

Maryland Agricultural Commission
Minutes
September 13, 2017

Present:

Ag Education – Martha Clark

Agribusiness – Tom Fisher

Aquaculture – Talmage Petty

Dairy I – Tim Bishton

Dairy II—Jason Myers

Equine – William Reightler, Jr.

Grange – Delegate Paul Stull

Horticulture – Cole Mangum

Organic-Marian Fry

Poultry II – Michelle Protani-Chesnik

Turf – Tom Warpinski

Absent:

Agritourism – Taylor Huffman

At Large Ag Service –David Roles

At Large Ag Service –Vanessa Finney

Bio-Fuel – David Burrier

Consumer – Carroll Shry, Jr.

Direct Farm Marketing – Vacant

Farm Bureau – Vacant

Field Crops – Donald Maring

Food Processing – Cheryl DeBerry

Nursery I – Marion Mullan

Nursery II – Ray Greenstreet

Poultry I – Charlie Carpenter

Tobacco – Charles Cox

University- Dean Beyrouthy

Vegetable – Alison Howard

Veterinary – Dr. John Brooks

Viticulture – Matthew Spies

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**MDA Staff:**

Joe Bartenfelder-Secretary  
Hans Schmidt – Asst. Sec., RC  
Steve Connelly- Asst. Sec., Animal Health  
Secretary  
Matt Tefteau- Director Gov't Relations  
Byron Petrauskas- Program Manager

Kevin Conroy – Asst. Sec., Pest  
Rich Colburn- Special Assistant to

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Guests:

Allison Roe and Nancy- MARBIDCO
Susan Dorcey and Nancy Nun- Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology

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## **Speakers:**

Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology

The Wednesday, September 13, 2017 public meeting of the Maryland Agricultural Commission was called to order by Jason Meyers, at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, at 8:37 a.m. The June 14<sup>th</sup> minutes were approved by Marian Fry, second by Tom Fisher and approved by all.

## **Commodity Reports:**

**Ag Education – Martha Clark** U- Learn was a great success. Our annual meeting will take place in November. We are moving forward with some new programs. Howard County has a fully staffed program and will begin next September. There are over 5,000 youth in ag programs in the county, we need 14 to start our program. Grain bin dust and mold poisoning is an additional concern during cleaning silos and bins.

**Agribusiness – Tom Fish** There are some interesting things happening in agriculture of which you may not be aware. Farmers from at least 12 states have banded together and proposed legislature at both state and federal level that would require equipment makers such as John Deere and Case IH and others to offer diagnostic tools, manuals, and other supplies needed to fix owned machinery. Farmers are saying if they purchase, they have a right to repair. Farmers are claiming that they are becoming more tech savvy. Opponents argue that attempting to repair own equipment a farmer may further damage that equipment. Interestingly, an opponent of this movement is Apple. Apple wants to maintain control if its “fixing business” as it is very profitable. States involved that are close to Maryland are: NC, NJ, and Mass.

Also, if you remember, 3-4 years ago, Syngenta sold GMO corn seed to US growers and some of the corn produced from this seed was exported to China. At the time, this GMO corn was not approved by China and China didn’t want to pay. Consequently, some massive law suits evolved-also corn was approximately \$6.00/BU at that time. Although all the exported corn to China was not Syngenta GMO, it impacted the price of all corn. As of today, there are nearly 50,000 corn growers in the US involved in the suit. This includes growers who did not plant Syngenta seed but are eligible because they grew corn. Attorneys involved in this settlement have asked Atlantic Tractor to invite their customers to informational meetings and all Atlantic Tractors locations are participating. Last week a meeting was held in Salisbury. The settlement is approximately \$100/Acre or \$40/acre net after fees.

**Aquaculture – Talmage Petty** 90% of the seafood we consume in the US is imported. The other 10% is half shellfish. In MD shellfish is the majority. Oysters on-bottom leases are harvested in the summer. Bigger demand during summer brings higher price points for a wild product. In Maryland the total number of bottom leased 6,050 acres out of 6,346 acres leased. Bottom leases produce approximately double the number of bushels. Leases usually last 20 years.

**Dairy I-Tim Bishton** The cool weather recently has helped milk production rebound from the summer heat waves that we experienced. Corn silage is being harvested currently around the state. Tonnage varied depending on farm location. Much of the state had ample rain; however there were pockets that experienced dry spells that effected yield. From the producers I spoke with yield has been about average. Triticale and other small grains will be planted soon Mailbox milk price is up slightly as compared to earlier in the year and around

1.50 more than 2016. FL dairy farms are dealing with the effects of Irma. Many farms will be running completely on generators for over a week. A freestall barn completely collapsed outside of Tampa that housed over 400 cows. Crews were working during the intensity of the storm to rescue as many animals as possible.

**Dairy II-Jason Myers** Milk production continues to be strong which is putting pressure on prices in the futures market. These prices are about 5% lower than three months ago. Class I sales (fluid milk) continues to decline year to year. This trend has caused the closing of another bottling plant in Virginia. Animal rights groups continue to be a concern to the livestock industry. We all need to continue to be good stewards of our livestock and advocate for our industry.

**Equine- Bill Reightler** Ross Peddicord, executive director of the Maryland horse Industry Board, reported things are proceeding well for the Fair Hill Four Star event to be held next year. Fair Hill was recently awarded this event beating out several other sites. There is only one other four star event in the country. This event is expected to have an economic impact of \$15-20 million for the surrounding area. Laurel Park's summer race meeting posted gains of a 25.6% increase or \$2.725 million in average daily wagering handle. Total wagering at the 33-day race meeting was \$112 million up from \$63.2 million last year. The Maryland State Fair was held from August 25<sup>th</sup> through September 4<sup>th</sup> at the Timonium Fairgrounds. Attendance at the fair increased 20% from last year to 555,841. This was the second best attendance on record. The Maryland State Fair Thoroughbred Race Meeting consisted of 7 race days, which produced gains in wagering and attendance. \$5,261,522 was bet as compared to \$3,572,474, a 47.28% increase from last year. Blu Moon Ace won the inaugural running of the Coalition Stakes offering a purse of \$100,000. Robert L. Cole, Jr. won the race, a Maryland based owner and the breeder of the winner was Howard Bender former master of Glade Valley Farm. The Maryland Horse Breeders Association announced the running of the 32nd annual running of the Jim McKay Maryland Million Day at Laurel Park. The series of races is to be run on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Competing horses are sired by Maryland based stallions.

**Grange-Paul Stull** Grange members are concerned about the weather and its impact on petroleum prices. The Grange participated in the State Fair. They are looking forward to their State Convention that will take place in Frederick on Oct. 19-21, 2017. The Ag community must promote trade through NAFTA. Trade in 2016 was over 38 Billion Dollars as part of NAFTA. Harvest season is here and the members are concerned with grain bin safety. The Grange gives credit to Farm Bureau Foundation on their efforts in Ag Education. Farm Bill will be discussed this next year in congress.

**Horticulture-Cole Mangum** September sales are up so far this year. May held an issue with a patient dispute. A GMO was put into a petunia 20 years ago in the orange color. Significant damage to nurseries in Florida due to storms. Energy rates have dropped for the first time in years. We are burning more gas than in previous years to create electricity

**Organics-Marian Fry** Very successful annual meeting of Future Harvest/CASA with more break out tracks, larger attendance and more vendors than previous meetings. The issue of soilless growing remains a significant concern within the organic community and continues to be a topic of debate and influence at the national level. Upcoming local meetings of interest to organic growers include: February 11, 2017 (Snow Date February 18), Maryland Organic Food and Farming Association Winter Meeting, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM, Maryland Dept. of Agriculture Feb. 16, Organic Grain Grower Roundtable, 9 – 12, Kent Co. Ext. office Feb. 23, Future Harvest/ CASA Foodshed Field School – Winter high tunnel management at Sassafras Creek Farm, Leonardtowne, 10-4.

**Poultry II-Michelle Protani-Chesnik** July and August went by rapidly I will not miss the heat or humidity. For poultry agriculture the past two months have been relatively quiet with only a couple of rounds of extreme heat for poultry farmers to contend with. The housing boom continues with new housing coming on board for the integrators at a rapid pace. Older farming operations and farms deemed to be performing poorly are finding themselves without income, as integrators are not continuing to place birds on these operations. For those of you who are not aware contract poultry farming is a competitive contract business. Farms in each settlement week are ranked from 1 through bottom for performance/cost. Those farms that are poor and consistently at the bottom are placed on notice and if they do not improve their ranking they are left without birds. It does not matter if the housing is old or new. With the abundance of housing this is becoming a frequent occurrence .

Cecil County is continuing to fight the development of poultry operations in their county see the link [http://www.cecildaily.com/image\\_e8b08953-e94f-5055-b4b3-517122f2d92f.html](http://www.cecildaily.com/image_e8b08953-e94f-5055-b4b3-517122f2d92f.html)

A suit has been filed against USDA by Food & Water Watch for what they feel was incomplete environmental overview before approving a loan for a poultry operation, see the link.

<http://www.feedstuffs.com/news/advocacy-group-sues-usda-over-cafo-approval>

Environmental groups are once again requesting hearings from MDE for new CAFO operations, I will attend the one being held on Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup> in Wicomico for the highly opposed Naylor Mill farm. This group is still up in arms after the courts denied their hearing due to late filing. I suspect this will be a very volatile hearing with standing room only. See link to story below.

<http://www.delmarvanow.com/story/news/local/maryland/2017/08/03/naylor-mill-poultry-farm/532513001/>

I saved the best for last, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in collaboration with North Carolina State University have decided to start their own air quality study of ammonia emissions from poultry operations on the Shore. They want to determine the impact of these emissions on the Bay This is to help them more accurately determine if the Bay Model is correct. The last time NC state helped out up here in 1998 , we experienced pfiesteria hysteria due to the findings of Judith Burkholder and Ed Noga NC State researchers. The research proved to be totally wrong , it claimed the fish kills and human health problems from pfiesteria were directly connected to poultry farms on the shore. Flawed and inaccurate research causes great harm and this was a prime example. See copy of CBF letter above.

**Turf – Tom Warpinski** A dry June followed by an unusually moist July and August really set the stage for heavy fungus and disease pressure on turf farms and the entire Maryland green industry. Most storms were heavy downpours with water pooling in lower areas of the fields, especially on the Eastern Shore farms. High temperatures drastically increased the proliferation of Brown Patch and Pythium diseases. Most farms experiencing some delayed harvest or even loss of acreage. Most farms are currently in the process of Fall seeding. Continued wet weather is making it more challenging than usual. Overall Turf sales have been steady to maybe a slight decline statewide Montgomery Circuit Court judge, in August, overturned the county's ban on the use of cosmetic pesticides on lawns. The Court confirmed that the County's ban was unlawful and preempted by Maryland law. Maryland state law already provides uniform and comprehensive regulation of pesticide use across the state. Judge McGann said the case was just one example of Maryland counties' "insatiable appetite to tamper with existing state laws,". The University of Maryland Summer field day took place July 12<sup>th</sup> at their research farm in College Park. The event was very well attended. An excellent program

was presented highlighting current updates on important turfgrass research being conducted by the University. Topics covered included fungicide research, various turfgrass cultivar trials, effects of various mowing heights and fertility on Tall fescue, use of compost topdressing for turf and much more. The 2017 TPI (Turfgrass Producers International) Summer Convention was held alongside the International Turfgrass Research Conference (ITRC) from July 16th – 21st in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Over 450 turfgrass researchers and professionals from around the world gathered to discuss the latest turfgrass research findings.

### **Updates**

Matt Teffeau- MDA will be doing legislative tours this fall in Oct.

Steve Connelly- Jim Eichhorst is at NASDA and they will be talking about the Produce Rule and its implementation.

Kevin Conroy- Two new programs started this week, Midge and Black Flies. Spraying has begun.

Dr. Michael Radebaugh- Maryland State Fair 3,751 animals inspected during the fair. 11 animals were rejected due to health. There were no disease signs during the fair. Fleas and ticks are up this year as well as the disease they carry.

Hans Schmidt- Cover Crop signup has concluded and the numbers are down a little to 640,000 acres. We have had previously 7 years straight of record enrollment. We have a new database for the sign-up. We encourage farmers to accurately fill out the Ag Census.

Sec. Joe Bartenfelder- We are working to assist the states that have been affected by the recent hurricanes.

### **Speakers**

Susan Dorcey and Nancy Nun- Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00. Moved by Paul Stull and Seconded by Marion Fry

Respectfully submitted by Logan Yearsley