

Chapter 172

(House Bill 540)

AN ACT concerning

Agriculture – University of Maryland Extension – Urban Farmer Assistance

FOR the purpose of requiring the University of Maryland Extension to hire an extension agent dedicated to urban farm production methods and crop management and an extension agent dedicated to urban farm and agribusiness management; requiring the agents to perform certain applied research and provide certain education to urban farmers; requiring the Governor to annually include certain funding in the annual budget bill for the extension agents hired under this Act; and generally relating to providing assistance to urban farmers.

BY adding to

Article – Agriculture

Section 2–401 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 4. Urban Farmer Assistance”

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2016 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Agriculture

SUBTITLE 4. URBAN FARMER ASSISTANCE.

2–401.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “URBAN AREA” MEANS AN AREA DELINEATED AS AN URBAN AREA BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.

(3) “URBAN FARMER” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO FARMS IN AN URBAN AREA.

(B) (1) THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION SHALL HIRE AN EXTENSION AGENT DEDICATED TO URBAN FARM PRODUCTION METHODS AND CROP MANAGEMENT.

(2) THE AGENT HIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL:

(I) PERFORM APPLIED RESEARCH ON URBAN FARM PRODUCTION METHODS AND CROP MANAGEMENT; AND

(II) SPEND A MAJORITY OF THE AGENT'S TIME PROVIDING EDUCATION TO URBAN FARMERS ON URBAN FARM PRODUCTION METHODS AND CROP MANAGEMENT.

(3) THE EDUCATION PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY INCLUDE:

(I) PLANNING AND SCHEDULING CROP PLANTING AND HARVESTING IN URBAN AREAS, INCLUDING OUTDOORS, INDOORS, IN GREENHOUSES, AND IN HIGH TUNNEL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS;

(II) PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS;

(III) GROWING TRIALS AND PRODUCTION METHODS FOR CROPS GROWN IN URBAN AREAS, INCLUDING SPECIALTY CROPS SUCH AS HERITAGE VEGETABLES, ETHNIC VEGETABLES, HERBS, MICROGREENS, AND CUT FLOWERS;

(IV) PROPAGATION AND TRANSPLANT PRODUCTION;

(V) TRAINING ON AND CERTIFICATIONS FOR GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES;

(VI) TRAINING ON ORGANIC CERTIFICATIONS; AND

(VII) ANY OTHER TOPIC REGARDING URBAN FARM PRODUCTION METHODS AND CROP MANAGEMENT THAT THE AGENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH URBAN FARMERS AND FARM SERVICE PROVIDERS LOCATED IN URBAN AREAS, DETERMINES IS NECESSARY.

(C) (1) THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION SHALL HIRE AN EXTENSION AGENT DEDICATED TO URBAN FARM AND AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT.

(2) THE AGENT HIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL:

(I) PERFORM APPLIED RESEARCH ON URBAN FARM AND AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT; AND

(II) SPEND A MAJORITY OF THE AGENT'S TIME PROVIDING AND COORDINATING EDUCATION FOR URBAN FARMERS ON URBAN FARM AND AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT.

(3) THE EDUCATION PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY INCLUDE:

(I) ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT;

(II) IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT;

(III) MARKETING;

(IV) HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT;

(V) DIFFERENT BUSINESS TYPES AND STRUCTURES;

(VI) LAND ACQUISITION;

(VII) INSURANCE;

(VIII) LICENSING AND PERMITTING; AND

(IX) ANY OTHER TOPIC REGARDING URBAN FARM AND AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT THAT THE AGENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH URBAN FARMERS AND FARM SERVICE PROVIDERS LOCATED IN URBAN AREAS, DETERMINES IS NECESSARY.

(D) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$300,000 TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION FOR THE EXTENSION AGENTS HIRED UNDER THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2022.

Approved by the Governor, April 21, 2022.