,060

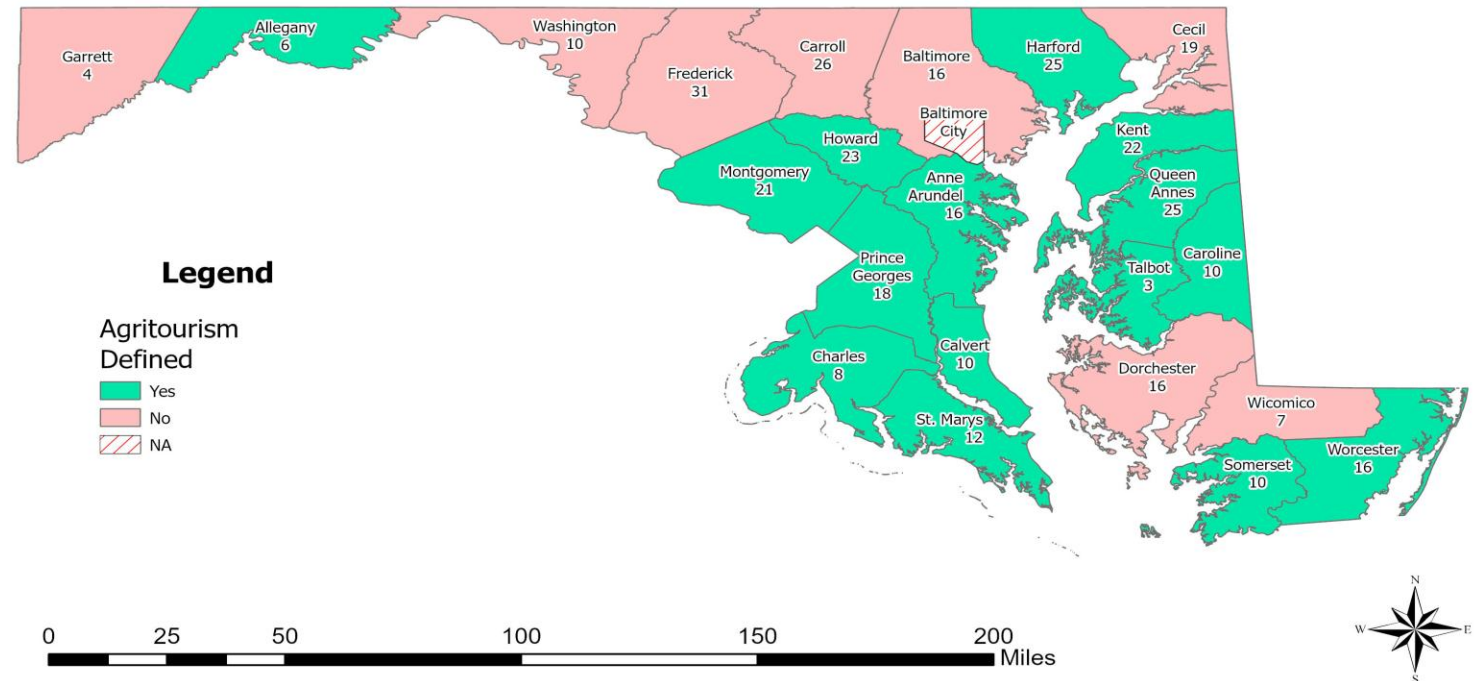
Opportunities...

- The State of Maryland has already defined Agritourism.

**15 Out of 23+1
Counties Defined
Agritourism**

Agritourism Defined in County Statutes

Number represents the number of Agritourism and Recreational Farms in each county



Summary

- **The State of Maryland has already defined Agritourism.**
- **Agritourism is growing.**
- **Agritourism has important role in addressing food insecurity problem.**
- **There are challenges. However, there are plenty of opportunities for diversified agritourism.**
- **Promotion is a key to enhancing agritourism in Maryland.**

<https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/economy/html/unemployrates.html>

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES - ANNUAL						
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Maryland	6.50%	5.20%	3.00%	2.20%	3.00%	
Allegany County	8.30%	6.40%	4.00%	3.30%	4.30%	
Anne Arundel County	5.70%	4.40%	2.70%	1.90%	2.70%	
Baltimore City	8.20%	6.70%	3.80%	2.90%	4.00%	
Baltimore County	6.70%	5.30%	3.10%	2.30%	3.10%	
Calvert County	5.10%	4.20%	2.80%	2.00%	2.60%	
Caroline County	5.80%	4.80%	3.10%	2.30%	3.00%	
Carroll County	5.00%	3.90%	2.50%	1.80%	2.40%	
Cecil County	6.00%	5.00%	3.20%	2.40%	3.30%	
Charles County	6.40%	5.10%	3.00%	2.20%	3.10%	
Dorchester County	6.50%	5.40%	3.50%	2.50%	3.50%	
Frederick County	5.30%	4.00%	2.50%	1.90%	2.60%	
Garrett County	7.00%	5.30%	3.50%	2.60%	3.50%	
Harford County	5.60%	4.40%	2.80%	2.10%	2.80%	
Howard County	5.30%	4.20%	2.60%	1.90%	2.60%	
Kent County	6.80%	5.40%	3.50%	2.60%	3.50%	
Montgomery County	5.90%	4.80%	2.60%	1.80%	2.70%	
Prince George's County	7.70%	6.60%	3.20%	2.30%	3.30%	
Queen Anne's County	5.40%	4.00%	2.60%	2.00%	2.50%	
St. Mary's County	4.60%	4.00%	2.80%	2.00%	2.70%	
Somerset County	7.50%	6.30%	4.00%	3.20%	3.90%	
Talbot County	6.30%	5.30%	3.40%	2.30%	3.30%	
Washington County	6.80%	5.10%	3.20%	2.60%	3.30%	
Wicomico County	7.00%	5.30%	3.40%	2.50%	3.30%	
Worcester County	10.90%	7.20%	4.70%	3.40%	4.20%	
MARYLAND AT A GLANCE						
ECONOMY						
EMPLOYMENT						
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES						

Maryland's unemployment rate remained at 4.2% in December 2025, while the national rate fell from 4.6% to 4.4%. Of the 3,232,441 civilian workers in Maryland, 3,096,065 were employed and 136,376 were unemployed. The State's labor force participation rate, which is the number of employed and unemployed workers divided by the civilian population number, was 64.5.



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Any Questions?

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Thank You!





UMES Extension

- About Us ▾
- Animal Agriculture
- Agritourism ▾
- UMES Ag Showcase
- Small Farms Program
- Small Farm Conference
- 4-H Youth Development
- UMES Extension Apiary Program
- Mosquitoes in Maryland
- Agriculture Law Education Initiative
- Resources & Publications
- Events
- Maryland Extension Network



By combining agriculture and tourism, UMES Extension aims to help farmers increase their revenue streams and spread community knowledge about agriculture on the Eastern Shore, throughout Maryland and the nation.

What is Agritourism

Agritourism is defined by Maryland law as "an activity conducted on a farm offered to the general public or guests for education, recreation or active involvement in farm operations."

It is a viable option for maintaining a farm's sustainability, helping to expand income sources.

Agritourism includes:

- Farm tours
- Hayrides
- Corn mazes
- Seasonal petting farms
- Farm museums
- Guest farms
- Pumpkin patches
- Pick your own or cut your own produce
- Camping
- Incidental outdoor stays
- Classes related to agricultural products or skills
- Picnic and party facilities in conjunction with any agritourism activity.



UMES Extension

About Us ▾

Animal Agriculture

Agritourism ▲

Maryland Agritourism
Interactive Map

UMES Ag Showcase

Small Farms Program

Small Farm Conference

4-H Youth Development

UMES Extension Apiary
Program

Mosquitoes in Maryland

Agriculture Law Education
Initiative

Resources & Publications

Events

Maryland Extension Network

UMES EXTENSION AGRITOURISM INTERACTIVE MAP

Whether you're looking for data on agritourism in the State of Maryland or simply looking for a place to pick your own strawberries or visit a local craft brewery, the map below can help you find every type of agritourism Maryland has to offer, and which businesses are closest to you.

For questions about or additions to this map, please contact [Dr. Prem Bhandari](#) or agritourism@umes.edu.

Learn [how to use this interactive map](#).

What's a you-pick? Read all [agritourism venue definitions](#).

UMES Extension Agritourism Interactive Map

Lower Eastern Shore

North Central

Southern

Upper Eastern Shore

Western

Zoom to Region by clicking on the name above

Search by Activity or County using the Filter function below

- 1690 Farm
- 1812 Brewery
- 32nd Street Farmers Market
- 7 Locks Brewing

Directions Legend

50 km / 20 mi

Esri, USGS | County of Prince William, Fairfax County, VA; VGIN, Esri, TomTom, Ga... Powered by Esri

SAVE THE DATE

MARYLAND
AGRITOURISM
CONFERENCE



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November 15-17, 2026
Hyatt Regency
Cambridge, MD

Connecting agritourism
stakeholders with resources.

The Nov. 15 preconference tour
of agritourism venues will be a
separate ticket.

More details and registration
information coming soon.



Hosted by the UMES
School of Agricultural
and Natural Sciences

umes.edu/extension/community/agritourism-conference/



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