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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Unique Maryland Ag Exchange Network Created
Free, User-Friendly, Online Marketplace to Help Farmers

COLLEGE PARK, MD (May 1, 2008) – Maryland farmers may now take advantage of a new, free online marketplace that can help them buy, sell, give away or trade their agricultural products.

The Maryland Agricultural Exchange, created by the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland, will help farmers in Maryland and throughout the Chesapeake Bay region exchange products such as manure, compost, hay, fodder crops, fruits and vegetables, organics, equipment, livestock, and much more.

The new agriculture products exchange website, which is located at <http://www.agtrader.org/>, is the first of its kind in Maryland and quite possibly, may be unique to the nation.

“This website will create new market opportunities for farmers. It is like a ‘Craig’s List’ for agriculture,” said Joanne Throwe, assistant director of the Environmental Finance Center, which is part of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education. “AgTrader also will help farmers transport manure from those who have it to those who need it.”

Roger Richardson, Maryland’s Secretary of Agriculture and a lifelong farmer from Worcester County, said, "This new website ties well with the O'Malley-Brown Administration's commitment to supporting agriculture and profitable farming. The AgTrader site is a novel idea with potential to help farmers keep costs down and complement our manure

matching service as well as our “Maryland's Best” agricultural products website.”

All trades through the website are made strictly between buyer and seller. The website allows traders to quickly register and then post their products anytime they wish without having to fill out forms. Pricing and delivery are left up to buyer and seller to work out.

“There are plenty of valuable resources on our farms such as chicken litter, organic material, produce, and hay, to name just a few,” Ms. Throwe said. “Why not build a marketplace that will assist farmers with an easy way to reach people who want their products? In addition, this kind of exchange is good for the environment and may help out the smaller farms in throughout the Chesapeake Bay region.”

The website is intended to complement state-run manure transport programs and provide a free, user-friendly marketplace where farmers and other interested parties can buy and sell agricultural products and services. Added features of the site include a directory for businesses and a resource section showing a calendar of events and important news for the Chesapeake Bay agriculture community.

Agtrader.org is a secured website that will be monitored and maintained by the Environmental Finance Center staff. All information is kept private.

For more information about Agtrader, contact Joanne Throwe at (301) 405-5036 or at jthrowe@umd.edu.

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