



Guiding Principles of MAEF

The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the awareness of and appreciation for agriculture in everyone's daily lives. We promote agricultural literacy and support opportunities to pursue agricultural education, per our mission, vision and values (MAEF Strategic Plan, 2021-2026).

Agriculturally literate citizens are those who understand and can communicate the source and value of agriculture as it affects our quality of life (National Agriculture in the Classroom, 2014). They understand the relationship between agriculture and the environment; food, fiber and energy; animals; lifestyle; technology and the economy (American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, 2012). This definition and previous works shaped the development of the National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (NALOs). The NALOs' five themes serve as a guiding document for outreach efforts to develop an agriculturally literate society.

Agricultural education prepares the current and next generation of agriculturalists and those in careers that support agriculture. While production farmers make up less than 2 percent of the American population, agricultural jobs provide almost 11 percent of U.S. employment. Broadly, jobs in agriculture include education; research; biotechnology; food and beverage production; environmental services; energy; crop protection; animal care; finance; marketing and communications; sales; national and international trade; management; food services and eating and drinking places; textiles, apparel, and leather products; and forestry and fishing (USDA ERS).

In all of its programs, MAEF strives to provide accurate and science-based information and objective and broad-based viewpoints to encourage people to explore all aspects of a subject and reach a well-informed conclusion about matters related to food, feed, fiber and energy, their production and its relationship to the environment. MAEF encourages all people to appreciate the cultural diversity of Maryland agriculture.

MAEF believes:

A viable agricultural industry is essential for the sustainability of modern society and an agriculturally literate citizenry is essential to empower a diverse, efficient and inclusive agricultural industry.

Consumers deserve choices in what they eat, how it is grown and where it is available.

Maryland farmers

- care about their land, air and the waters;
- know their land and how best to care for it using a suite of best management practices;
- take pride in the production of safe, quality food; and
- understand that proper animal care is an important responsibility.

All agricultural businesses, from primary production on farms through to consumer products, must be profitable in order to be sustainable.

The National Ag Literacy Outcomes (NALOs) serve as a guiding document for outreach efforts to develop an ag literate society.

Ag literacy efforts and sites

- should be safe, inclusive and accessible events/facilities which promote the importance of agriculture in everyone's lives;
- should encourage visitors to explore and understand various methods of production while respecting other methods of production; and
- should only share information that is fact based and scientifically supported.

Maryland agriculture education should be available equitably for the increasing diversity of all current and next generation agriculturalists.

All Marylanders

- should understand and respect that different modes of production are necessary, and allow those who produce the food, feed, fiber and energy and associated agricultural professionals to determine what works best for each individual farm situation;
- should understand the contributions that agriculture makes to their quality of life; and
- share the benefits of a healthy, abundant and resilient world, and agriculture is essential to achieving that world.

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