

Maryland Agriculture Industry Onsite Wastewater Needs Survey
October 4th 2021

1. What County is your operation located? n=22

Anne Arundel - 2

Baltimore -1

Calvert - 1

Carroll -2

Dorchester -1

Frederick - 2

Howard - 2

Montgomery - 6

Prince George's - 1

Queen Anne's - 3

2. What type of value added operation do you have? Check all that apply

Answer	%	Count
Agriculture Tourism	36.73%	18
Farm Alcohol Producer	32.65%	16
Fruit or vegetable processing	8.16%	4
Meat processing	6.12%	3
Other Value-Added Agriculture Production, please describe.	14.29%	7
Creamery/Dairy	2.04%	1
Total	100%	49

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Other:

Bake pies, Tasting room, Winery, Flower farm

3. What are the greatest issues you experience with the review and approval of your septic system?

Waste water

We struggled with the health department's process. No communication until a call with the Health Officer, and Maryland Distiller's Guild got on that call with us. Once we had approval, when we were ready to begin pulling permits, the county pulled "new maps" and it cost another \$2,800 to an environmental company to prove our tax ditch is, in fact, an ag ditch, not a "perennial stream".

NA

We're treated like a large commercial establishment and thus a massive expensive septic system was required to open the tasting room.

Not getting percs

Getting the health department to understand what we do.

Time. From the moment a decision is made that a septic system is needed, it can take years to get a completed system. Lack of Capacity. Due to the nature of Ag Tourism, there can be large but infrequent uses, systems are designed for the single busiest day. this would require unmanageably huge and expensive systems.

Being forced to put in a septic system for a 1-season glamping venture in a 5 acre field that was designed and prepared to remove all waste for disposal by professional, licensed waste disposal trucks. In other states this has been an acceptable practice with the use of self contained bathroom units.

Time and money in addition to overboard requirements

3. What are the greatest issues you experience with the review and approval of your septic system?

Limited perk test time

Just finding the correct COMAR code that applies to our operations

We have been told we cannot add another septic system so are forced to rent multiple portajohns which are expensive and not ideal

lack of communication, no phone call backs, poor response time, no follow through on part of staff, no on the ground assistance or suggestions and this always requires additional visits that are never timely , gvida issues

Finding the information needed to make a decision, affordability

The staff decision makers are too rigid and difficult to deal with. They expected us to build a pretreatment sewage treatment plant costing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Wait time for plan review, requirement for seperate holding tank

Too costly &

Forcing applicant to upgrade existing systems where it is not necessary

I want to have a farm stay but can't afford a new septic just for one site for that.

Inconsistent standards, lack of knowledge, lack of accountability, lack of real data (all referencing our county/state officials)

Having to install a 1,000 gallon tank system.

None

4. How do these issues impact your business?

Cost Prohibitive

This cost us another 6+ months, plus the \$2,800 to the env company and more to my surveyor. I anticipate that now that we have a builder and are ready to go again, there will be SOMETHING else with the septic.

NA

We spent \$40k on a septic system that we'll likely never even use to 1/2 of it's capacity.

We can't build worker housing on one site because we can't expand the existing septic

Takes valuable time

Many times a system is required, however the public is prohibited from using this system and port-a-johns must be brought in. NO ONE wants to use a port-a-john

First, It cost about \$10,000 for a 5-1/2 month use. Second I now have a useless septic tank in the oats field. I guess the notion of "no trace left behind" doesn't apply to health dept officials who forced the issue. Third, while it's not directly related to the septic system, this health official allowed water for toilets, showers to be brought in via water buffalo containers from an approved municipality for this season only. However, he stated that if we want to have the same operation next year he will force us to drill a well. That puts an end to this venture.

Monetarily

Unable to have a kitchen as provided by the farm bill due to expense of multiple septic systems to satisfy health department

Without support from our County Commissioner we would have been dead in the water. Sometimes the Health department does not want to meet businesses halfway and stick to a cookie cutter approach

We get frequent complaints from visitors who would understandably prefer a better restroom

brings projects to a stop and has huge cost implications

cost

We haul our wastewater.

Delayed opening by over a month, cost 10's of thousands in loss of business and 10's of thousands in additional engineering/permit requirements

It cuts into the bottom line

Delays and extra (and unforeseen) costs

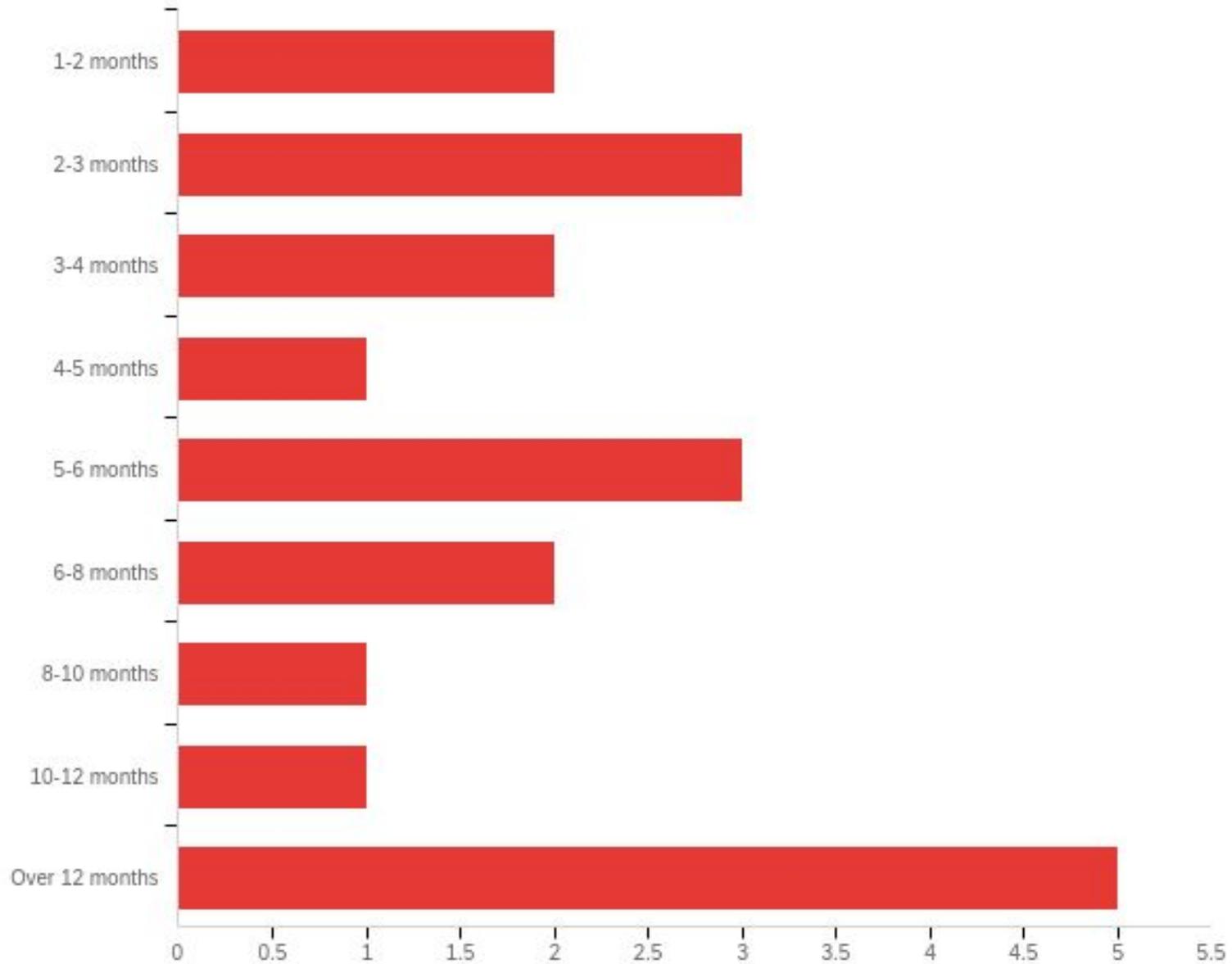
It's ridiculous to require all these things when we just want to have a little glamping setup which could help me farm full time and secure my family farm for the future. Our county is awful. I should just move to another state that is easier to work with.

Severely hurt our sales

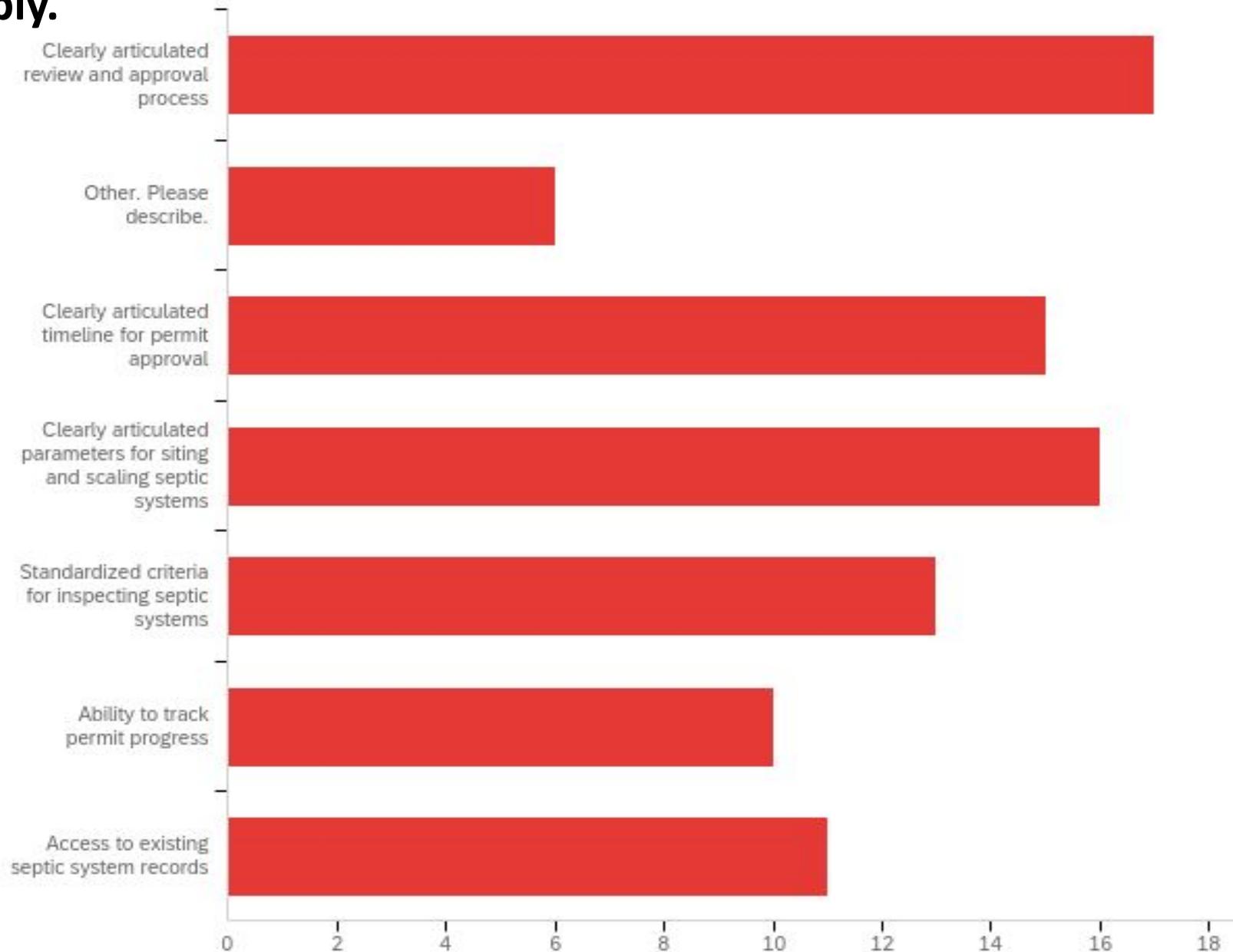
5. On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being easy and 10 being difficult), rate the ease of the septic plan approval process.

Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
6.91	3.49	12.17	22

6. In your experience, what was the estimated review time between the submission of a septic plan to the county/Maryland Dept. of Health and the final approval?



7. What changes or ideas do you think would be helpful in reducing issues? Check all that apply.



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Other. Please describe.

NA

Entire system needs to be scrapped. Get rid of the anti business mind set. Reach out to land planners, real estate atty and system installers for some common sense ideas. If you think I'm over reacting, try it yourself, my bet is you'll give up when you realize how long it will take, how expensive it will be and how little GPD you will be allotted.

Common sense thinking when other options are present.

Removal of officious and dictatorial staff.

It is clear that there is much confusion about what the rules are for farm alcohol production facilities
Probably everything needs to be better but I haven't been able to go through the process.