



Calvert County NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: | July 14, 2011

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Calvert County Seeks Nominations for Sustainable Agriculture Awards Program

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – July 14, 2011 – To recognize the contributions that local agriculture makes toward a more sustainable community, the Calvert County Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup is seeking nominations for the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners' second annual Sustainable Agriculture Awards program.

The Sustainable Agriculture Awards will be offered in four categories. The **Sustainable Farmer of the Year** award will recognize a local farm that has a Soil Conservation Plan in place. The farm should utilize best management practices in soil conservation, should have a diversity of crops, should have implemented a plan to reduce pesticide use and is selling a crop directly to consumers. Preference will be given to farms on preserved properties.

The **Green Grocer of the Year** award will be offered to a retailer that buys and sells local products when in season. The business will have featured local products in advertising and business promotions. The variety and presentation of goods sold will also be considered.

The **Buy Local Restaurant of the Year** will recognize a restaurant that buys local products when in season. The ideal candidate will feature and advertise local products on menus and in special recipes. Special consideration will be given to those that offer a variety of local goods used in meals and for uniqueness in presentation.

New this year is the **Sustainable Meat Producer of the Year** award, which will

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recognize a local meat producer whose animals are raised, transported and processed humanely as defined in the Southern Maryland Meat standards. Livestock should not be fed animal by-products or given growth implants, and are given antibiotics only when medically necessary. The products should be sold locally and consumers should have access to clear, consistent and accurate information about how the animal was raised and fed.

Individuals, businesses and organizations are eligible for nomination in all four categories. Self nomination is accepted. Nominees will be judged by a selection committee comprised of representatives from Calvert Eats Local, the Calvert County Agriculture Commission and the University of Maryland Extension. Nominations will be accepted through August 31, 2011, and awards will be presented at a Board of County Commissioners' meeting in October, 2011.

Nomination forms are available at the Department of Planning & Zoning, 150 Main Street, Room 304, Prince Frederick, or online at www.co.cal.md.us/News/NewsHighlight7.asp. For further information please contact Denise Cherry at 410-535-1600, ext. 2340.

Established in 2008, the Calvert County Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup includes members from the county departments of Planning & Zoning, Economic Development and General Services along with representatives from the Calvert County Health Department, the Calvert County Soil Conservation District, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission and Maryland Cooperative Extension. The group's purpose is to facilitate revenue opportunities for farmers; facilitate market opportunities for farmers and consumers; help the community understand the importance of farming; and build a more sustainable community that is better insulated from price fluctuations and unsafe foods.

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Calvert County is Maryland's smallest county in land area with 213 square miles. It is home to approximately 90,000 people and has one of the highest standards of living in Maryland. Major industries include defense contracting, information technology, tourism, utilities, light manufacturing and administrative services.