



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maryland Farmers Support the Urban Agricultural Act of 2016

Davidsonville, MD (September 28, 2016) – Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) stands with the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) in supporting the Urban Agricultural Act of 2016. U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, introduced this legislation on Monday, September 26, to increase assistance for urban farmers. MFB believes this Act would provide our urban farmers the technology and resources needed to increase access to healthy foods.

“Maryland Farm Bureau appreciates the challenges faced by farmers producing food on repurposed lots in Baltimore City and Rockville,” said Chuck Fry, President of Maryland Farm Bureau, “as well as those producing in rural communities on the Eastern Shore and in the mountains of western Maryland.”

“Our grassroots organization stands ready to assist farmers of all sizes from all locations,” added Fry. “MFB’s goal is to make sure legislators in Washington and Annapolis understand we are all in this together. The Urban Agricultural Act will give farmers in population centers the resources they need to bring local food to all our tables.”

The Urban Agricultural Act of 2016 is outlined to create new economic opportunities for agricultural cooperatives, rooftops, vertical farms and indoor production, and cutting-edge research. It will also provide new financial tools and support in the form of loans, risk management tools, a new Urban Ag office at USDA, and mentorship and education. The bill will increase access to healthy foods through community gardens and create a healthier environment with soil remediation and urban composting.

According to Sen. Stabenow, “this legislation addresses the unique needs of urban farmers by investing new resources and increasing flexibility through existing programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.”

AFBF President Zippy Duvall stated, “Regardless of where or how America’s farmers and ranchers produce food, giving them the technology and tools to succeed supports our nation’s strength and security. The Urban Agricultural Act of 2016 would do that for farmers in urban settings. As an organization that supports farmers of all sizes, commodities and production systems, Farm Bureau believes this legislation will build a stronger bond among all farmers—rural, suburban and urban.

“This legislation offers services and support to urban farmers. The research component of the bill is not only critical for production, but also for exploring the risk management, food safety, environmental and economic factors that are critical for economic success.

“It’s exciting that more Americans want to become farmers. Whether it is access to technical, marketing and educational materials, securing the capital investment to start new ag enterprises or navigating regulations that can kill innovation, all beginning farmers need a helping hand. Mentorship is a two-way street and we have much to teach and learn from each other. America’s farmers lend a hand when needed; they unite around a common mission.”

For updates on the Urban Agricultural Act of 2016, follow Maryland Farm Bureau on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mdfarmbureau or Twitter at www.twitter.com/farmbureau.md. Call 410.922.3426 for more information and to join Maryland Farm Bureau.

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Maryland Farm Bureau is a private, non-profit membership organization. It is controlled by its members through the democratic process and is financed by voluntary membership dues. Its strength comes from the active participation of over 36,000 member families that belong to the state’s 23 county Farm Bureaus. For the last 100 years, Maryland Farm Bureau has served to promote and protect Maryland agriculture and rural life. Help us Keep Maryland Farms First.