

Jul 16, 2026

Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture

Agritourism & Value Added Subcommittee

July 16, 2026

Virtual - Google Meet

Invited: Martin Proulx -MDA- Cliff Mitchell -MDH- Joseph Milone -COMMERCE- Rachel R Jones -MDA- Harrison B Palmer -MDA- Naomi Howell -MDE- aliceatsunbirdfarm@gmail.com Amy Crone angelicab@mdmunicipal.org brittney@thecapitalmarketmd.com Joshua L Parker -MDH- jrichards@tccsmd.org kelly@cultivateandcraft.com Kevin Atticks -MDA- klewis@ruppertnurseries.com kstevens1@frederickcountymd.gov motodd@law.umaryland.edu nnunn@umd.edu sijones@qac.org smchenry@marbidco.org Steve A Connelly -MDA- Allie Cavanagh -MDA- canyanw2@terpmail.umd.edu teonago1@umd.edu jo.ann.chason@gmail.com

Agenda:  GICA AVAA Subcommittee Agenda 7-16-26.pdf

Recording:  GICA Subcommittee - Agritourism and VAA - 2026_07_16 10_57 EDT - ...

Summary

Committee discussed agricultural licensing frameworks and regulatory guidance for on-farm processing via interdepartmental coordination and updates.

Food Licensing Framework Proposals

Proposed licensing frameworks seek to bridge gaps for farms engaging in value-added

activities. Regulatory alignment across local departments remains a primary goal for 2027.

Regulatory Updates and Coordination

Ongoing work with environmental and commerce departments addresses tax credits and septic regulations. Drafts for septic oversight are currently in development.

Agritourism and Labeling Guidance

House Bill 272 aims to establish intermediate licenses for agritourism without bypassing land-use requirements. New guidance materials address common labeling questions for on-farm meat processing.

Next steps

- ☐ [Martin Proulx] Create Meat Labeling Rack Card: Develop an informational rack card that provides guidance on label approvals, weighing procedures, and pricing requirements for meat products sold under the on-farm home processing license.
 - ☐ [Martin Proulx] Share Rack Card Proof: Share the proof of the new rack card for review during the next subcommittee meeting.
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Detailed Notes

- **New Food Service Licensing Framework:** Cliff Mitchell -MDH- presented a proposal to create a new licensing framework for farms, bridging the gap between seasonal food stands and full, permanent brick-and-mortar restaurant licenses. The goal is to accommodate farms engaging in value-added agricultural activities throughout the year that do not meet the scale of full food service operations. They outlined a "decision table" approach to help categorize requirements based on critical factors such as the menu (e.g., hot versus cold foods), infrastructure, and equipment. This matrix aims to provide guidance for farmers as they scale up, allowing them to understand future requirements

regarding water access and septic systems. The project is on track to be finalized by January 31, 2027, and they emphasized the necessity of ensuring consistent regulatory application across all local health departments.

- **Department of Commerce Update:** Joseph Milone -COMMERCE- reported that they are currently coordinating with the Maryland Department of Agriculture on research regarding tax credits stemming from the Joint Committee Review (JCR) study.
- **Septic Regulation Update:** Joshua L Parker -MDH- stated that they are working with the Maryland Department of the Environment regarding septic regulations. The process is currently in the drafting stages, and they anticipate having a draft available for internal comment within approximately two months.
- **House Bill 272 and Licensing Clarification:** Martin Proulx -MDA- discussed House Bill 272, a departmental proposal designed to create a middle-ground license tailored for agritourism and value-added agriculture. They reinforced that while this license offers a stepping stone for businesses to scale, it does not bypass standard land-use requirements, such as building permits and septic reviews, which are handled separately by local authorities. The effort aims to establish these regulations by January 2027 to benefit agricultural operations.
- **On-Farm Meat Processing Labeling Guidance:** Martin Proulx -MDA- noted that Maryland has approximately 150 active on-farm home processing licenses, which allows farms to sell proteins processed by USDA-licensed facilities. They highlighted current challenges regarding the packaging and labeling of these meat products, specifically concerning weight and price calculations under the Maryland Department of Agriculture's weights and measures oversight. To provide clarity, they are developing a "rack card" that serves as a guide for producers on how to properly tare scales and label meat products for shelf sale. This material is intended to answer common questions for producers before they reach the regulatory review stage.
- **Administrative Adjournment and Future Meeting Dates:** Rachel R Jones -MDA- confirmed that the next subcommittee meeting will occur on October 1, and the next full meeting of the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture (GICA) will take place on December 3.

Meeting notes were supported by Gemini and edited for accuracy by Allie Cavanagh -MDA-.