

CONTACT: Sue duPont, 410-841-5889 or Julie Oberg, 410-841-5888

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2010 Maryland Equine Census Coming Soon

Marylanders involved with equine activities encouraged to respond

ANNAPOLIS, MD (March 2, 2010) – The Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) has commissioned the United States Department of Agriculture to conduct a census of the Maryland equine population starting in May 2010. The 2010 Equine Census will be the second count in Maryland of all breeds (horses, ponies, mules, burros and donkeys) regardless of ownership or use.

“The first equine census eight years ago gave us an important baseline for measuring the size of our equine industry. It reinforced that horses of all kinds are remarkably important to Maryland’s agricultural sector, jobs, economy and land base,” said Maryland Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. “With the 2010 count, we will learn how the industry has changed, which can in turn help us determine what policy or economic development activities might be needed.”

Beginning in April, the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will mail out more than 21,000 forms to equine owners and stable operators to collect information on Maryland’s equine industry for the 2009 calendar year. Completed forms are due by June 1.

“It is important that everyone who receives a questionnaire respond. Whether you own a single horse for your family’s recreational use or run a large breeding or training facility, we need your input,” said Jim Steele, the chairman of the MHIB and manager of Shamrock Farm in Woodbine. “Anyone concerned about submitting personal or financial information should know that by law, all such information is strictly confidential.”

The census is the only reliable measure of the size and economic impact of the industry for public and private decision-making process. Anyone who receives an equine census questionnaire in the mail should complete the form and return it promptly. Anyone involved in equine activities who does not receive a questionnaire by May 1 should call the 1-800-675-0295 (toll free) to request a questionnaire.

For more information about the Maryland Field Office of USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service or the 2010 Maryland Equine Census, visit:

www.marylandhorseindustry.org/census.shtml or www.nass.usda.gov/md

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