

significantly impact the viability of agriculture as a major component of Washington County's economy. Increased concerns over manure storage, environmental regulations, and fluctuating market prices are issues, now more than any time over the last few decades, creating instability in the animal agricultural economy.

During this same time period, average annual net farm income for the County remained around \$14 million dollars. However, there was a wide disparity in net cash value between farms. The farms producing net gains over the period showed net cash return increasing from \$39,000 in 1992, to \$48,000 in 1997. In contrast while the net cash return increased during this 10 year period, the percentage of farms reporting net gains decreased from 55% in 1992 to 47% in 1997.

The value of farmland and buildings for the average Washington County farm increased from \$399,000 in 1992, to \$454,000 in 1997. In the same manner, the average value of machinery and equipment increased from \$52,000 in 1992, to \$68,000 in 1997. These increases can be explained in part by the fact that while the number of farms has decreased, the amount of active farmland has remained stable with the average farm size increasing from 153 acres in 1992 to 164 acres in 1997.

Agricultural and Conservation zoning classifications associated with the rural areas have had both positive and negative impacts on agriculture. While one acre residential development has permitted a farmer to sell small parcels of property for income generation in times of cash flow shortages, it has also generated incompatibility issues associated with odors, spraying of pesticides, and traffic. Sustaining agriculture as a viable part of the Washington County economy in the future will depend upon addressing the incompatibility issues.

Mining

Quarrying has been a part of the economy of Washington County throughout its history. Limestone and shale are currently the two primary minerals involved with mining activity. Major quarry operations conducted by H.B. Mellott, St. Lawrence Cement Corporation, Martin Marietta, C. William Hetzer and Redland Brick should be continuous throughout the 20-year horizon period for this plan. Zoning for major mining operations is addressed through the Industrial Mining classification, which is a floating zone classification restricted to areas outside of designated growth areas. Compatibility issues between expanding mining operations and nearby residential development have been on the rise. Addressing incompatibility issues must be balanced with efforts to insure the sustainability of the industry and utilization of the resources.

5. Tourism

Tourism is a major part of the Washington County economy. Unlike other industries it transcends the bounds of the rural and urban areas providing economic opportunities all across the County. Active and passive recreation areas, National and State Parks, restaurants, hotels, outlets and specialty shops, spectator sports, performing arts, museums, and a variety of scenic and historic sites support the tourism industry.

The major non-retail tourism attraction in Washington County is the Antietam Civil War Battlefield. Efforts by the State of Maryland to create a “Civil War Trails” program will highlight this attraction as well as other Civil War sites in Washington County. The creation of the South Mountain State Civil War Battlefield should also add to the promotion of the Civil War Heritage of Washington County.

Development of a “Civil War Heritage Area” in conjunction with Carroll and Frederick Counties will provide opportunities to promote conservation of historical sites as well as target