AG'S PROGRESS TO DATE

Farmers' livelihoods depend directly on maintaining healthy soil, clean water, and stable ecosystems for future generations. While we have more work to do, farmers have made significant progress already!

- The Watershed Model shows that between 2023 and 2024, the agricultural sector was responsible for 76% of nitrogen reductions.
- Farmers more than doubled their cover crop acreage between 2009 and 2024, from 558,000 acres to 1,166,000 acres.
- Between 2009 and 2024, there was a 3x increase in acres with core nitrogen nutrient management practices and a 4x increase in acres with core phosphorus nutrient management practices. Tracking and crediting the full extent of nutrient management in the watershed remains a challenge.

FIND US AND LEARN MORE

The Agricultural Advisory Committee's fourteen voting members represent a cross-section of production systems and geographies across the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Membership includes two representatives from each Chesapeake Bay jurisdiction, including Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, DC.

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AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUPPORTING CHESAPEAKE RESTORATION THROUGH INCREASED FARM VIABILITY

ABOUT THE AG ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)

Farmers are not opponents in Chesapeake Bay restoration— they are partners and problem-solvers. Our farmers are frontline environmental stewards, balancing food for our communities with protecting the water, soil, and ecosystems that sustain us all. Supporting them means supporting clean water and strong rural economies.

Created by the Chesapeake Executive Council in 2024, the Agricultural Advisory Committee consists of farmers (including urban), agribusiness representatives and technical professionals to advise the Chesapeake Executive Council on strategies and opportunities for agricultural operations to more effectively meet the restoration and conservation goals of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

One of the key functions of the Committee is to provide recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council to advance watershed restoration. In 2025, the AAC offered the following recommendations:

1. **Strengthen Farm Viability as the Foundation for Conservation**
   Economic viability is inseparable from environmental sustainability- when farms thrive, conservation thrives. Programs should link profitability and risk management with improved water quality outcomes.

2. **Accelerate Innovation and Target Investments**
   To build on the success of current investments, the Partnership should support agronomic research and innovative practices, strategies, and technologies that enhance productivity, profitability and water quality.

3. **Celebrate Agricultural Progress and Build Public Trust**
   The "ag sector" is made up of 83,000 farms, including many small private landowners. They have achieved measurable nutrient and sediment reductions through their voluntary actions, innovation, and stewardship. Those successes should be recognized!

4. **Support Land Preservation and Diverse Agricultural Systems**
   Preserving farmland is integral to protecting the Bay. Maintaining working lands and improving soil health are core strategies.

5. **Cultivate Agricultural Literacy and Workforce Development**
   To sustain momentum, the next generation should be engaged and equipped to build conservation-focused agricultural businesses.