

Maryland's Best Promotes Locally-Raised Meats during March More than 130 local farms have meats for sale

ANNAPOLIS, MD (March 17, 2011) – From beef and pork to poultry, lamb, emu and many other meats, Maryland farmers have a wide variety of meats available for consumers who want to buy locally-raised products. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is promoting local meats during the month of March through its Maryland's Best branding program. Maryland's Best, through its website and limited advertising, helps state producers sell their products and helps consumers locate the products.

“Maryland livestock producers raise some of the best and freshest meats available,” said Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. “MDA is encouraging consumers to continue buying locally-produced meats and other farm products. Buying local supports our farmers, rural economies and helps keep Maryland smart, green and growing. It helps the environment by keeping land in farming rather than development and reducing the impacts of transporting our food long distances. Consumers can get to know the livestock producer and how the animals were raised.”

The 2009 Policy Choices Survey by the University of Baltimore Schaefer Center for Public Policy found that 77 percent of Marylanders are more likely to buy produce that is identified as having been grown by a Maryland farmer. In addition, nearly all of those surveyed said that it is at least “somewhat important” that the state preserve land for farming and most residents are concerned about the environment. Maryland livestock farmers are protecting the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through the use of nutrient management plans and many other on-farm conservation activities. Ninety-nine percent of eligible farmland is currently covered by nutrient management plans.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's food pyramid offers selection tips and nutritional information about meat and poultry through its website www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/meat.html. The site notes that lean cuts of meat and poultry are healthy aspects of your diet, especially when it comes to providing necessary proteins.

To find a producer near you, visit www.marylandsbest.net.

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