

**Maryland Agricultural Commission  
Minutes  
February 8, 2017**

**Present:**

Ag Education – Martha Clark	Nursery I – Marion Mullan
Agritourism – Taylor Huffman	Organic-Marian Fry
Bio-Fuel – David Burrier	Poultry II – Michelle Protani-Chesnik
Consumer – Carroll Shry, Jr.	Tobacco – Charles Cox
Dairy I – Tim Bishton	University-Dave Myers for Dean Beyrouthy
Direct Farm Marketing – Katie Kraszewski	Vegetable – Alison Howard
Equine – William Reightler, Jr.	Veterinary – Dr. John Brooks
Farm Bureau – Milly B. Welsh	Viticulture – Matthew Spies
Field Crops – Donald Maring	
Food Processing – Cheryl DeBerry	
Grange – Delegate Paul Stull	

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**Absent:**

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| Agribusiness – Tom Fisher           | Forestry – Vacant             |
| At Large Ag Service –Vanessa Finney | Livestock – Vacant            |
| At Large Ag Service –David Roles    | Nursery II – Ray Greenstreet  |
| Aquaculture – Talmage Petty         | Turf – Tom Warpinski          |
| Horticulture – Cole Mangum          | Poultry I – Charlie Carpenter |

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**MDA Staff:**

Joe Bartenfelder-Secretary	Jim Eichhorst – Deputy Secretary
Hans Schmidt – Asst. Sec., RC	Dr. Terron Hillsman-USDA NRCS
Steve Connelly- Asst. Sec., Animal Health	Rob McAfee- USDA NRCS
Jason Schellhardt, PIO	Paul Goeringer-UME

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**Guests:**

Dr. Terron Hillsman-USDA NRCS  
Rob McAfee- USDA NRCS  
Paul Goeringer-UME

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**Speakers:**

“Right to Farm” by Paul Goeringer, University of Maryland Extension Legal Specialist

The Wednesday, February 8, 2017 public meeting of the Maryland Agricultural Commission was called to order by the Vice Chair, Alison Howard, at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, at 8:35 a.m. The December 14<sup>th</sup> minutes were approved by Milly Welsh, second by Marian Fry and approved by all.

**Commodity Reports:**

**Ag Education – Martha Clark** Ag Education in the State has rolled out the new horse education series and was very well received. The Horse Industry has received a \$150,000 grant to go towards education. The MAEF Board is meeting 2/24-25/17.

**Agribusiness – Tom Fisher** In the agribusiness world, locally, there has been a change in the ownership of Atlantic Tractor, the regional John Deere retailer. About 13 years ago, John Deere corporate organized many of the independent local John Deere dealers to form a regional model that was named Atlantic Tractor. In the last few months a Florida investor names Eric Levin with Baltimore ties has purchased the holdings of the original members of Atlantic Tractor. This could create a more streamlined organization going forward. One of the goals with the new Atlantic Tractor is more equipment inventory at each location and an effort to grow their business and expand its presence in the turf business. John Deere in recent years has focused on collecting data and the application of this information with their equipment and technology. Also in the merger world, Bayer, the proposed buyer of Monsanto, and Monsanto has met with the Trump administration to seek their blessing. Bayer has promised, if purchase is allowed, they will create many new jobs and will invest billions of dollars in the U.S.

**Agritourism – Taylor Huffman** There isn't too much going on in the world of agritourism in February other than Maryland Craft Beer Lover's Month: feBREWary. In its 2nd year, by official proclamation of Governor Larry Hogan, feBREWary is Maryland's official month-long celebration of craft beer and there are craft brew events on tap across the state. On February 17th, the Maryland Brewers Association will have an event in Silver Spring called "Love thy Beer". It is the signature event of feBREWary. During the event, enthusiast can chat with brewers and local brewery owners in an intimate setting and over local, seasonal ales. For more information, visit the newly re-designed website for Brewers Association of Maryland. Also, on the website you can find the article titled "Breweries play big role in MD tourism increases" dated January 9th and quoted from the Baltimore Business Journal. Interesting information from the article: "New restaurants and breweries in Maryland are resulting in more tourists and revenue for the state, according to a report released Wednesday by the Maryland Office of Tourism Development. Visitors to Maryland spent nearly \$17 billion on travel expenses in 2015, which was up 3.5 percent from the previous year. The report also found that Maryland welcomed 40.5 million visitors in 2015, which was a 6 percent increase from 2014, which also outpaced the growth of national visitation by a full percentage point. Visitor spending has grown for six straight years, expanding 31 percent since 2009. It generated \$28.4 billion in total business sales across all Maryland industries in 2015, according to the report. The tourism boom in Maryland has also had a positive impact on locals. More than 143,000 Marylanders were directly employed in the tourism industry in 2015, making it the 10th largest private-sector employer in the state. Again, this goes to show how important tourism is to our state, especially agritourism!

**At Large Ag Service – Vanessa Finney** Thank you to commissions who attended MANTS in January. The show recorded the largest attendance since the start of the "Great Recession" in 2008. Exhibitor and attendee feedback confirms that demand for plant material is high, while supplies are low. Forestry-The Maryland Forests Association is hosting its annual meeting and legislative reception on February 8th. There is a list of bills which the association is following, however most falls under the purview of DNR. Nursery and Greenhouse-The green industry is actively engaged in legislative issues through its umbrella council, The Maryland Green Industry Council (MaGIC). The association and council work closely with MDA and other commodity groups when analyzing and taking positions on legislation, and regulations. The American Landscape Institute – a new organization developed to recruit and train new employees into the nursery and landscaping professions is well on its way to seating its first class. This program is in infancy, however, moving forward quickly.

**Bio-Fuel – David Burrier** The EPA finalized its volume requirements for the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program for calendar year 2017 for cellulosic biofuel, advanced biofuel, biomass-based biodiesel as well as the total renewable fuel. The proposed total renewable fuel was 18.8 billion gallons and the final volume is 19.28 billion gallons. Soy oil was the big winner. Biodiesel is expected to make up much of the higher advanced biofuel total. The only other source of advanced biofuel is Brazilian ethanol and there won't be much of that imported. U.S. ethanol production rose 10,000 barrels a day during the week ending Jan. 27 to a record 1.061 million barrels per day. That was the fourth time in five weeks ethanol output has been record large. Delaware approves Delaware City Refinery's Ethanol Project. The owners of a Delaware City, Delaware refinery have won state approval for a project that will significantly increase the amount of biofuel being stored and shipped from the facility. Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control approved a permit that will allow PBF energy to ship unblended ethanol by barge from its refinery. PBF energy hopes to soon begin work on the 7 million dollar project soon and begin full production in 2017.

**Consumer-Carroll Shry, Jr.** Aspects looked at are increased demand of grafted vegetables, tomatoes, watermelon, and eggplant. These are used extensively in green houses. Another hot issue is bio emergent materials. An easier way to describe this is a GMO; this is something that we need to be on top of. MPT Farm and Harvest season finale last night.

**Dairy I-Tim Bishton** A few events coming up 2/22/17 MDIA convention in Frederick. Next week I will be attending MDIA breakfast event at an Annapolis elementary school. It is where our dairy check off money goes.

**Direct Farm Marketing – Katie Kraszewski** On December 20, 2016, the USDA released the results of its first Local Food Marketing Practices Survey. The report covered both fresh and value-added foods, such as meat and cheese. According to the survey, more than 167,000 U.S. farms locally produced and sold food through direct marketing practices, resulting in \$8.7 billion in revenue in 2015. Farms selling food directly to institutions and intermediates, such as wholesalers who locally branded the product or food hubs, brought in the most revenue at \$3.4 billion. The next category, at \$3 billion in sales, was from approximately 115,000 operations with direct-to-consumer sales, such as on-farm stores and farmers markets. Sales directly to retailers were \$2.3 billion from over 23,000 operations nationwide. Pennsylvania led the U.S. in the number of farms selling directly to consumers, with more than 6,000 operations engaged in direct to consumer sales. California led in sales, earning \$467 million. Only 8% of farms selling directly to consumers across the nation did so via online marketplaces. The survey also concluded that more than 80% of all direct market food sales occurred within 100 miles of the farm, and that most farms selling to consumers were less than 20 miles from their largest grossing marketplace. As for Maryland, there are over 1,800 farms engaged in the production and direct market sale of food items (including value-added), resulting in nearly \$84.3 million in revenue. Of this, over \$58 million was from direct-to-consumer sales. Of the farms, 28.3% had been producing and marketing directly to consumers for more than 21 years. 24.9% from 11-20 years, 19.9% from 6-10 years, and 39.8% for less than 5 years.

**Equine- Bill Reightler** The Thoroughbred foaling and breeding season began in January. We have had increased numbers of broodmares being bred. The Jockey Club reported 913 in 2016 and 788 in 2015 an increase of 15.8%. Maryland is the 5<sup>th</sup> in the report of mares bred in the country. The Maryland Horse Council along with other industry partners sponsored the Maryland Horse Industry Day in Annapolis on January 31. A large contingent of horseman gathered in the Miller Senate Office building and met with approximately 70% of the 188 state legislators. The purpose was to educate legislators about the industry. While meeting with legislators, I mentioned our industry is concerned that the good news about upswings in the industry should not overshadow the needs of our racing and breeding industry. We are faced with competition from

surrounding states and must continue to improve breeding and racing programs. The Fasig-Tipton Company held its annual MidAtlantic Winter Mixed Sale on January 29 at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. 236 horses were cataloged. Gross sales were \$906,400 up 3.2% from last year. The sales average was \$6,428 down 23.9% and the no sale rate was 29.1% which is normal for this type of sale. The highest sale was a colt by Dialed In for \$70,000 sold by Bill Reightler, Agt. We were also the leading consigner with gross sales of over \$275,000. El Areeb, a three year old colt by Exchange Rate, won the Withers Stakes Gr.3 at Aqueduct Course on February 4. The Maryland based colt trained by Cal Lynch, who is stabled at Laurel Park has 4 wins form 6 starts and earnings of \$334,200. The colt is being prepped for the Triple Crown Series this spring.

**Farm Bureau – Milly B. Welsh** The *Hotline* will be posted on the MFB website each week. Our website address is [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com). The Hotline descriptions will include the title of the bill, our summary and MFB's position. Our positions are based on policy adopted by grassroots members at our annual convention. You can view the text of the bill and the MGA fiscal analysis by clicking on the hyperlink associated with the bill number and selecting the "documents" tab. The Maryland General Assembly's website can also serve as a valuable tool for legislative information. The site offers the proceedings and agendas of the House and Senate, hearing schedules, bill information and status, and other data updated nightly. You may also obtain contact information (phone & email) for your legislators at this site:

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frm1st.aspx?tab=home>. MFB will be holding its Day in Annapolis on February 8th. Our MFB members will attend a briefing with our lobbyists Colby Ferguson and Val Connelly, visit with their legislators, sit in on hearings, and enjoy lunch with legislators. The Taste of Maryland Agriculture legislative event on February 2th was well attended by MFB members.

**Field Crops-Donald Maring** As of last Friday, cash corn in central Illinois was \$3.43 and here in Maryland it was \$4.58 delivered to the mills. Soybeans in Illinois were \$9.95 and here in Maryland it was \$10.22 delivered to Baltimore. Harvest has begun in South America rains have lowered quality in early season beans however it could be beneficial to the later season beans. USDA is estimating an additional 4-5 million acres of beans this year with most of them coming from corn acres. Tomorrow's report they are expecting USDA to trim corn carry over by 20 million bushels and beans by 10 million bushels. In December the US exported \$12.9 billion dollars of Ag goods and imported \$9.7 billion dollars with a net balance of \$3.2 billion. That is 30% less than November.

**Food Processing-Cheryl DeBerry** The Grow Maryland advisory committee met last month to debrief from the Grow Maryland Summit held in December, make plans for the organizational structure of Grow Maryland, and brainstorm funding mechanisms for a sustainable organization. The meeting resulted in many ideas and the organization is moving forward in its mission to represent and help agritourism and food processing businesses. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual FeBREWary: Maryland Craft Beer Lovers Month is here, by official proclamation of Governor Larry Hogan. FeBREWary is Maryland's official month-long celebration of craft beer lovers, with craft brew events on tap across the state. More information is available at <http://marylandbeer.org/febrewary/>

**Grange-Paul Stull** Grange members are pleased to hear Governor Hogan in his state of the state address give credit to farmers, land owners, and the agricultural community for their efforts in helping clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Governor Hogan reported it was the best annual report in 25 years. Grange members are in support of a clean bay and are hoping Governor Hogan will contact the states to the north of Maryland and get the Corps of Engineers evolved in removing the sediment behind the Conowingo Dam. The membership joins the state Farm Bureau in promoting grain bin safety. There is critical need for first responders to acquire the specialized rescue training and equipment need to rescue someone entrapped in a grain bin. Most grain bin accidents occur in rural areas. You are being asked to contact your local Volunteer Fire and rescue company to see if equipment and training is available for their station. Nationwide Agribusiness is working

with local communities in helping to make rescue training and equipment available to help first responders. The Grange membership joins Agriculture Secretary Bartenfelder in asking everyone involved in Agriculture to keep abreast of the bills before the General Assembly, and especially those issues that will affect your business. Contact your representative, discuss the issues and make plans to testify on a given bill. Information on bills is available from the General Assembly website, from the Maryland Department of Agriculture and members of farm organizations. On a national level-A number of Grange members have expressed interest and concerns about new Agricultural policies coming out of Washington, especially in the area of trade agreements. The national Grange is in support of trade agreements with other nations, with the stipulation that all future trade deals require imported items meeting the same strict standards to which U. S. produced goods are held. It is interesting to note that 25% of farm commodities are exported annually. Agricultural commodities have been one of the big items in the balance of trade with other nations, especially China, Canada and Mexico. America's big item to the rest of the world has been autos, airplanes, and agricultural commodities. (A little side note: the U.S. trade deficit rose to 45% billion this past November) On a personal note: in reading letters to the editors in local and agriculture newspapers it is refreshing to see that rural people are speaking up and fighting back as to why the environmentalists are always condemning agriculture and the farmers as the polluters, but never mention any other areas of pollution for example waste water treatment plants, road solvents, vehicles, airports, and the list goes on.

**Nursery-Marion Mullen** MANTS Horticultural Trade show in Baltimore was a huge success this year January 11- 13<sup>th</sup>! Here are some of the statistics: Over 11,300 total Registrants including exhibitors. 952 Exhibiting Companies in 1536 booths. Exhibitors and attendees from 45 states and 16 countries the general feeling of the trade show was one of optimism for the upcoming business year! MNLGA annual meeting was held on January 11 2017 with over 100 members in attendance. Bernie Kohl Jr. of Angelica Nurseries received the MNLGA Professional Achievement Award! This is the time of year we have many educational events. Below are some of these: Boxwood Blight Training is being held February 16<sup>th</sup> at MD Department of Agriculture Chesapeake Green Horticultural Symposium is being held this year February 23 and 24<sup>th</sup>. The Key note speaker this year is Lloyd Traven from Peace Tree Farm. Manor View Farm and The Perennial Farm are hosting their 18<sup>th</sup> annual Education Seminar on February 24, 2017. Green Matters Symposium is being held at Brookside Gardens Friday February 24<sup>th</sup> the Perennial Plant Association and the Horticultural Society of Maryland present 'Perennially Inspired!' on February 25 2017 at the Conference Center at Sheppard Pratt.

**Organics-Marian Fry** We had a very successful Future Harvest CASA meeting. Kate's husband and father were presenters. There were more attendees, along with more breakout sessions, that have gained more traction in the industry. Their beginning farmer program had 65 applicants for around 20 openings. Within the Organic industry the biggest issue nationally is still if soil-less growing (hydroponic-aquaponics) can be labeled as "Certified Organic." There is a great deal of money at stake by big players and they are pushing hard because it carries a premium price within the market place. The originators of the organics movement still contend that organics is soil driving and the most basic premise is soil health.

**Poultry II-Michelle Protani-Chesnik** It has been a crazy winter season for rearing poultry. We have winter weather some days and spring like weather on others. Ventilating and keeping bird's health presents a real challenge with these weather variations. The communities on the lower and mid shore continue to raise concerns over new housing and the size of it. Worcester County hopefully will decide what the regulations for existing and new housing will be in the near future several meetings have occurred with DPI and Poultry Agriculture representatives. I personally still have concerns we are allowing the Right to Farm Laws to be eroded. One company on the shore has dropped/discontinued growing birds in approximately 2 million square feet of housing. This could be anywhere from 50 to 200 houses depending on the size of the houses. Information I have received from various sources indicate it is a mixture of newer houses 1 to 3 years old (non

performing) and older farms. Exactly how many of these are Maryland Farms has not been disclosed. Avian Influenza is still a major concern as it has spread rapidly through Europe. Maryland Commercial growers remain on high alert. The Maryland General Assembly is in full swing and several bills have been introduced that will impact not only Poultry Ag, but animal agriculture in General. Bills of major concern are: Antibiotic Bill SB 422 and HB 602-These bills mimic the FDA Veterinary Directive and actually take it a few steps further. While in the past it has targeted commercial poultry it targets dairy also this year. As a commercial poultry grower I take exceptions with the ability it would allow farmers with less than 60,000 birds a year to be exempted. SB 422 and HB 602 are not only duplicitous in nature but put a paper burden on MDA and a waste of tax payer monies. Clean Energy Production SB 0174-This would eliminate Agricultural renewable energy process from qualification for Maryland clean energy Tax credit. It also includes waste to energy projects; this would impact a broad spectrum of agricultural businesses. SB 773 Community Healthy Air Act-This bill targets MDE and requires all air pollutants from CAFO'S are Identified, monitored and comply with State and Federal laws. These findings would be reported to the Maryland General Assembly. It will be a tough year again in Annapolis from Poultry Agriculture.

**Tobacco-Charles Cox** The stripping season is about to close. Phillip Morris keeps pushing the market end date to mid-February. We were hoping for mid-March. We are hauling to New Holland. Pennsylvania crop is mostly done. The big key player in Pennsylvania is JTI (Japan Tobacco International), they are a major competitor to Phillip Morris and they are no longer buying tobacco in the region. This means that Phillip Morris is the big guy again. Generally when competition is lost in business things get hairy.

**Turf – Tom Warpinski** Continued mild winter weather is definitely helping the grow in of the turf crops planted this past fall. The 2nd annual Mid-Atlantic Turfgrass Expo. Down in Fredericksburg VA was a huge success. Attendance was very strong and the many informative educational sessions were very well attended. The show is a combined effort by the Maryland Turfgrass Council and the Virginia Turfgrass Council. All profits are split evenly between VA Tech and the University of Maryland to further Turfgrass research. Turfgrass Producers International, the sod grower's international association, will be having their mid-winter convention and field day Feb. 20 to the 23<sup>rd</sup> in Tampa Florida.

**Vegetable – Alison Howard** I was in Florida earlier this year and they hoped right into NAFTA. They will often look for growers north when their season ends. They were directly impacted by NAFTA and met with President Trump about their issues.

**Veterinary-Dr. John Brooks** Veterinary Feed Directive—it is clearly a good intention with unintended consequences. I have spent a long time working on this. It is unfortunate that those who have brought forth this bill have not headed the clear direction of FDA. It is clearly identifies all individuals who are in food animal production whether you have one animal or a million. It is directed at having better veterinary oversight with the use of either water or feed driven antimicrobials. We have worked a long time at removing “growth promotion” in the terminology. The second piece is reportability. The FDA is working on developing strong databases. HPAI the feral cat population has been diagnosed as a very rare form of HPAI. HPAI has affected over 40 countries. Finally, they have diagnosed the first case of CRD in a wild deer in Texas.

**Viticulture-Corey Spies** potential for new legislation that will require a certain percentage of Maryland sold wine to contain Maryland Fruit. MSLBA is trying to limit class 4 wineries. Alcohol sales in the state are set up in 3 tiers-you can only operate a business on one tier (retail, wholesale, and manufacturing). Essentially, class 4 wineries are all three. Maryland Winery Association is being proactive in introducing this bill. Another bill this year will be allowing class 4 wineries to have a second tasting room, at this point the law does not allow us to be in two places.

**University-Dave Myers** (filling in for Dean Beyrouthy) Dean has hired a consultant to do a college wide strategic visioning. They will be looking internal then will move to stakeholders and will focus on teaching, research, and extension. Where should the college be headed and will it be stronger? It will also guide the strategic plan. Today the college will be meeting with President Loh to talk about the strategic vision. We have the start of a new communications and marketing division. Dean Beyrouthy has put together his leadership council. College wide searches currently going on; Soil Fertility Specialist.

### **Updates**

### **Speakers**

“Right to Farm” by Paul Goeringer, University of Maryland Extension Legal Specialist

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00.

Respectfully submitted by Logan Yearsley