

## Environmental Sustainability

For 8 years Howard County has had an Environmental Sustainability office. This office has mainly promoted sustainability in the environment which I feel is very important. Farming has always been an important part of our local economy with production in dairy and livestock, corn, and small grains. As well as hay, pasture, tree fruits and vegetables also add to the diverse agriculture environment we have in Howard County.

Agriculture in Howard County has been a vital part in life of my family. We are one of the three dairy farms that still operates in the county. The two others are the Jones family on Underwood Road and Iager family in Fulton. We all have many generations that have been involved in operating these farms over the years.

Our family has been a member of many of the farm organizations that we have in the county. A few include the Farm Service Agency, Farm Bureau, Land Preservation Board, Howard County Fair Board, Western Shore 4-H Show which is held at the Howard County Fair Grounds. There are many families that have done the same as we have done to promote agriculture in the county. My daughter serves as the 4-H leader for the Howard County Dairy Club with a membership of 87 kids. This may seem strange with only 3 dairy farms in the county, but with a 4-H leasing program offered members who may live in small area's or developments can lease an animal and help care for it at one of our farms and then exhibit the heifer at the county fair.

Even with only 3 dairy herds there are 300 farms in the county. Where land holdings in the county comprise approximately 25% of our county's total land area. I have tried to tell you how important that I feel agriculture is in Howard County.

Just a few weeks ago we held an agricultural roundtable meeting at the TLV Tree Farm. The agriculture community got together with county government to have our concerns heard and discussed.

I thank you for letting me speak today on behalf of the proposed bill “ ”.