

Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture
Thursday, June 21, 2011, 10am,
Minutes

Attendees: Jim McCarron, John Sullivan, Dan Magness, Pam Saul, Jenelle Partelow, Cheryl DeBerry, Gwendolyn John, Michael Elben, Gail Owings, Les Knapp, Kenny Bounds, Kurt Fuchs, Emily Wilson, Faith Elliott Rossing, Phyllis Kilby, Gabe Zepp, Cheng I Wei, Steve McHenry, Carol West, Jorge Austrich, Ryan Sigworth, Lynne Hoot, Dan Rosen, Buddy Hance, Joanna Kille, Delegate Doyle Niemann

(all materials for this meeting can be found at:

http://www.mda.state.md.us/boards_comms/gica.php#mtgmats)

Secretary Buddy Hance called the meeting to order at 10am. He asked for approval of the October 29, 2010 minutes, which were approved.

Deanna Baldwin, MDA Food Safety Manager –MDA-GAP and the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act

There could be conflicts between federal FDA foods safety requirements and Maryland's Nutrient Management law. There are Good Agricultural Practices basic requirements as well. There are also buffering requirements between cattle and vegetables and documentation is very important. Ms. Baldwin also referenced the Specialty Crop Block Grant which has been helpful for food safety programs. She also mentioned the new poultry and rabbit processing certificate that is available now. Ms. Baldwin also talked about the MDE wastewater discharge permit issue, the produce mobile vendor's license

Delegate Doyle L. Niemann – Food Policy Councils and GICA

Food and agriculture face critical issues both now and in the future, and we now need to figure out how to move ahead. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene had a food policy work group during the interim which focused on Farm to School and other food and nutrition issues. The House Environmental Matters Committee is a political component of these issues and has to balance priorities. Delegate Niemann has several action items for GICA to consider: MDP has sea level maps – people will have to go elsewhere. There are fewer resources and demands for action. Local good, local communities, etc. Food Councils are vehicles for a way to move forward. There are a multitude of things already going on. How do we facilitate this? We need to identify specific obstacles, develop strategies and need to develop online opportunities. The National Ag Library has put together a 20 page package of abstracts on food policy councils. Need to increase access to foods by zeroing in on category specific issues/. Examples:

Food Deserts – walk to market. In rural areas, how many miles do you have to go to to find a store that sells vegetables. Access – marketing, economics, obesity.

Different groups are working on issues. In a survey of Maryland, there are a lot of food deserts in Maryland. What is the normal mode of transportation. There are groups working on this – Shore Gourmet, and other “food hubs” (Future Harvest).

Cheryl DeBerry said that there are a lot of places that do this but there is more demand than supply. There are great programs but that is not enough for new farmers. Donna Sasscer mentioned the “Obesity Coalition” in St. Mary’s County. There is also an effort by the Charles County Health Department to do more fruits and vegetables. There is also an ongoing experiment in Mom and Pop stores. St. Mary’s Hospital.

Dan Magnuss said that agriculture is traditionally pitched to younger kids. It needs to be pitched to older kids. A big part of the issue has to do with the environment. School boards should also look at more links to nutrition. There is also a need to look at agricultural jobs available. The MAEF representative said that there are issues with mandatory environmental issues and the Bay. Jim McCarron said that there are certain elements that GICA can pursue. There is nothing new with the food desert issue. What information do you need? Is the goal to look at best policies? Buddy Hance indicated that this was not necessarily the goal. Everyone agreed that education was the biggest issue. The process takes extra effort. Kenny Bounds said that MSDE and the University of Maryland should be contacted.

Phyllis Kilby said that GICA should conduct a survey to determine what is working at the local level. Gabe Zepp suggested a forum focusing on best practices. Buddy Hance said that GICA would do a survey first and then proceed from there.

Other issues

Allen’s Poultry Company filed for bankruptcy. There are 90 producers impacted. The Governor wants to make sure all producers get picked up. MAFC has received a lot of calls about this. All producers are well capitalized and collateralized. This won’t impact their ability to borrow money. There is concern about growers in the northern part of Queen Anne’s County, though. Kenny Bounds said that there needs to be a business friendly environment in Maryland. Faith Elliott Roessing said that the story is evolving on a daily basis. Poultry is an economic development engine. Kenny Bounds said that people need to contact their lender.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm