



Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes September 20th, 2023

Present:

John Murphy
Dr. Marianne Bailey
Amy Crone
Kelly Dudeck
Gordon Krester
J. Kelly Lewis
Matthew Levi Sellers

Richard Pelz
Rajneesh Kathuria
Sean Hough
Paula Linthicum
Rebecca Stoecker (Zoom)
Michael Pons (Zoom)

Absent:

Frank Allnutt
Dean Craig Beyrouthy
Joe Dymek
Michael Levensgood
Tom Mullineaux

Far Nasir
Cliff Newsome Jr.
Matt Nielsen
Stefanie Reiser
Ben Sowers

MDA Staff:

Kevin Atticks
Dwight Dotterer
Michael Calkins (Zoom)

Guests:

Allison Roe (MARBIDCO)
Sierra Criste (MARBIDCO)
Brian Cadden (MARBIDCO)
Jonathan Cribbs (Delmarva Farmer)
Jimmy Tilghman (via Zoom)

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve partial, “reports only” minutes from the April 2023 meeting was made by Paula Linthicum, 2nd by J. Kelly Lewis

Motion to approve the June 2023 meeting minutes was made by J. Kelly Lewis, 2nd by Rajneesh Kathuria.

Maryland Department of Agriculture Staff Updates:

Kevin Atticks, Secretary of Agriculture

- Welcome Harrison Palmer as the new Executive Secretary of the Maryland Agricultural Commission, his first task will be to fill the vacancies of the commission so that it is truly representative of the agricultural industry at large. Meetings will be hybrid moving forward so that we can be more inclusive and ensure that we are hearing the perspectives of those in the far east and far west corners of the state.
- MDA senior staff has spent a lot of time on the road to be within the community and is working to set this as the new 'norm' for the department. "You cannot hear what is going on if you aren't out within the community."
- Issues affecting apple orchards right now, working to communicate with those growers who will be affected.
- Dep. Sec. Steve Connelly, Environmental Secretary McIlwain, and Secretary Atticks visited El Salvador to meet with their farmers, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of the Environment to share ideas and build a connection. 10% of Maryland population is Latino, 70% of the Latino population in Maryland is Salvadorian.
 - Labor is a huge topic of discussion within the Latino community. The El Salvador Minister of Labor has an entrepreneurship program that sends their citizens to work in ag in USA then come back and bring new experiences, new ideas, new methods to advance El Salvador's agricultural economy.
- The department has hosted and attended several tours and done extensive legislative work to ensure policy makers understand agriculture and the concept of the challenges we face. Few understand the successes & challenges of agriculture, and most have other priorities. There is still a lot of education we need to do in all parts of the state to ensure every legislator has a concept of agriculture.
- We are doing everything we can to get staff hired as fast as possible. There was an initial 11% vacancy rate; internally our goal is a 6 or 7% rate, and we are going to meet that goal by January, if not December.
 - Bolstering where we can in a very tough budget year, yet we are still going to be asking for more fortification of staff.
- Nutrient Management – we are taking great input from the farming industry to figure out how to evolve the nutrient management program. The nutrient management taskforce meets every other week and is having great discussions and opening it up to figure out how to make things better. We recently staff met with UMD about NuMan software updates that will be discussed in today's presentation.
- We are spending an inordinate amount of time meeting with folks who have had concerns about agriculture; environmentalists, conservationists, Bay groups, the Bay commission, the Bay program, anti-pesticide groups, and every policy group that our team can meet with.
 - The department is going head-on into discussions with them to try to alleviate concerns these groups have, the bottom line is that agriculture is not going away, and that principle is being made clear.

- The department and Maryland farmers want to end well for soil, climate, environment, bay, but through our lens, the profitability of the farmer comes first. We are going to be sustainable and regenerative, but it must be profitable.
- It is the responsibility of the environmentally charged groups to come to the agricultural community with ideas that are going to increase profit and not decrease profit.
- When farmers go out of business, the alternative land use is development and on every metric, development is worse than agriculture; worse for climate, worse for the bay, worse for soil, worse for runoff, worse for pesticides, worse on ALL metrics.

Presentation from Dwight Dotterer – Nutrient Management Update

Commodity Reports:

Ag Education- Joseph Dymek:

MAEF

- MAEF held a fundraiser at Hopkins Farm Brew on September 11th to support the building of the new Mobile Science Lab.
- MAEF currently has two mobile Showcases that are used to promote ag education in Maryland. At the August MAEF Annual Meeting, it was approved to move forward in replacing the older Showcase.
- Members of the Maryland ag community are asked to please start thinking of agriculture businesses or organizations which may be able to offer apprenticeships for high school students. Apprenticeships are valuable component of the Blueprint.
- The MAEF Scholarship Golf Tournament will be held September 13th, at the Oakmont Green Golf Course in Hampstead.

FFA

- June 22, 2023-Assisted in conducting the Maryland FFA Forestry and Environmental & Natural Resources Career Events
- June 26-29, 2023-Planned and Conducted the 95th Maryland FFA State Convention at the University of Maryland College Park
- June 29, 2023- New Officer Team was installed:
 - President - Brandon Boyer, Brunswick
 - Vice-President - Kayla Crigger, Boonsboro
 - Secretary - Hope Mullins, North Harford
 - Treasurer - Abby Dinterman, Walkersville
 - Reporter - Carlee Eierman, Caroline County
 - Sentinel - Hailey Ogg, Walkersville
- July 10-14, 2023- State Officer Team attended Base Camp training in Westminster, Maryland focusing on team building. The evening of July 10th, the team met with Mrs.

Kitty Gialanilla at the Carroll County Ag Center for an official and casual team photo session.

- July 11, 2023- State Officer Team attended the Maryland Ag Educators Summer Picnic sponsored by the Westminster and FSK Alumni Affiliated at the Carroll Co Ag Museum. Kayla Crigger led the Invocation. Brandon introduced the new team members to those in attendance.
- July 12, 2023- State Officers participated in Business visits with local Agriculture teachers to Clear Ridge Nursery and Local Homestead Products, Inc.
- July 13, 2023- State Officers attended the Maryland Agriculture Educators Award Luncheon. Brandon brought greetings from the Association and Carlee led the invocation before the meal.
- July 20, 2023- State Officers Brandon, Kayla, Abby, and Hailey assisted with the Maryland FFA Livestock, Dairy Evaluation and Dairy Handling CDE held at the Washington County Ag Expo and Fair. Carlee participated in the Dairy Handling event.
- July 20, 2023- Brandon and Hope attended the Governor's Buy Local Cook-Out at the Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- July 24-28, 2023- the State Officer team attended the National FFA Summit for State Officers in Washington, D.C. Kelcey Trewin accompanied the team as their chaperone. Team members participated in Advocacy training, visited many historic sites of Washington, D.C., met with legislative staff and Senator Chris van Hollen. They also worked on issues to be addressed by the State delegates during the upcoming National FFA Convention.
- August 9, 2023- State Officers attended the Maryland FFA Alumni Board meeting via zoom.
- August 14, 2023- Maryland FFA Board of Directors Meeting attended via zoom by the Officer team.
- August 14-18, 2023- Attended the National FFA Checkpoint #1 Training in Garrett County. The training focused on Workshop preparation, Facilitation, conversation skills and public speaking.

Maryland FFA State Officer Report

- August 21, 2023- State Officer team joined the State Officers from Delaware and Pennsylvania at a business tour of Horizon Farm Credit in Westminster, Maryland. Career opportunities and programs for new and young farmers were discussed and a financial workshop conducted for the State Officers.
- August 24, 2023- Maryland FFA and 4-H Tractor Operators was conducted at the Maryland State Fair starting at 12 noon. Eight FFA members participated with Caroline Clark from Catocin placing first.
- August 24-27, 2023, August 31-September 4 and September 7-September 10, 2023- The Maryland FFA State Officers assisted with the ULEARN Farm exhibits, MD FFA & 4-H Horticulture Event, MD 4-H Dairy Judging events, MD Farm Bureau Young Farmer Ice Cream Stand, attended the Governor's Luncheon meeting the Secretary of Agriculture

Atticks, Governor Wes Moore and Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, and other agricultural events throughout the fair.

- September 11, 2023- State FFA Officers attended the MAEF Food, Fiddles and FUNraising event to support the funding of the new mobile lab.
- September 13, 2023- State FFA Officers will attend the MAEF Scholarship Golf Tournament and assist with the event.
- September 13-17, 2023- Brandon, Hailey and Carlee will travel to the Eastern States Exposition to assist with FFA Events.
- September 17-20, 2023- Kayla and Hope will travel to Harrisburg, Pa to assist with the PA All-American Dairy Shows.
- September 18-22, 2023- State Officers will support the Ag Education Days at the Frederick Fair by assisting with the school tours and activities.
- September 20, 2023- State Officers will conduct the Region 2 Greenhand Ceremony held at the Frederick Fair.
- October 13-15, 2023- Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT) Conference at North Bay Adventure Camp in Cecil County.
- October 20, 2023- Maryland FFA Land and Home Site Evaluation event.
- October 29-November 4, 2023-96th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana
- January 3-16, 2024- Brandon, Hope, Abby, and Hailey have been selected to represent the Maryland FFA in the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers sponsored by the National FFA. They will be traveling to Australia along with 70 other State FFA Officers from across the U.S. to meet with agricultural leaders, visit agricultural businesses and educational institutions, learn of the connections between agriculture in the U.S. and Australia and experience the history and culture of Australia.

MDFB

- The Agriculture Education and Extension Committee will be meeting on Sept. 19. Thanks to Tyler Hough (MDFB) for his able staff leadership during a time of significant change for the organization. The committee developed and approved three policies on ag education that were sent forward to the Board and then to county farm bureaus for support for the 2024 policy.
- MDFB will continue discussions about routes to enrollment in Agriculture at UMD and UMES, our two land grant universities. The committee will entertain approving a guidance document on Tips to Become an Ag Terp, after discussions with MD AGNR leadership.

Howard County Farm Bureau

- Howard County's Board of Directors via the Outreach and Education Committee were awarded a grant for two agriculture education programs within the Youth Engagement Program (YEP) grant led by Dr. Calvin Ball.
- The grant will fund HCFB's Junior Showmanship and the inaugural HCFB Ag Awareness Day. Led by Rhonda Winkler, the 9th annual Junior Showmanship held during the Howard County Fair was a huge success. Junior Showmanship is for any youth ages 5-8 years and provides the opportunity for them to learn and then exhibit in showmanship for dairy

calves, sheep, goats, and pigs. For 2023, 81 youth signed up and 81 participated for 100% retention rate, and for the past two years, 100% of these youth have joined 4-H. Many volunteers made light work. Dr. Ball stopped by and gave brief remarks which he posted on FB. Rhonda reported that she had the opportunity to visit Ag Secretary Atticks during the State Fair about Jr. Showmanship and he was impressed.

- Joe Dymek is leading the first ever HCFB Ag Awareness Day to be held on April 12, 2024, for the 7th graders at Folly Quarter Middle School. Much planning has started. After this event, HCFB is being encouraged to expand the AAD to the entire seventh grade of the HCPSS.
- The HCFB and the HCPSS Ag Science Academy (and FFA) are starting up for the fall Ag Seminar Series. Experts will speak with these juniors and seniors to expand their awareness and understanding of the vast array of careers, in addition to farming, that are available in agriculture, food, environment and natural resources sectors.

UMCP

- Dr. Colby Silvert, Assistant Professor for Agricultural and Extension Education (tenure track) started in late August. He is already working with mentoring graduate students, analyzing FFA data from the summer convention and discussing future projects with current AGNR faculty.
- We had great interest in the Ag and Extension Education program at the AGNR welcome back fall bash as well as the 1st look fair for students examining degree major change options at UMD.
- On Thursday September 21st we will be participating in the national Tagged to Teach AG day. Our event "There S'More to Ag Education than You Realize" will host events on campus and online to connect middle and high school students to agricultural degree programs. Individuals on campus will build s'mores (examining the content areas taught in Ag Ed programs- graham crackers, the network of professionals and communities- marshmallows and the sweet celebrations of awards and grant programs- chocolate.

Agribusiness- Thomas Mullineaux:

- The growing season has been the tale of East-West.
 - Eastern Shore, ample rainfall, some places more than ample.
 - Western Shore, Drought.
- Corn and soybean yields are expected to be very good to excellent East, Poor for the most part west of the bay. Corn Silage and Hay yields very concerning.
- Statewide dairy operations are feeling the pinch of lower milk prices. Retail Farm and garden supplies, Tack, Hardware, and feed in "Traditional Retail Farm Supply Stores" continue to be lower with competition from National Retailers. Rural King store in Hanover Pa is the size of a football field.
- In western central counties there has been a very large Amish population moving in. Carroll and Frederick counties are growing Tobacco again after an absence of 40 or so years.
- There is a new Amish school in Taneytown (Carroll County)
 - These folks are paying very large sums for farms.

Agritourism- Kelly Dudeck:

- The ability for farmers to revenue from agritourism in Maryland seems to be becoming harder, rather than easier.
- Some of the issues currently being dealt with:
 - On-farm stays
 - Given that the State recently approved incidental overnight stays, some Agritourism business owners in Montgomery County (among others) have expressed interest in county legislation being introduced that would allow incidental overnight stays. On November 6, the County Council will have a work session on agritourism, and incidental overnight stays will probably be discussed then.
 - SDAT
 - Workgroup is creeping along. Biggest hang up seems to be “ag vs commercial.”
 - Working with Rachel Jones, MDA Director of Government Relations, and Martin Proulx, MDA Value Added Agriculture Specialist
 - Events
 - No set definitions at the State level for events and other activities, which leaves the State referencing local language and leads to inconsistencies at the expense of the businesses.
 - Red Tape
 - Lacking clear, certain, and consistent language often leads to unexpected delays and expenses – as well as the culture of no.
 - Farmers are losing income without guidelines and clear regulations.
 - Frederick County
 - Agritourism Workgroup is meeting to better define what is an agritourism operation, what would be included under an agritourism definition, and how to regulate these farms.
- Penn State’s Department of Agricultural Economic, Sociology, and Education recently published Agritourism in the United States – State & National Factsheets
- Agritourism activities fit within five main categories:
 - **Direct sales:** *consumers buy directly from farmers*
 - **Education:** *learning experiences, such as school tours*
 - **Hospitality:** *includes farm stays, on-farm dinners*
 - **Outdoor recreation:** *outdoor farm experiences*
 - **Entertainment:** *on-farm activities such as festivals*
- Once there, you can link to all 50 states. Here are a few stats from MD and our neighboring states that help to give us an overall picture of agritourism in Maryland.
- This chart shows the missed opportunities for Maryland farmers to revenue, as well as the direct economic impact that the state could benefit from, if a more supportive framework were in place.

	# of Farms	# of Farms offering Agritourism	% of farms w/ Agritourism
MD	12,429	1,548	12%
NH	4,123	1,281	31%
ME	7,600	2,201	29%
NJ	9,883	1,994	20%
VT	6,808	1,953	28%
MA	7,241	1,915	26%
CT	5,521	1,454	26%

- *From Paula Linthicum: Montgomery County Chapter 52 sets very clear language for agritourism that gained input from the agricultural community, business development organizations and the County government.
 - Grow & Fortify was hired by Baltimore County to do a regulatory scan to help make them a more hospitable place for these ventures.

Aquaculture- Richard Pelz:

Drought conditions

- Due to the drought, salinity regimes throughout the bay remain 4 ppt (parts per thousand) higher than normal.
- Positive impacts:
 - Improved flavor making oysters more sale able.
 - Better growth rates, bay oysters prefer 22ppt most of Maryland's bay waters normally are lower.
 - Better reproduction and survival
- Negative impacts
 - Certain oyster diseases like MSX prefers higher salinity.
 - Oyster predators from the Atlantic Ocean migrate further up the bay.
 - Boring sponge which weakens an oysters shell prefers Salinity over 15ppt St. Jerome Creek for example which normally has a salinity of 12ppt had salinity readings over 15ppt all summer and is still 17ppt.

Maryland Oyster sales slowed recently.

- This a normal occurrence. 90 % of oyster sales occur in restaurants. When congress goes into recess Many Legislators and their staff leave Washington. Lobbying decreases as well so restaurants have reduced patronage. Conversely in the summer when schools are closed the number of visitors to Washington increases. So the combination of the start of the school year with the congressional recess has temporarily reduced sales.

Moving Aquaculture back to MDA

- This will be a re-occurring bullet point in my reports.
 - Maryland Law states that Aquaculture is Agriculture.
 - Initially it was here in MDA on the main floor.
 - Then it was moved down to this floor and eventually by an act of the legislature to DNR.

- When aquaculture was at MDA there were numerous start-up operations.
- Tilapia, striped bass and hybrid striped bass, yellow perch, Koi, catfish, ornamental guppies, hard clams in the coastal bays, shrimp, bay scallops, aquatic plants both ornamental and for environmental use such as native grasses.
- After moving to DNR these operations went away and according to Don Webster who heads the Aquaculture Coordinating Council, the only one remaining is oysters.
- This is an important reason to return Aquaculture to MDA. There are a number of other reasons which I will discuss in future reports.

The Aquaculture Coordinating Council

- Issued its Alternative Substrate Workgroup Final Report
 - Just by the title you can see the thrust of the council is not only towards oysters but towards open bottom culture of oysters.
 - Alternate substrates mean not using oyster shell. Over the years I have seen multiple alternative substrates attempted from broken old toilets in Virginia and fly ash from coal fired electric plants to the Memorial Stadium from Baltimore. I have a list of about 20 of them and none work better than oyster shell.
- Open bottom oyster culture has several drawbacks.
 1. Working the beds suspends silt. Suspended silt in bay waters drops back out of the water column at a rate of 8 feet every 50 years.
 2. Lower Production volume. One dimensional culture versus 3 dimensional.
 3. Predation. Several years ago, the Army Corps of Engineers planted oysters on the Potomac River at Ray's Point in Virginia. Hundreds of cownose rays returned as they do every year to Ray's Point and consumed the young oysters.

Bio-Fuel- Rajneesh Kathuria:

- Exciting time for Maryland farmers, especially corn growers and soybean growers because Europe just approved biofuels from corn and soy
 - The biggest challenge in Maryland is that we do not have that many refineries.
- Huge industry, a lot of capital investments
 - 50-100 million startup costs. Texas is closing refineries, but they do not want to come here.
 - October – Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition & Conference (ADIPEC) in Abu Dhabi, UAE
 - 200,000 attendees from around the world discuss decarbonization internationally focusing on biofuels.
 - October 9-10, AgraME Biofuels conference that Maryland should be involved with moving forward if Maryland wants to export biofuel and expand the industry.

Dairy II- Benjamin Sowers:

- No Report.

Direct Farm Market: Amy Crone

- Annual fall reminder: Kids are back in school, but markets are still open!
- Starting to shift from summer to fall produce; beginning to see more apples, pumpkins, squash, and root vegetables at markets along with the lingering summer items like tomatoes and corn.
- The majority of markets stay open through at least Thanksgiving; a few close at the end of October and a few are year-round.
- Passing of Rick Blevins happened in April; a loss to the farm market community who will be missed. Lisa Barge also passed in July – a huge loss to the Anne Arundel Agricultural community and beyond.
- National news:
 - End of September USDA has to award all pending grants, so will be keeping an eye to see if any Maryland organizations and/or farmers received the [FMPP](#), [LFPP](#), [GUSNip](#), or [Local Meat Capacity](#) grants
 - The Farmers Market Coalition ([FMC](#)) named a new Executive Director, Charisse McGill (from Philadelphia)
 - NAFMNP had a successful conference in Santa Fe, where the talk was very much focused on electronic options for FMNP programs. MDA & MDH had representatives attend.
- Ongoing challenges for this sector: processing dates, weather, labor
- Grants available:
 - [SARE](#) accepting proposals until November 14
- Opportunities:
 - SMADC has an [RFP](#) out for Agricultural & Aquaculture Analysis in Calvert, Charles & St. Mary's County
 - SMADC also working on a Maryland Farm & Art tour in 2024
 - PASA openings ([here](#))
 - AA County is seeking Agriculture Preservation person; Barbara Polito retired. AA County is also looking for a new Soil Conservation Specialist.
 - MarketLink SNAP Online project now open to farmers to accept SNAP via an eCommerce site (GrownBy). They can apply at www.marketlink.org/apply

Equine- Michael Pons:

- The Governor's committee to oversee Maryland Racing met to discuss the future of the Maryland Jockey Club. The Stronach Group, under 1st Racing, has proposed to sell Laurel Racecourse and keep Pimlico and the Preakness Stakes, Maryland's largest sporting event. At the end of the day, if there is a new owner of the Maryland Jockey Club, it would be beneficial if it was a Marylander, someone with local ties. The nearly \$400M Bond Bill Funding for rebuilding Pimlico and Laurel is currently on hold.

- Implementation of the Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Act, known as HISA, began earlier this summer in nearly every racing state, except Texas and Louisiana, who currently have lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of HISA. However, while in litigation, those states are without simulcasting rights to import/export races to other states and internationally. Overall, HISA has gotten off to a pretty good start, responding to challenges on a case-by-case basis. Maryland attorney, Alan Foreman, has been appointed HISA ombudsman in a recent appointment.
- The handle and attendance during the Laurel Summer meet were down slightly, about 7% overall. Competition from legalized Sports Betting began in earnest with the start of the College and Professional Football seasons. How much it will impact the handle remains to be seen.
- The Fasig-Tipton July in Kentucky and the Saratoga (August) Sale in New York both were strong at the top of the market. Wealthy buyers have formed syndicates to increase buying power on the best horses. However, this places enormous pressure on the middle and lower parts of the market. This trend is likely to continue, with the racing successes of recent purchases.
- The MidAtlantic October Yearling Sale is on Monday and Tuesday, October 2nd and 3rd, 2023. Nearly 700 horses will be offered and should attract buyers from primarily the East Coast, with representatives from Kentucky, Midwest and California also participating. Last year's Kentucky Derby winner, Mage, was sold at the 2022 May Sale at Timonium, the first time ever a Derby winner was sold here. Yearling Sales graduates include several Eclipse Champions, like Declan's Moon, etc.
- The 2023 Preakness Stakes attendance was down considerably, from nearly 125,000 in 2019, pre-Covid, to an estimated 65,000 fans. Maryland Jockey Club officials were disappointed, especially after hiring 8-time Emmy winning rockstar Bruno Mars, as the headliner for the popular infield concert. However, the 2023 pari-mutuel handle was \$104M, which compares favorably to \$100M+ pre-Covid betting totals. The Preakness Stakes featured a field of only seven horses, with Kentucky Derby winner, Mage, being the lone Derby horse to run here. Mage ran a pedestrian third to the Bob Baffert-trained winner, National Treasure, who won in wire-to-wire fashion, in a time nearly three seconds slower than Secretariat's record 50 years ago. MJC needs to address attendance, Preakness field-size, as well as numerous customer service and facilities issues.
- A six-month extension to the 10-Year-Plan was recently signed by: MJC, MTHA (Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen Association, and the MHBA (Maryland Horse Breeders Association). This agreement provides a game plan for all three participants, regarding: number of racing days, racing schedule, marketing plans, etc. Discussions about a new 10-Year-Plan have begun.
- The Sport of Thoroughbred Horse Racing has been severely impacted by the recent deaths of racehorses across the country. So far, there have been at least 12 horse fatalities at Churchill Downs, two on the Pimlico's Preakness Card, and one on Belmont Stakes Day and another the following day. Extensive pre-race veterinarian inspections have been enacted, as well as blood tests and physical examinations, yet these breakdowns have still occurred. The Churchill Downs track was closed on June 7th, about three weeks

prior to the end of the meeting, so that more extensive track safety testing could be done. The CD Meet has been shifted to Ellis Park, in Henderson, KY.

- Maryland racing has also had troubles with horse fatalities at Laurel Park. A total of 15 horses have died at Maryland racetracks this year, including two on the same day. In April, racing was cancelled for several days after Maryland horsemen boycotted the entry box until the Laurel Park racetrack was examined by an independent expert, former Maryland racetrack superintendent John Passero. After repairs were made to the surface, the track reopened and, so far, it is a safer and more uniform racetrack on which to train and race.
- Despite the passage of the 2020 Maryland Racetrack Improvement Bond Bill, which pledged nearly \$400 Million to rebuild Pimlico and Laurel, no progress has been made. The Stronach Group, which owns the Maryland Jockey Club, is faced with formidable capital gains taxes on the cash value of the improvements, significant cost-overruns and interest-rate hikes, which have stopped the project. Negotiations have, so far, been unproductive. The Maryland Legislature approved a new six-person racing board to oversee Maryland racing issues. It's hoped that this board will facilitate racetrack improvements and act in our sport's best interest, if anything happens to the Stronach Group, the Canadian-based owner, who currently operate the MJC.
- In the good news department, this year's Kentucky Derby winner, Mage, was sold last spring here at Timonium. He's the first Derby winner to have been sold in Maryland in my lifetime. Mage brought \$290,000 at the 2022 May 2-Year-Old in Training Sale and was bought by a syndicate, which includes a micro-share partnership. Mage is the first Classic winner sold in this sale since Afleet Alex, winner of the 2005 Preakness. He ran third in this year's Preakness, unable to catch the leaders in a much slower paced race than the Derby. The 2023 May Sale had a \$1M sales-topper and several \$500,000+ horses as well. But the overall clearance rate, the number of horses sold, dropped considerably as did the median sales price. Nonetheless, several top racing prospects, who might be famous one day, were sold here again this year.
- Fasig-Tipton has added a June 2-Year-Old Sales to our calendar, cataloguing about 150 horses for the sale, scheduled for Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at the Timonium Sales Pavilion.
- The Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Act, known as HISA, which provides uniform racing regulations, central racing office and numerous other reforms, began on May 22, 2023. Opponents have stalled enactment from its planned beginning on January 1, 2023. HISA is a federal law governing the sport of horse racing and will provide uniform mediation regulations for participating racing states.

Farm Bureau- Paula Linthicum:

- As farmers are getting into the field for fall harvest they are recognizing the widespread impact of deer damage and drought stress from the summer months.
- Maryland Farm Bureau (MDFB) recently announced newly appointed staff members:
 - Parker Welch, Executive Director

- Jeb Burchick, Director of Communications
- Mitch Hopkins, Regional Field Manager (Central/Southern)
- Kara Hutchison, Regional Field Manager (Eastern Shore)
- MDFB Issues of Concern for the Upcoming Legislative Session:
 - Solar Siting on Farmland (Agrivoltaics)

During the 2023 legislative session, the legislature passed a bill to make the community solar program permanent in Maryland and defined Agrivoltaics. The location of Agrivoltaics in Community Solar is important to MD agriculture.

 - * From Sec. Atticks: MDA is planning a solar summit later in November/December to look at the latest and greatest technologies. Agriculture MUST be maintained as productive and profitable.
 - Ban the Use of Cages in Layer Operations

A ban would have a negative financial impact on the commercial egg producers in the state.
 - Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS)

The per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of chemicals used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. Also known as the “forever chemicals” they have been used in consumer products since the 1950s. Residues exist in our environment. Farmers need protection from harmful actions, exemption from liability, and eligibility to receive financial relief if Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are found on a farm.
 - Sunday Hunting in Maryland

Under current state law, the counties have the authority to dictate which Sunday’s during the hunting seasons that hunting is allowed. Passage of a bill to allow hunting in Montgomery County, but only from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 AM set the precedent for future Sunday hunting bills. Since that date, only bills with the 10:30 AM restriction have passed. During the past legislative session, several counties sponsored bills to remove the 10:30 AM restriction, but none of those bills passed.
 - Foreign Government Ownership of Maryland Farmland

As foreign ownership of agricultural land has grown, so has the interest in restricting and monitoring foreign ownership of U.S. agricultural land among federal and state lawmakers. There is concern these purchases could undermine the ability for the American Farmer to be competitive in a national and international market. Twenty-one states have laws prohibiting or restricting foreign ownership. During the past legislative session, there were two bills introduced that would have restricted the ability for foreign ownership of Ag land.
 - Artificial Intelligence (American Farm Bureau Federation – AFBF)

AI is a rapidly evolving technology with many positive attributes. Balancing the good and the bad is a challenge prompting the need for policy framework to address AI

regulation. e.g. AI is replacing traditional methods of forecasting demand and predicting disruptions supply chains.

Hemp- Matthew Levi Sellers: Industrial Hemp

National News

- On August 7th at the Central PA Institute of Science and Technology, the National Hemp Association (NHA) and PA Secretary of Agriculture, Russell Redding met with Congressman Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson, Chair of the House Agricultural Committee. The focal point of this meeting was the Industrial Hemp Act of 2023 ([H.R. 3755](#) & [S.980](#)) and its potential integration into the forthcoming 2023 Farm Bill.
- The Industrial Hemp Act of 2023 seeks to create a clear distinction and separate regulations for industrial hemp fiber and grain from cannabinoid or floral hemp. While maintaining the existing regulatory framework for cannabinoid hemp production, these bills provide a new framework specific to industrial hemp. This bifurcation reduces burdens on farmers, provides clarity for investors and promoting economic development in rural America.
- This is similar to the efforts by MD Hemp Industry stakeholders during the 2022 legislative session with certain provisions within HB1204.
- In addition to the Industrial Hemp Act, the meeting spotlighted broader asks for hemp within the Farm Bill. One significant request is the approval of hemp grain as animal feed for pets, exotic pets, horses, ornamental fish, camelids, and other non-production animals.
- Also discussed was the much needed ‘Whole of Government Approach’ as well as the development of the legislation to create the regulatory authority that FDA needs in order to provide a path forward for cannabinoid products.
- Hemp Industry Stakeholders are rallying to empower American farmers, encourage innovation, and champion sustainable practices.
- <https://nationalhempassociation.org/national-hemp-associations-push-for-the-industrial-hemp-act-of-2023/>

Maryland News

- On September 7th Hart Hemp Company located in Frederick, MD held a Field Day. The event gave an exclusive firsthand look at the development of a commercial-scale industrial hemp farm in the State of Maryland.
- Many goals of the operation were discussed, including setting up much needed processing plants and contracting new farmers to grow hemp for industrial purposes.
- There is a lot of work that needs to take place to improve this sector of the hemp industry. Support by the MDA for certain key legislative changes laid out in

HB1204 would be a start to removing certain hurdles holding back adoption of industrial hemp by MD farmers.

- In my last report I mentioned approximately only 17% of the licensed hemp producers in MD produce hemp for industrial purposes, while the other 83% produce cannabinoid or floral hemp.
- As I have stated in the past “In order to achieve the full social, environmental and economic potentials of hemp, we must protect and promote both its therapeutic potentials and industrial potentials”

Floral Hemp

MD Case Against Cannabinoid Monopolies

- Currently, the MD hemp industry is awaiting the ruling from a preliminary injunction hearing that took place on Sept. 11th & 12th in Washington County. The case was filed on July 24th and seeks to find relief for the MD hemp industry from the new Cannabis Reform Act that the industry believes violates the Declaration of Rights in the MD Constitution.
- The new law that went into effect on July 1 contained provisions that effectively removed the sale of certain hemp-derived products from small family-owned and minority-owned hemp businesses. These products consisted of approximately 70-80% of the products previously sold by MD hemp businesses. In order to continue selling these products, the new Cannabis Reform Act requires existing hemp businesses to obtain one of the new licenses.
- Due to geographical restrictions and limited licensing established in the act the responsibility for selling these products was handed over to large out-of-state corporations that currently dominate the cannabis industry, further consolidating the market and removing valuable revenue streams from small local businesses.
- The absurd licensing scheme that subjects applicants to a lottery system favors urban areas over rural areas. This is based on certain geographical locations determined by zip codes established by the Office of Social Equity as a “disproportionately impacted area”. In order to meet this criteria a zip code must have had above 150% of the state's 10-year average for cannabis possession charges, which equates to over 250 charges per year. The absurd part is that these zip codes were determined solely on possession charges without factoring for population, so zip codes with larger populations easily meet the requirements. Thus favoring urban areas over rural areas where MD hemp farms reside.
- A ruling is expected any day so more information should be available for the next meeting.

Precedent Set in Arkansas Case

- A federal court in Arkansas just issued a landmark ruling enjoining enforcement of a recently enacted hemp law. This is an incredible victory for the hemp industry and a powerful vindication of the lawful status of hemp products.

- The Plaintiffs contend that the Act is preempted, or superseded, by the federal 2018 Farm Bill and also that its provisions are unconstitutionally vague and thus void. The Court agreed and entered an injunction barring enforcement of the Act.
- The case has not concluded, but the Court found that “there is a substantial probability [the Plaintiffs] will succeed at trial” on the above issues, which is the legal standard for receiving an injunction.
- The Court also found that the definition of “hemp” found in the 2018 Farm Bill extends beyond just the plant to “all derivatives, extracts, [and] cannabinoids. The definition covers downstream products and substances, if their delta-9 THC concentration does not exceed the statutory threshold.”
- This is important because it echoes an earlier 9th Circuit Court Ruling that determined the same from the 2018 Farm Bill definition of hemp.
- This is welcome news, particularly in the wake of many states enacting laws that unconstitutionally restrict and prohibit hemp products that are clearly lawful under the 2018 Farm Bill.

Livestock- Sean Hough:

- Summer is always an exciting time with all of the county fairs, state fair, the jackpot shows, and the livestock being shown by 4H & FFA kids.
- Lots of attendance at the fairs, great numbers of livestock, livestock sales have all been very good prices and numbers, high supported.
- Capacity of butcher shops is a major issue; fairs bring that to a head with all of the livestock sales that are going directly to the butcher shop and are getting priority.
 - The average wait is about 12 months.
- Most animals are now leaving the state for butcher because capacity is so low
- At state fair, Maryland Pork Producers did a pork tasting day to encourage pork consumption
- Getting into weaning season for cattle, farmers are weaning and selling calves
- Swine, sheep & goats are breeding for sales in spring
- YTD through July, pork exports are up 13%
 - Getting market diversification by selling to other countries, western hemisphere, and central America
 - China, Japan, south Korea sales are down
- YTD through July beef exports are down 11%
 - Asian markets are down, but US Beef supply is down due to the drought
 - Going to continue to see the beef supply go down
- With beef production down and expected to continue to trend down, pork and chicken have increased and will continue to do so as a protein source
- 30% of US pork production is exported, 15% exported beef, exports up 1% for lamb,
- Part of the China reduction of imports, they’ve increased retaliatory duties
- Maryland Shorthorn Cattle Association
 - June 2024 National shorthorn association is coming to Maryland at Maryland state fairgrounds at the end of the June
 - Kids from 25 states (700 head of cattle)
 - Getting a show like that on the East Coast is big, last time it was on the east coast

was in PA 20 years ago

- *From Amy Crone
 - There are 2 USDA grant programs coming down the pipeline to for slaughter facilities, not sure if any from Maryland have applied

Nursery I- J. Kelly Lewis:

- We have seen an extended drought along with very warm temps as we go into the fall months. We have been very dry for over three months. Temps were almost 100 degrees during the first part of September. This impacts growers and retail garden centers. Trees become stressed opening them up for insect and disease problems. Seasonal crops such as mums require extra care and sales are slow. Consumers are hesitant to purchase trees and other plants when it is hot, and the ground is hard and dry.
- The Maryland Dept. of Agriculture confirms Beech Leaf Disease in Maryland. This disease has previously been confirmed in many surrounding states. It impacts American Beech as well as European Beech. Currently there is no known treatment.
- September 13th the Maryland Nursery Landscape and Greenhouse Association is hosting their annual field day at Abby Farms in Waldorf Md. – Report to follow.
- Deer have been active and are expected to continue to be so as hunting season and breeding comes. Damage due to browsing has been heavy all year. Now bucks rubbing trees with their antlers will be a problem as antlers transition from softer fuzzy velvet to hard bone-like “weapons”.
- In Montgomery County we are sorry to see, but happy for Jeremy Criss as he retires after 34 years. As The Director of the Office of Agriculture, Jeremy has always put farmers first and worked tirelessly to help and support Agriculture. He will be replaced by Mike Scheffel on October 1st.

Nursery II- John Murphy:

MNLGA

- MNLGA is currently updating their website
- Testimonials are welcome for the good of the MNLGA
- The MNLGA board members are receiving Cannabis questions
 - Where can Marylander’s purchase plants.
 - Questions on cultivation.
- * Comment from Kelly Dudeck: cannabis bill was passed very quickly last year and new legislation will be coming up in 2024 to clean up some of the uncertainties that arose from the passed legislation.
- University of Maryland Extension received MNLGA funds for the research on cultivars suitable for Maryland.
 - Hazelnut Research Grant \$4,000
- MD Clean Energy Center
 - Educational Wood Energy Site Visits November 7-8
 - All Expenses paid

MNLGA Events 2023-24

Greenhouse Tours	July 11, 2023	Tidal Creek Growers, Earleville, MD SunMed Cannabis, Warwick, MD Murphy John's Inc., Sudlersville, MD
Nursery Field Day	September 13, 2023	Abby Farms Accokeek, MD
CPH Basic Exam	October 2, 2023	Online
Chessie Green	February 2/15-2/16	Linthicum, MD
Bio Control Seminar	March 1, 2023	Columbia, MD

MANTS

- The MANTS trade show at the Baltimore Convention Center. Next year the show will be held January 10-12, 2024. The Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association holds their annual meeting at the Baltimore Convention Center early morning before the show floor opens.

On the Legislative topic:

- The Maryland Green Industry Council
 - Board members have attended several fund raisers during the summer months to introduce MaGIC to Maryland's new legislators in the General Assembly. MaGIC also met with Maryland's Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones, President of the Senate Bill Ferguson, Maryland's House Environment and Transportation Committee Chairman Marc Korman and Vice Chair Regina Boyce, and Maryland's Chairman on the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Senator Brian Feldman.

Odds and Ends

- \$1 Billion Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Grants
 - Part of the Bidens Inflation Reduction Act

Organic Farming – Matt Nielsen

- No Report.

Poultry I- Michael Levensgood:

Seats are filling fast at the 58th National Meeting on Poultry Health, Processing, and Live Production

- More than 390 people have registered for the 58th National Meeting on Poultry Health, Processing, and Live Production, taking place Sept. 25-27 in Ocean City, Md. Attendees from across the United States will be here to learn the latest updates on research and policies regarding poultry diseases, processing, and managing bird health and animal welfare on the farm. Who gets value out of attending? Veterinarians, processing facility managers, quality assurance managers and supervisors, grow-out managers, live production managers, flock supervisors, growers, pharmaceutical representatives, allied businesses, government regulators and officials, research faculty, university extension and others involved in the poultry industry. The National Meeting will address HPAI and disease challenges; trends and regulatory shifts in combatting Salmonella; robotics in poultry processing; ILT vaccine research;

broiler breeder fertility; innovation in housing; rodent, fly and darkling beetle control; and much more. [See the full agenda and a printable registration form](#). Or, [register with a secure online form](#). The presenting sponsors of the National Meeting are [Best Veterinary Solutions, Inc.](#) and [Farm Credit](#)

NCC posts new issue brief about cell-cultured chicken

- USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) earlier this summer approved the sale of cell-cultured ("lab-grown") chicken by two California companies: GOOD Meat and UPSIDE Foods. The United States joins Singapore as the only countries in which cell-cultured chicken is approved for sale to consumers, albeit on an extremely limited basis. While still in its infancy, there remain more questions and concerns about these products than there are answers. As such, NCC this week posted [a new issue brief](#) to its website outlining some of these questions and concerns. In the brief, NCC raised several issues and questions about cell-cultured products pertaining to: labeling and terminology; energy and environmental impact; scalability; cost and affordability; loss of jobs in rural America; nutrition and health. You can find the issue brief on the NCC website [here](#).

Delmarva Chicken Festival is just weeks away

- We're putting the finishing touches on the Delmarva Chicken Festival, taking place Saturday, October 7, from 1-7 p.m. at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury, Maryland. Anyone interested in being a vendor or exhibitor can find more information and signup forms at dcachicken.com/festival. Attractions at the 2023 Delmarva Chicken Festival will include food vendors, an open-air marketplace, kids' activities (including touch-a-truck exhibits, a petting zoo, and bounce houses), a "Walk Through History" tent with historical displays, a virtual reality tour of a chicken farm, baby chicks for visitors to hold, two stages with programming, and more. Live music will be performed throughout the day by The Jones Boys, Jimmy Charles, and Mike Hines & The Look. The 'Chicken Capers' contests, which pit teams of employees from Delmarva's five chicken companies against each other in field day-style games, are returning for the 2023 event. A fireworks show will round out the event at 7 p.m. Delmarva's five chicken companies – Allen Harim Foods, Amick Farms, Mountaire Farms, Perdue Farms, and Tyson Foods – are presenting sponsors of the 2023 Delmarva Chicken Festival. Marydel Ag Supply is the event's fireworks sponsor, and Pohanka of Salisbury Automotive Group is the music stage sponsor. Sponsorship opportunities are still open.

USPOULTRY holding environmental management seminar

- Water quality, wastewater, air emissions, sustainability and regulatory compliance are all issues that poultry and egg industry environmental managers face daily. [USPOULTRY's](#) 2023 Environmental Management Seminar is a great way to stay up to date on these ever-changing challenges. The 2023 Clean Water award winners will also be announced with a virtual tour of the winner's facilities. The seminar will be held Sept. 28-29 at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa in Destin, Fla. The program was developed by industry environmental leaders and will include a Washington Review; Regulatory Update; Rendering Industry Update . . . What's Coming

Down the Pike for Environmental Managers; ELG Update; Facility Acquisition Environmental Review; a Legal Update; A Circular Approach to RNG and CO2 Capture; Biological Pretreatment Application; New Technology in Zero Landfill, and more. To learn more and register for the 2023 USPOULTRY Environmental Management Seminar, click [here](#) or visit uspoultry.org.

Market data: Chicken consumers take a magnifying glass to price

- Ninety-five percent of consumers said that price per pound and overall price are more important or as important compared to a year ago when purchasing fresh chicken, according to [research](#) presented at the 2023 Chicken Marketing Summit. The National Chicken Council (NCC) and WATT Global Media presented the results of a study that focused on current and anticipated U.S. consumer behavior, specifically, consumption of fresh chicken. You can see more highlights from the survey, and review complete results, [in this WATT Poultry story](#).

High Path AI

- High Path AI has really been quiet this summer allowing a lot of states to declare AI free. We still need to be focused on bio security as we head into the migration season.

Poultry Processors are struggling

- We are currently in one of our high cost times with grain prices up, inflation increasing all farm costs (electric, gas, labor, parts, etc.) and low demand.

Poultry II- Far Nasir:

- Avian Influenza in commercial poultry flock was found in Canada in September. With start of bird migratory season, that anyone with birds must practice enhanced bio security. Unfortunately, AI might be back in USA again this year. **This highlights the need for a system, that would pay farmers in Federal mandated quarantine zone. Currently birds are disposed but the farmers are not paid.**
- August - The Maryland Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld a livestock farm water quality permit that had been challenged in court by environmental group. The appellate court's ruling also found that MDE's best management practices-based regulatory framework for the state's permit was "reasonable" and "consistent with federal and state law."
- On October 7, 2023, Delmarva Chicken Association is bringing back one of the best-loved events in the region - the Delmarva Chicken Festival - to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the meat-chicken industry. It will be held in Shore Birds Stadium, Salisbury MD. It is free to public, and ALL are welcome.

Related Services I – Frank Allnutt:

- No Report.

Related Services II – Stefanie Reiser:

- No Report.

State Grange- Clifford Newsome:

- No Report.

Turf- Gordon Kretser:

- For perspective, if you disturb 5000 sqft or more you need a sediment and erosion control plan approved by your local soil conservation district. As a part of that plan, you must stabilize the area with either seed or sod. If it is sod, it must be Maryland state certified, which drives a large portion of the sod farm business in Maryland.
- Maryland sod growers are continuing to work with MDA on enforcement and improvement of the Maryland Certified Sod program.
- Maryland's sod certification program is recognized as one of the best in the country with very strict guidelines. The majority of Maryland's sod farms participate in this program and pay fees that contribute to MDA's operating budget (seed tests, certification tags, field scouting fees, etc.)
- We have identified two main issues with this program that must be addressed.
 - The copying of certification labels issued by MDA to be used with non-certified sod.
 - The non enforcement of the MDE sediment & erosion control requirement that Maryland certified sod must be used.
- While MDA's seed program & certification program is nationally recognized, however the 'bad actors' are spoiling that reputation and causing immense issues within the market. Homeowners are not the root of the issue, but more so the national homebuilders that are building thousands of homes per year and importing sod.
- Although these are two separate issues, we are noticing the blending of the two which is causing confusion and deteriorating the confidence in the program.

University of Maryland – Dean Craig Beyroudy

- No Report.

Vegetable – Rebecca Stoecker

- Farmers' markets across the state are still going strong into the fall season. Many markets start to wrap up in October and November but there are several year round markets and ones that go till the end of the year.
- Some of the drought area has improved but around 27% is still abnormally dry and around 16% is in a moderate drought. If we hadn't had so many mild temperature days this summer we may have seen more areas that would have stayed abnormally dry.
- It's a concerning trend that should definitely have people prepared with how they can irrigate and protect their crops. The coming winter months will hopefully bring in more snow than last year.
- Spotted Lanternflies are still a concern as adults have emerged. In Northern Baltimore County we have not seen large clusters but farther south there have been.

- Fall season offers a lot of opportunities for vegetable farmers to market their seasonal projects to the public and help get folks out on the farm.

Veterinary – Dr. Marianne Bailey

- Quiet time of year in the veterinary industry
- A potential bill will be proposed regarding poultry egg laying hen confinement.
 - Veterinary Medicine Association of Maryland currently is taking a neutral stance unless certain parts of the bill change.
 - A similar bill was proposed last year but did not pass.

Guest Reports:

Allison Roe – MARBIDCO

- MARBIDCO has announced the Maryland Producer Cold Storage Grant Program available to farmers and watermen to purchase cold storage for their operations.
- MARBIDCO will match 50% with the producer towards the equipment grant amount. Minimum is \$500, maximum is \$2,000.
- Application deadline is Nov. 17th, applications are live now. Brittany Rawlings is the contact for the office.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:17 pm by Kelly Lewis, seconded by Amy Crone

Respectfully Submitted by Harrison B. Palmer, Executive Secretary