



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MAEF

1. Who is the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF)?

- ◆ MAEF is a private, non-profit 501c3 organization incorporated in 1989 following recommendations from a Governor's task force reviewing the status of agriculture in education in Maryland
 - The task force recommended establishing an independent organization whose purpose would be to educate Marylanders about the important role agriculture plays in their lives
 - MAEF conducts a variety of educational and promotional programs throughout the state using agriculture, nutrition & natural resources as the tools for teaching core subjects such as math, language arts, and science

2. Why is it important for Marylanders to know about agriculture or to be agriculturally literate?

- ◆ As the nation moves away from an agrarian-oriented society to a manufacturing, technology and service oriented society, fewer people have the opportunity for first-hand experience with the production of food, fiber and other products upon which their lives depend for survival
- ◆ It is important for both children and adults to be knowledgeable about agriculture for making informed decisions as consumers, citizens, voters, and leaders
 - About food & nutrition
 - About land use and natural resource management
 - About food safety
 - About environmental protection and stewardship
 - About agricultural economic development
 - About supporting activities that sustain the "working landscape" including profitability

3. How is MAEF Funded?

Grants	Individual Contributions	Corporate sponsors
Ag Tag Revenues	Fundraiser Programs	Service Fees
Commodity Sponsors	Endowment Development	

4. How does MAEF use the funds?

- ◆ **Ag in the Classroom Workshops - (AITC)** – providing educators with the resources and teacher training necessary to use agriculture as a tool for teaching core areas of study such as language arts, math, science, social studies, geography, etc.
 - Teachers receive quality curricula and materials matching Maryland's teaching standards
 - Programs are available for educating students k-12
- ◆ **Mobile Science Labs(s)** – primarily available to elementary schools throughout the state
 - For one-week periods in which MAEF instructors lead students through hands-on scientific activities where they learn about agricultural products, aquatics/conservation and food & fiber
 - The three labs log nearly 80 total school visits annually, with 50,000 or more student contacts made each year
 - Schools pay a modest fee, roughly 40% of the cost of lab operations, with the balance being underwritten by Ag Tag revenues and other contributions
- ◆ **Teacher Resources** -
 - *Take Me Out to the Cornfield* - video/DVD production linking agriculture to baseball
 - *Maryland Agriculture Commodity Map* - includes both wall and desk-size format, showing each county's top agricultural products (recently updated to reflect more recent census of agriculture)
 - *Digital Atlas of Maryland* – includes a collection of 100 maps and worksheets about Maryland agricultural products, growing seasons, regional maps, land use, soil types and more
 - *Teachers' Guide* - with lesson plans (matched to state teaching standards) to accompany the resources

- *Literature Links, Green Thumb resources*

Gems and many other lessons and

- ◆ **Elementary Education** – including annual AITC workshop, developing and managing the activities for the Mobile Science Labs, developing hands-on activities for the mobile Ag Showcase, working with Ag & commodity ambassadors, participating in regional and national professional development programs
- ◆ **Middle School**– including developing career connections for middle and high school, providing teacher training for public, private and home school programs and working with environmental studies and natural resources programs.
- ◆ **High School/Post Secondary** – including supporting activities and conferences for Maryland agriculture educators, supporting the Maryland Agricultural Teachers Association (MATA), supervising state FFA, developing statewide informational profiles for school programs, Ag teachers in training, Ag sciences and articulations with post-secondary institutions. This program is having a positive influence for initiating and growing programs statewide.
- ◆ **Maryland Agriculture Showcase** - Exhibiting at fairs, festivals, field days and other public events around the state promoting agriculture. This mobile exhibit of Maryland agriculture features 12 informative and interactive displays and various hands-on activities for children. The showcase is staffed by MAEF trained attendants.
 - **Ag on the Move** – this tabletop exhibit and hands on activities is available for events too small for the showcase or when the showcase is unavailable
- ◆ **Maryland FFA Association** - (a national youth development organization) the FFA Executive Secretary, a MAEF staff member, coordinates a variety of career development events, leadership workshops and state and national convention participation for more than 1300 members from school-based chapters throughout the state
- ◆ **Grants** - are awarded supporting Urban Garden Programs, Teacher Mentoring, LEAD Maryland, MD Envirothon, MD FFA Foundation and organizations who share MAEF's mission and outreach efforts.

5. How has MAEF expanded its programming?

- ◆ **Middle School and High School Ag in the Classroom** – Biotechnology, science and technology, Integrative Middle School Teacher Workshops, supporting MD Association for Environmental and Outdoor Educators, supporting MD Envirothon, supporting Maryland Farm to School, statewide program consulting, and expanded teacher training
- ◆ **Maryland Farm to School** – supporting the statewide Farm to School program development and teacher resources
- ◆ **“Career Connections” in Agriculture** - distributed to teachers, guidance counselors and students to increase awareness of agricultural career opportunities and to direct students toward proper training and education for careers in the agricultural industry
- ◆ **Agriculture Returns to the City** – focuses on urban areas throughout the state. This successful program has reached teachers in over 62 schools in Baltimore and over 20,000 students.

6. How many Maryland citizens are you reaching with your educational programs?

Since MAEF's inception, we have reached well over 600,000 Marylanders with our message of agricultural literacy. In 1990, the only program conducted was a teacher workshop. The mobile science lab program was added in 1995 with an aquatics classroom. A second lab was added in 1997 focusing on Maryland agriculture products and a third in 2000 with the biotechnology lab. In 2003, the Maryland Agriculture Showcase was added to our fleet of mobile classrooms, expanding into the arena of public education. MAEF is currently reaching over 178,000 citizens annually.

7. How many Maryland “Ag Tags” have been sold since its availability in July 2001?

From July, 2001 to December, 2009 nearly 173,000 new tags have been purchased; over 171,500 tags have been renewed and over \$3,850,000 has been raised to support MAEF programming. This income appears to be generous at first, but only a small portion of the initiatives needed to accomplish the long-term mission is funded through the Ag Tag

- With nearly 1 million students in kindergarten through grade 12 and another 4.6 million residents in the state, MAEF needs to expand its educational and promotional programs significantly to accomplish its mission of agricultural literacy and awareness.