



Agribusiness

The agribusiness industry in Maryland spans the spectrum from wineries, microbreweries, aquaculture operations, and family farms that dot the state to such industry leaders as H&S Bakery, Perdue Farms, and McCormick & Company. Perdue, headquartered on Maryland's Eastern Shore, is the fourth-largest poultry company in the nation and leads a \$1.6 billion poultry industry in the state. The world's leading spice maker, McCormick, has a state-of-the-art corporate campus near Baltimore. As of 2023, there are over 12,600 farms covering 2 million acres of land in Maryland.

At the other end of the spectrum, the spirit of agribusiness entrepreneurship is evident in the impressive growth of craft breweries in Maryland, increasing from 34 in 2013 to 112 in 2023, as well as in the rise of food incubators recently opened or under development. Maryland has seen similar increases in wineries, with the State now boasting over 100 active operations. Maryland's agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries generate \$1.2 billion in gross state product, with food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing contributing an additional \$3.6 billion in GSP.

Major Agribusiness Employers in Maryland

Employer	Employment	Product / Service
McCormick & Company	2,650	HQ / Food flavorings
USDA Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)*	1,725	Federal agricultural research and regulation
Perdue Farms	1,600	HQ / Poultry processing
H&S Bakery	1,575	HQ / Commercial food products
FreshPoint Sysco (was Coastal Sunbelt Produce)	1,575	Food products distribution
Pimlico Racing Association, Inc. / Maryland Jockey Club	1,325	HQ / Thoroughbred horse racing
Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co.	1,275	Carbonated beverages
Amick Farms	1,200	Poultry processing
Frito-Lay	800	Snack products

Note: Numbers are rounded.

Source: Maryland Department of Commerce

Selected Rankings

- The Port of Baltimore ranks among the top U.S. ports for the handling of autos and light trucks, as well as farm and construction machinery.
- According to U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges survey, the University of Maryland College Park ranks 16th in the nation in undergraduate supply chain management/logistics.
- Maryland is a major producer of commercial broilers (chickens) ranks 9th by number and 11th by production weight nationally in 2022-23.
- In 2022-23, Maryland ranked 26th nationally for the number of chickens and eggs produced.
- According to the USDA in 2022-23, Maryland ranked 11th nationally for the number of bushels of barley produced.

Industry Snapshot – Agribusiness in Maryland

Farm Economy

- Total number of farms, all sizes (2023) – 12,600
 - Farms with hired workers – 3,025 (24%)
- Total land in farms (2023) – 2 million acres

- Average farm size – 159 acres
- Total farm producers (2022) – 23,507
- Gross state product, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (2023) – \$1,238.1 million
- Market value of agricultural products sold (2022) – \$3.4 billion
- Leading agricultural commodities by sales (2022 – in millions):
 - Poultry and poultry products – \$1,181
 - Greenhouse, nursery, and mushroom products – \$230
 - Corn – \$281
 - Meat and other livestock – \$169
 - Soybeans – \$237
 - Dairy products – \$174
- Exports (2022) – \$935 million (includes bulk, intermediate and consumer-oriented agricultural products)

Non-Farm Agribusiness Economy

- Non-farm employment (2023) – 53,832 jobs
 - Subsectors:
 - Food manufacturing and processing – 21,075 jobs
 - Distribution of food products (including general groceries) – 20,891 jobs
 - Crop production, aquaculture, and fishing – 5,154 jobs
 - Breweries, wineries, and distilleries – 2,249 jobs
- Business establishments (2023) – 3,363
- Total wages (2023) – \$3.3 billion
 - Average salary (2023) – \$61,517
- Gross state product, food, beverage, and tobacco manufacturing (2023) – \$4.8 billion

Sources: Maryland Department of Labor; U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Census Bureau Trade Data, U.S. State Export Data

Employment by Occupation

Maryland Employment – May 2023

Selected Production and Distribution Occupations	Employment	Location Quotient*	
		Index	Rank
Bakers	2,140	0.55	38
Butchers and Meat Cutters	1,400	0.58	42
Food Batchmakers	1,390	0.46	38
Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders	390	0.75	26
Food Processing Workers, All Other	2,070	1.83	10
Food Scientists and Technologists	650	2.6	4
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	11,000	0.8	24
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	4,390	0.43	40
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	44,640	0.84	21
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	910	0.37	35
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	1,840	0.28	41

* Location Quotient indicates concentration of the occupation in Maryland, with national average equal to 1.0. Rank indicates Maryland's rank among the 50 states.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics.

Assets & Resources

- Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) – Provides financing and business planning guidance to farm, forestry, and seafood operations to help them take advantage of emerging markets in food and fiber production and in rural tourism or ecosystem services.
- Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) – Works to identify and develop profitable local, national, and international marketing opportunities for Maryland farmers and agricultural producers.
- University of Maryland Extension (UME) – Offers scientific expertise, educational programs, and marketing resources through its network of county extension offices.
- Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) – USDA's largest scientific installation is located in Beltsville and conducts research to develop solutions to a wide range of problems related to food and agriculture.
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) – Promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities.
- Additional resources include the Maryland Wineries Association, Brewers Association of Maryland, and the Maryland Distillers Guild. Each provide a variety of services and support to their members.

New & Expanding Businesses

- Aquacon (Cecil County) – Norway-based aquaculture firm is planning an Atlantic salmon recirculating aquaculture system with a \$320 million capital investment.
- Pinnacle/Conagra Brands (Washington County) – Pinnacle has begun a \$16.1 million project at their plant in Hagerstown to expand the Gardein frozen food product line.
- Pooles Island Brewing (Baltimore County) – 10,000-square-foot craft brewer plans to open in Middle River.
- Gotham Greens (Baltimore County) – New York-based urban farming operation is opening a 100,000-square-foot hydroponic greenhouse at Tradepoint Atlantic, creating 60 full-time jobs.
- Phillips Foods, Inc. (Baltimore County) – Has expanded its Halethorpe facility an additional 15,000 square-feet Halethorpe facility, where it will begin producing soup in Maryland for the first time in years. The company is also looking into producing additional grocery products at the facility, such as Phillips' frozen crab pretzels and calamari, and includes a research and development space to support additional products in the market.
- Perdue Agribusiness (Baltimore County) – Company announced a \$30 million investment to open an organic grain receiving and storage facility to meet the rising demand for organic feed ingredients, supporting more than 25 new jobs.
- Robin Hill Farm and Vineyards – (Prince George's County) – Handcrafted farm, winery, and tasting room opened in Brandywine.

Programs & Incentives

- The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) grant and loan programs (*selected*):
 - Maryland Value Added Producer Grants - MARBIDCO provides matching grants to recipients of USDA Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG). Capital Assets Option Program (MVAPG-CAO) grant funding encourages Maryland's agricultural producers to expand or diversify their business operations by installing capital assets (equipment and fixtures) to make a product that is value added.

- Maryland Resource-Based Industry Financing Fund Loan (MRBIFF) – Makes available low-interest loans to qualified applicants for the purchase of land and capital equipment for Maryland farm, forestry, and seafood businesses to innovate, diversify, and exploit emerging market opportunities.
 - Maryland Vineyard/Hopyard/Orchard Planting Loan Fund – Makes low-interest loans to increase the acreage of viable commercial vineyards, orchards, and hopyards in Maryland.
 - Maryland Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Fund – The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and MARBIDCO provide affordable financing to watermen and other parties who want to start or expand commercial shellfish aquaculture operations in Maryland.
 - Maryland Urban Agriculture Commercial Lending Incentive Grant (MUACLIG) – Provides an incentive for beginning urban farmers to seek commercial financing for a food/fiber growing operation located in an urban community.
- The Maryland Department of Commerce Maryland Wineries and Vineyards Tax Credit – The Maryland Department of Commerce provides an income tax credit for qualified capital expenses related to a Maryland winery or vineyard.
 - The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) Commercial Industrial and Agricultural Grant Program (CI&A) – This program offers businesses assistance on the implementation of energy efficiency improvement projects to facilities.
 - Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) administers USDA funds to enhance the competitiveness of Maryland specialty crops.
 - Organic Certification Program – MDA is a USDA-accredited certifying agent for producers and handlers located in Maryland. MDA also offers a registration program for exempt operations.

Contact for assistance:

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