

Does Maryland's Smart Growth Program Protect Farmland?

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Overview



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- Smart Growth in Maryland
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- Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

- Between 1992 & 2001: 2.2 million acres of farmland converted to urban uses; 1.1 mil/year in previous decade
- Cropland loss rates highest in the eastern states

Effective Farmland Protection

- Focus on economic viability
- Distribute the costs of the program fairly
- Involve all levels of government

Libby (1997)

Traditional Farmland Protection Tools

- Agricultural Zoning
- Agricultural and Forestal Districts
- Conservation Easements
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Use-value Assessment



Shortcomings of Traditional Tools

- Often omit farm profitability
- Fail to focus on farm operator
- Open space v. working land
- Multiple objectives

“...a farm is more than land”

Libby (1997)



Smart Growth in Maryland

1997: Smart Growth Initiatives

- Priority Funding Areas (PFAs)
- Rural Legacy Areas
- Brownfield Clean-up Program
- Live Near Your Work Program
- Job Creation Tax Credit Program

Methodology

- Census of Agriculture: 1992 to 2002
- Surrounding States: Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, Delaware
- Data: Number of Farms, Number Acres in Farms, Economic Viability
- Change 1992 - 1997: Pre-smart growth
- Change 1997-2002: Smart Growth

Comparison of States

- Very different land areas, densities and populations
- Geology and Agriculture very similar
- Different philosophies on growth and conservation

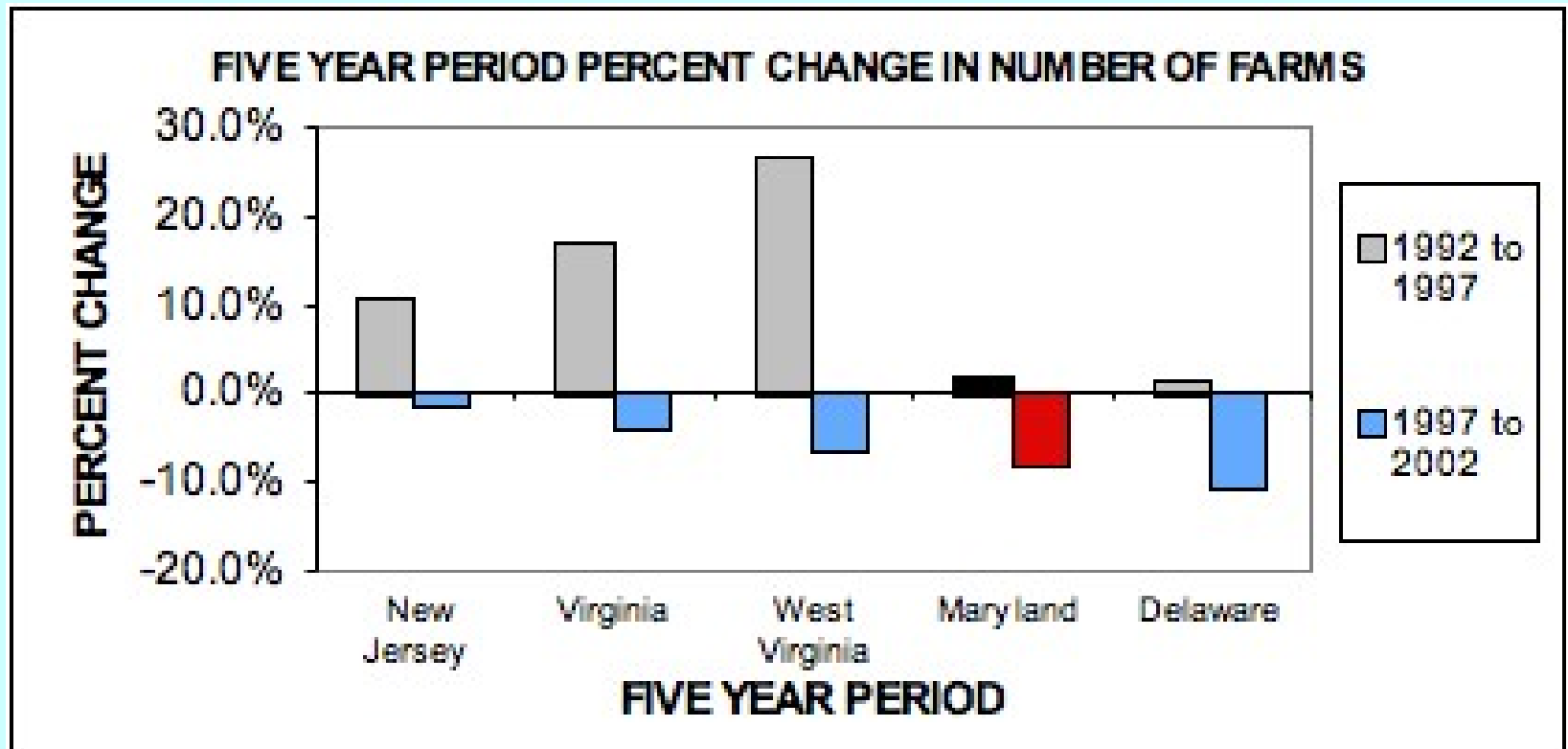


Farmland Protection?

- Number of Farms
- Number of Acres in Farms
- Economic Viability



Number of Farms

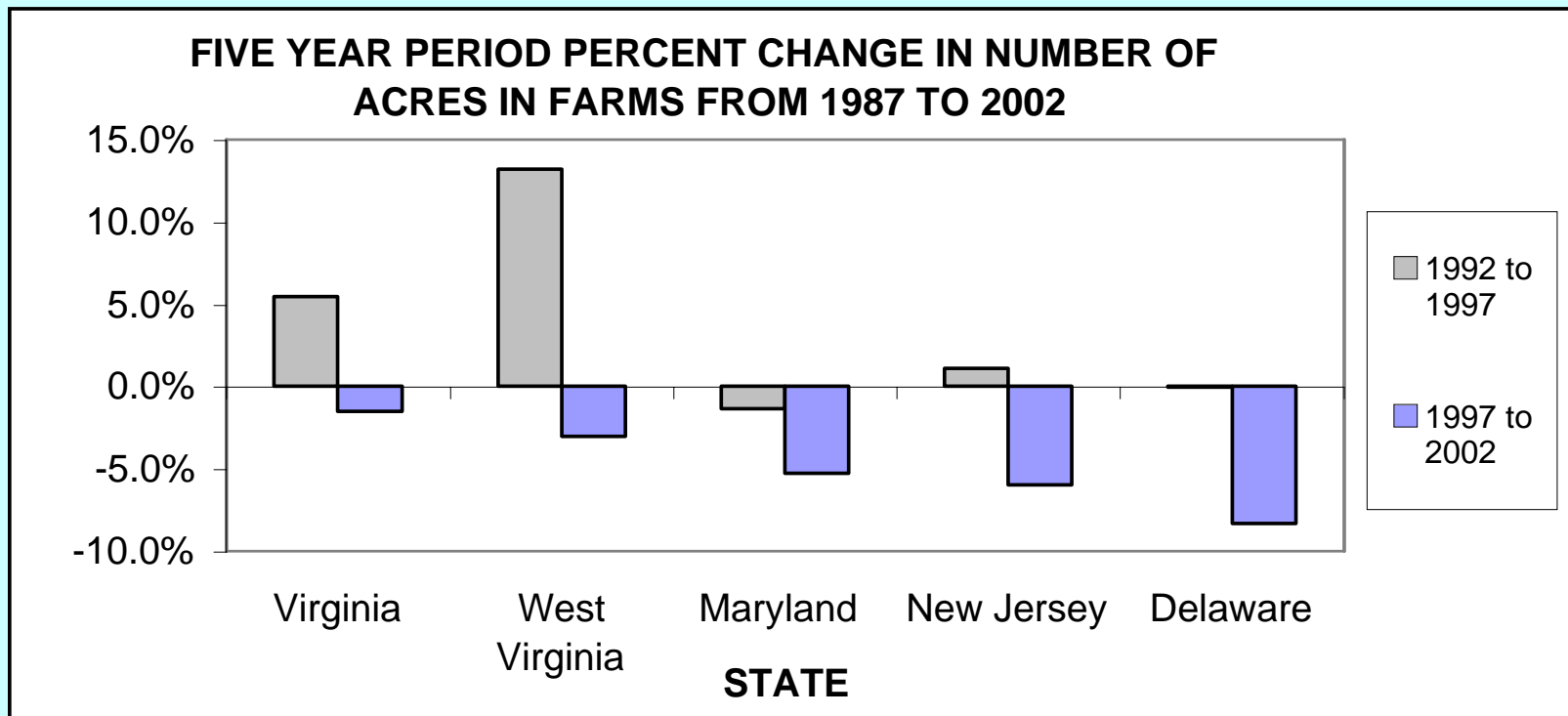


Number of Farms

- From 1992-1997, increased by 1.7% in Maryland, other states showed increase
- From 1997-2002, decreased by 8% in Maryland
- Virginia, West Virginia and New Jersey showed losses also, but at a much lower rate
- Only Delaware lost a greater percentage of farms between 1997 and 2002



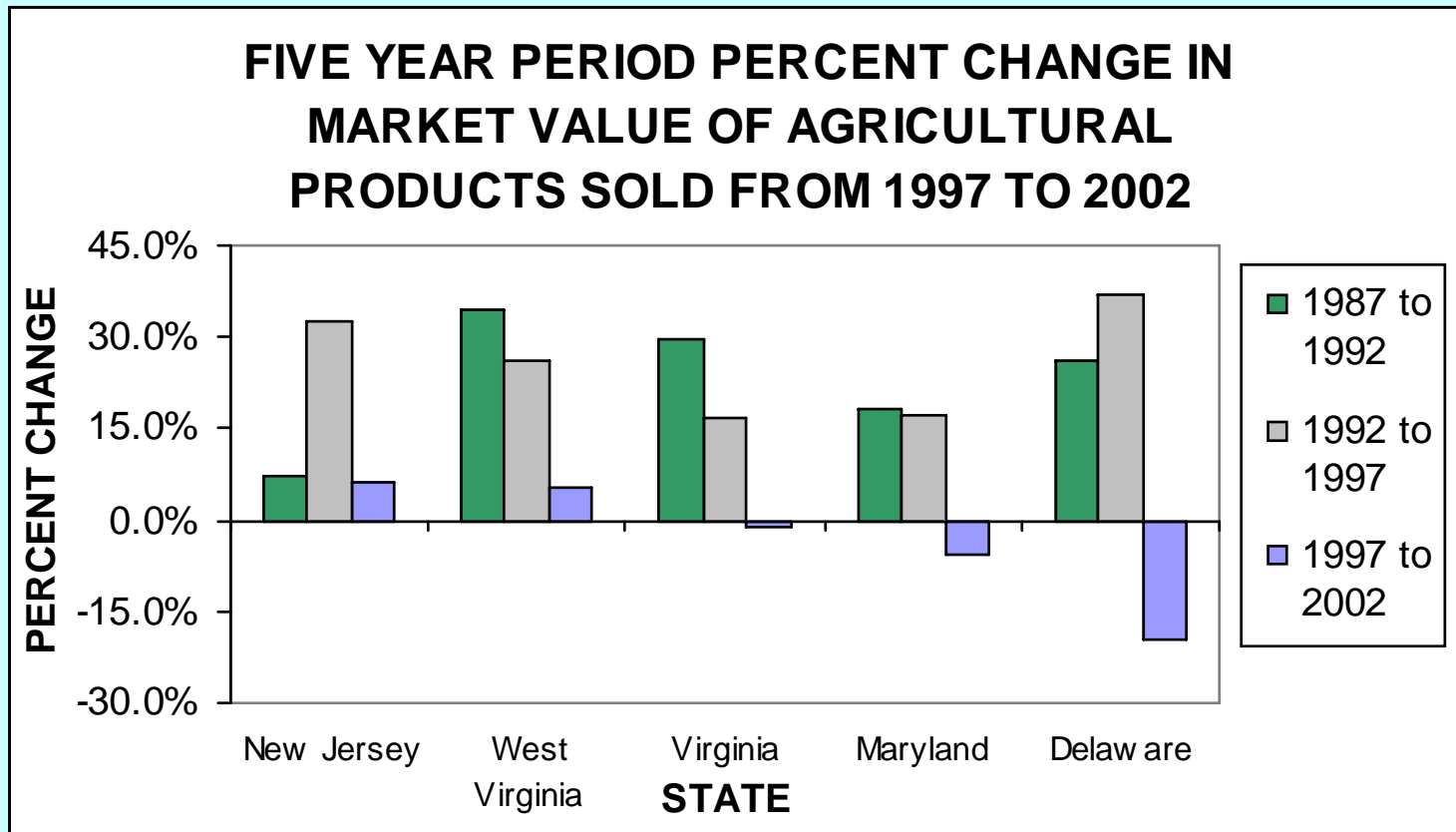
Number of Acres in Farms



Number of Acres in Farms

- All studied states lost farmland between 1992 and 1997, with Delaware (10.5%) and Maryland (8%) showing highest percentage loss
- All states also showed losses between 1997 and 2002
- Delaware (8.3%), New Jersey (6%) and Maryland (5.3%) had the greatest percentage losses

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold



Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

- All states showed gains between 1992 and 1997, with Maryland in the middle of the pack with an 18.2% increase
- Between 1997 and 2002:
 - West Virginia and New Jersey showed increases
 - Virginia experienced a small (1.4%) decrease
 - Maryland (5.7%) and Delaware (19.3%) suffered decreases

Conclusions

Since the implementation of Smart Growth:

- Maryland has lost farms at a greater rate than all neighboring states but Delaware
- Maryland ranks in the middle of these states with respect to number of acres lost
- Of the examined states, only Delaware experienced a greater decline in market value of agricultural products sold



Recommendations

- Term easements- perpetuity conflicts with adaptive, dynamic planning
- Green payments- rewards landowners for undertaking conservation payments
- Smart payments- encourages conservation of farms in the right places