

**Maryland Agricultural Commission
Minutes
December 14, 2016**

Present:

Ag Education – Martha Clark	Livestock – William Edwards
Agribusiness – Tom Fisher	Nursery I – Marion Mullan
Agritourism – Taylor Huffman	Nursery II – Ray Greenstreet
Aquaculture – Talmage Petty	Organic-Marian Fry
At Large Ag Service –Vanessa Finney	Poultry I – Charlie Carpenter
At Large Ag Service –David Roles	Poultry II – Michelle Protani-Chesnik
Dairy I – Tim Bishton	Tobacco – Charles Cox
Dairy II – Jason Myers	Turf – Tom Warpinski
Direct Farm Marketing – Katie Kraszewski	University-Dave Myers for Dean Beyroudy
Farm Bureau – Milly B. Welsh	Veterinary – Dr. John Brooks
Food Processing – Cheryl DeBerry	
Horticulture – Cole Mangum	

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**Absent:**

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|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bio-Fuel – David Burrier        | Forestry – Vacant            |
| Consumer – Carroll Shry, Jr.    | Grange – Delegate Paul Stull |
| Equine – William Reightler, Jr. | Vegetable – Alison Howard    |
| Field Crops – Donald Maring     | Viticulture – Matthew Spies  |

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MDA Staff:

Joe Bartenfelder-Secretary	Jim Eichhorst – Deputy Secretary
Hans Schmidt – Asst. Sec., RC	Julie Oberg, PIO
Kevin Conroy- Asst. Sec., PI&PM	Jason Schellhardt, PIO
	Matt Teffeau- Executive Direction

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**Guests:**

Paul Chesnik, Farmer

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Speakers:

“Major Ag Law Labor Mistakes” by Professor Sarah Everhart, University of Maryland School of Law

The Wednesday, December 14, 2016 public meeting of the Maryland Agricultural Commission was called to order by the Chair, Charlie Carpenter, at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, at 8:35 a.m. The November 9th minutes were approved by Milly Welsh, second by Tim Bishton and approved by all.

Commodity Reports:

Ag Education – Martha Clark MAEF has nothing new to report for the Ag Commission this month. Please wish everyone a safe and wonderful Christmas.

Agribusiness – Tom Fisher Monsanto has recently received label approval for XtendiMax herbicide. XtendiMax is a new formulation of dicamba, also known as Banvel, for use on soybeans. The significance of this new formulation is that it controls some very difficult to control broadleaf weeds in soybeans especially pigweed variety Palmer Amaranth. This weed can completely take over a bean field once established and can grow 3” per day! Dicamba has always been an excellent broadleaf herbicide but has had drift issues. This new formulation has Vapor Grip technology so drift movement is not a problem. This year-2016- Monsanto introduced new soybean varieties with traits that allow Roundup and dicamba to be used for expanded week control. Monsanto has licensed Pioneer to also use this technology in their seed portfolio. Initially, Monsanto is targeting the full season no-till bean acre and expects 50% of acres in 2017 to be planted with Xtendi beans. They project by 2019 100% of soybeans will have Xtendi traits. Growers need to be aware that if this product, XtendiMax, is sprayed on their regular Roundup Ready soybeans it will kill them because Roundup Ready beans do not have the dicamba tolerant trait.

Agritourism – Taylor Huffman Christmas is in the air Fall activities have come to a close and most farmers in the area have put away all their fall agritourism displays and products. Some farms are well into their Christmas tree sales. According to the Maryland Christmas Tree Association, there are approximately 30-35 million live Christmas trees sold in the U.S. each year. The last survey taken in 2012 showed that in Maryland there were 55,926 Christmas trees harvested. That ranks Maryland as number 21 on the list for total number of trees harvested per state. However, in 2007 the total number of trees harvested was 77,801 and in 2002 the total harvested was 99,183. This means that production and sales of Maryland Christmas trees is down almost half of what it was just 14 years ago. According to a survey taken by the National Christmas Tree Association, the average price for a fresh-cut Christmas tree in 2008 was \$36.50. In 2012 that number rose to \$41.30. By 2015 the number was at \$50.82. Although average retail prices of Christmas trees have increased, the volume produced by Maryland has significantly decreased. Per the charts on the National Association’s website, the number of Maryland growers/retailers has decreased from 204 in 2002 to just 151 in 2012. Not only is our production of the Christmas Trees slowed significantly, so has our retail. Christmas is one of the most income-producing holidays in the United States each year, so why has production and sales of Christmas trees in Maryland among farmers decreased so significantly.

At Large Ag Service – Vanessa Finney Forestry-The Maryland Forests Association supports development of sustainable energy programs involving wood and wood products. MD Energy Administration (MEA) has announced a Commercial Wood Boiler program that could use reserves of woody biomass (i.e. wood chips) as an energy source. The targets are commercial facilities like schools and hospitals; the wood inputs could come from MD arborists and foresters. Nursery and Greenhouse-This time of year greenhouses and garden centers are busy with poinsettias and other holiday sales. They will soon join nursery growers and allied suppliers at MANTS, January 11 – 13th, Baltimore Convention Center, www.MANTS.com

At Large Ag Services-David Roles Our season is winding down. Recertifications are underway. MDA has put together a comprehensive schedule of recertifications. The city of Gaithersburg is following suit with the city of Takoma Park on the restriction of pesticides on home lawns, so we are following it closely and assessing how it will impact our business. Our company is experimenting with brine solutions to melt snow and ice. This is also a time when deer damage increases.

Aquaculture-Tal Petty Hollywood Oyster was on MPT Farm and Harvest last week. In January the Maryland Watermen’s Association is in OC, in the last 3-4 years it has become 50% watermen 50% Aquaculture. Aquaculture Farms are continuing to increase and the wholesale price is holding. Wild production of Oysters is down.

Dairy I-Tim Bishton The price of milk is climbing ever so slightly. Manure spreading has ended (November 30th). Our storage is barely enough to get us from the end of November to the beginning of April. Storage continues to be an issue for many dairy farmers. Soy, rice, almond, split pea, coconut, and hemp milk industry is growing and is becoming a major competitor for the dairy industry with an 8% growth rate and a \$5.8 billion industry.

Dairy II – Jason Myers According to a new investigation published in Nutrition Journal, certain cows' milk containing a specific protein can affect digestion of dairy products and boost human body's defenses against diseases. Milk contains either A1 or A2 or a mix of both, which are beta casein proteins. The genetic makeup of the cow determines which of these proteins will be produced in her milk. Studies show that these two proteins digest quite differently in humans. Presence of A1 protein can result in discomfort of drinking milk in some people. Milk containing only the A2 protein was found to digest differently and for some people, resulted in less discomfort from consuming dairy products. The A2 protein has been shown to have a higher concentration of glutathione, which is an essential anti-oxidant that may help strengthen the body's disease fighting power.

Direct Farm Marketing – Katie Kraszewski A quick refresher on direct marketing: Across the United States, despite a rapid increase in direct marketing opportunities, direct market farms still represent less than 10% of the total 2.1 million farm operations nationwide, and direct market sales represent only 0.3% of total nationwide agricultural sales. Twenty-nine percent of farms selling directly to consumers specialize in vegetable, fruit, and nut farming, and 25% specialize in beef. Of these farms (selling fresh, edible products), three-fourths have annual sales of less than \$5,000. 10.4% of the value of Maryland's agricultural products is sold directly to the consumer. Over the past decade, direct marketing has become highly visible and popular among consumers. Consumer campaigns such as USDA's [Know Your Farmer](#), [Know Your Food](#) have succeeded in bringing awareness to the importance of the farmers who provide our food. Direct marketing can improve economic viability, capturing a greater percentage of the food dollar. Competition still exists, but it is often among farms of similar size rather than large-scale vs. small-scale farms. And most importantly, direct markets provide opportunities for personal connections with consumers.

5 Keys to Marketing Channel Decision Making. **Value Your Time:** As a farmer and business owner, you should place a value on your own time when evaluating marketing channel opportunities. **Keep Records:** Take the time to keep records, even if only for "snapshot" periods, so you can make informed decisions about your business. **Use the Six Factors of Performance:** Evaluate a channel for its weekly sales volume, profit, labor requirement, risk, associated costs, and lifestyle compatibility. **Rank and Compare:** Rank each channel for each performance factor (give a "1" to the best), add them up, and the channel with the lowest total is best. **Multiple Channel Strategies:** Combine channels to maximize sales. Have at least one steady channel, and one that is flexible in its volume and demand.

Equine- Bill Reightler

2016 Maryland Horse Industry Economic Impact Study-The Sage Policy Group conducted a survey of industry participants. Nearly 700 surveys were completed with respondents representing each of Maryland's 24 major jurisdictions. Based on the results of the survey, after years of decline Maryland's Horse Industry is finally moving in a positive direction. Though the industry involves more than breeding horses for the Thoroughbred horse racing, the availability of slots revenues to support purses via a 2008 referendum represents a key inflection point. Between 2002 and 2010, inflation adjusted industry spending declined by nearly 45%. By stark contrast, industry wide spending increased by 19% between 2010 and 2015 in real terms and by 29% in nominal terms. The findings do not embody the impacts of race track operations. The Preakness itself generates more than \$30 million in statewide economic impact each year.

Principle findings of the report-As of 2015, Maryland Horse Industry directly supported 5,800 full-time jobs statewide. Once multiplier effects are considered, full time employment jobs stand at more than 9100. These jobs are associated with nearly 500 million in wage and salary income. Direct horse industry spending exceeded \$660 million in 2015. Once multiplier effects are considered, the industry supports about \$1.15 billion in economic activity in Maryland each year, significantly more than \$930,000 in statewide economic impact generated in 2010. If the current pace continues through 2020, the industry will be associated with \$1.5 billion in economic impact and support more than \$620 million in employee income and more than 11,000 jobs. The industry will also contribute \$90 million in State and local revenue by that time.

Farm Bureau – Milly B. Welsh

MFB held its 101st Convention in Ocean City from December 4-7. Several new policy resolutions for 2017 were adopted; only two topics - commercial solar energy facilities and nutrient trading - received extended discussion and debate. The current officers were re-elected, and districts elected their representatives to the MFB board. MFB Women in Agriculture Conference will be held on March 25 at the MFB building in Davidsonville. Maryland Farm Bureau will offer five \$2,000 scholarships. Applicants must be high school seniors starting college in the fall of 2017 or full time college students at any community or four-year institution. Applicants or their parents/guardians must be members of Maryland Farm Bureau. Three of the scholarships will be offered to agricultural curriculum majors and two scholarships will be offered to non-agricultural or agricultural curriculum majors. Application deadline is February 1, 2017. February 8 is MFB's Day in Annapolis. American Farm Bureau's convention will be January 6-11 in Phoenix. SMADC is interviewing for a new director. The closing date for applications was December 5th. Organizers from Fair Farms Maryland and the Maryland Campaign to Keep Antibiotics Working hosted a community forum held in Charles County on Nov. 17. The event, included a panel discussion moderated by Peter Murphy, the president of the board of Charles County commissioners. Panelists advocated for a state ban on the routine use of antibiotics in livestock to close what they called a loophole in federal regulations put in place by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Numerous Farm Bureau representatives in the audience disagreed. Colby Ferguson, the director of government relations for the Maryland Farm Bureau and a member of the MDA task force for the implementation of the federal guidelines, said the Veterinary Feed Directive, which goes into effect on January 1, 2017, "has teeth and there will be a removal entirely of antibiotics from bagged feed for livestock after the end of this year." David Hancock, president of the Charles County Farm Bureau, said the new federal regulations in the Veterinary Feed Directive go far enough and that state legislation would only hurt Maryland farmers and possibly consumers as well. Many other Farm Bureau members spoke at the forum and talked informally to attendees after the meeting was completed.

Food Processing-Cheryl DeBerry The Grow Maryland Summit was held Dec. 1 with a sold-out crowd learning about opportunities, challenges, and models for agritourism and local food processing. The sessions and breakouts were very informative and the networking opportunities were excellent. The folks at Grow Maryland (and Grow & Fortify) did an outstanding job in organizing the summit and I am excited to learn more about their efforts in the future. <http://www.growmaryland.org/> and <http://www.growandfortify.com/> If you haven't seen it, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council released a report developed by Grow & Fortify which details the state of value-added agricultural production in the Baltimore Metro Area. The report presents case studies and survey results covering value-added agriculture, agritourism, and food production. The report is available for download from the Grow & Fortify website, referenced above.

Livestock – William Edwards Cattle Cattle harvest continues at a greater pace than experienced last year at this time. The historically heavy slaughter weights seen in the first half of the year are declining and returning to the norm. The predicted decline in the price of all classes of cattle is continuing. The national average sale

price for 500 pound steers is \$1.06 per pound which is a decrease of \$0.29 per pound from April prices, \$0.39 per pound less than a year ago and \$0.26 below the 5 year average. The northeast region November sales price for 500 pound steers was \$1.17 per pound while the Maryland price was \$.94 per pound, \$0.84 less than Maryland's April price of \$1.78 per pound. Due to continued herd expansion live cattle prices are predicted to decrease well into 2018. **Hogs** In 2016, U.S. pork production is expected to set an all-time record at 24.96 billion pounds. October 2016 retail pork price was about \$3.74 per pound, about 5.8% lower than a year ago. Wholesale pork prices are currently 16.5% lower year-over-year. There are reports that some hog producers have to accept prices below breakeven. The first week of December saw yet another record for federally inspected hog slaughter and pork production. The week's total harvest of 2.54 million head is an all-time record and marks the fourth time this fall that more than 2.5 million hogs have moved through U.S. plants. Pork production for the same week was also a record high at 537 million pounds. **Meat Goats** As I reported in October the Maryland Meat Goat Producers Association has raised a concern regarding a product called "ShowShake". The product is being used at various fairs in the state to pump up the muscle of animals being shown and judged. The animals are later auctioned at the fair. The association does not think using this product is fair to the purchaser who thinks they are getting an animal with great muscle tone to find out later that it was chemically induced. I have contacted the Maryland.

Nursery-Marion Mullen Mants Horticultural Trade show in Baltimore was a huge success this year January 11-13th! 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 NMLGA 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 16th at MD Department of Agriculture Chesapeake Green Horticultural Symposium is being held this year February 23 and 24th. The Key note speaker this year is Lloyd Traven from Peace Tree Farm. Manor View Farm and The Perennial Farm are hosting their 18th annual Education Seminar on February 24, 2017. Green Matters Symposium is being held at Brookside Gardens Friday February 24th 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

National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) met and decided to send back to committee the decision of allowing hydroponic/aquaponic operations to carry the title "Certified Organic." There was tremendous opposition within the Organic community in allowing the 52 certified organic hydroponic/aquaponic operations that were certified. As a certified organic grower I know the extra work involved because of the products organic growers are not using and I know that people pay a premium in the market place. As a grower it is not satisfactory that people would reap a premium price without being transparent. Hydroponics and aquaponics are completely legitimate operations and business and that they produce good products but they should not be label as organic. In January Future Harvest CASA will be held in College Park.

Poultry I-Charles Carpenter The Poultry industry continued work in some Maryland counties as they consider changes to their zoning ordinances related to the construction of chicken houses. The most recent counties are Worcester and Caroline. Poultry industry representatives met with officials of the Maryland Department of Agriculture and Maryland Department of the Environment to identify ways to have the MDE issue required CAFO permits to new chicken farms in the absence of Maryland Agricultural Cost Share dollars. The new chicken farms are required to have certain types of best management practices on the farms and some farms, without a state cost-share match, have not been able to install manure storage buildings and carcass composters. The purpose of the meeting was to seek help with less expensive practices that new chicken growers can install without state cost-share money. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza has been detected in at

least nine European nations, Iraq, and Japan. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is on high alert should it be detected in America. Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. has issued a bio security reminder to its grower members reminding them that it is their responsibility to protect their farms and investments. Additionally, Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. has started updating its database of poultry farm locations to help with mapping and disease containment should avian influenza be detected on the Delmarva Peninsula.

Poultry II-Michelle Protani-Chesnik The problems with poultry ag and the environmental groups continue, with calls to further regulations in Worcester and Caroline Counties. The Wicomico County situation continues to fester even though regulations were put in place by the County Council and the Environmental groups have resumed harassing the Council in hopes of gaining a health ordinance and to further trample the Right to Farm Bill in this county. Another large meeting was sponsored by the NAACP and various environmental groups to advise citizens of the health concerns they should be aware of related to poultry production. DPI has been Working with regulators in Worcester County to facilitate reasonable regulations for poultry housing. MDE has once again received a request to hold a hearing on a CAFO permit by the Environmental action committee in DC. This is a Wicomico County farm the hearing will be on January 9th 2016. Monies are still being held up by the State due to funds held up by the Maryland General Assembly. Some growers are in danger of having their CAFO Permits denied by MDE as they will not have adequate composting or manure storage facilities in place and NRCS monies are not available until after a need for these items / resource concern is shown. This is a real catch 22 for folks that have already heavily invested in their operations. I attended a meeting at DPI with Gary Kelman and others to see what options may be available to get these farms up and running until funds are released. We are waiting for a response from MDE. The upcoming legislative session could prove to be one of the hardest we have seen for Poultry AG in many years. We will all need to support each other to get through it. Growers and companies on the shore are actively preparing for the upcoming bird flu season.

Tobacco-Charles Cox Stripping season is underway. Some of the dry weather has slowed things down. The cutoff date for selling is quickly approaching. The market will close in mid February.

Turf – Tom Warpinski Extreme dry weather during the fall finally saw some relief in late November. Sod planted under irrigation is doing fine but acreage not irrigated most likely will not get thru the winter without damage or death. Frost heave and subsequent winter desiccation will do much harm to undeveloped plantings. Overall sod supply is still slightly tight due mostly to the heavy flooding from hurricane Matthew down in the Carolinas wiping out quite a few acres of turf. A number of Carolina growers and brokers were purchasing Tall Fescue sod from Virginia, Maryland and Delaware growers, impacting the supply up here. Overall Sod sales have been relatively strong especially with the dry weather this fall. Jobsites have been very accessible. The Mid Atlantic Turfgrass Expo (M.A.T.E.) will take place Jan 30 through Feb 2, 2017 in Fredericksburg Virginia. The four day event has much to offer professional turf managers in all segments of the Mid Atlantic turfgrass industry. There are educational sessions for Golf, Lawn Care, Sports Turf, and Sod Production. More information is available at: www.turfconference.org The Turfgrass Producers International association will be having their international education conference and field day down in Tampa, FL on January 20 to 23, 2017. More info at: www.TurfGrassSod.org

Veterinary-Dr. John Brooks Veterinary Feed Directive will go into place on January 1st. When there are forums that come up that deal with the feed directive or antimicrobials please contact the Animal Health Department or myself and I would be happy to help. There has been a lot of hard work that has gone into Veterinary Feed Directive in the last 5 years. Anything antimicrobial will be under direct control from a veterinarian. All of this has become a part of the One Health Initiative (<http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/>) which looks at our treatments as a whole (human health, environment and veterinary care). First case of Anthrax was found in Indiana, still trying to figure out where it came from. HPAI, has been found in mainland Europe and coming

from migratory waterfowl and has also been found in South Korea. Avian and Porcine viruses come from 3rd world countries where animals and people cohabitate. TB outbreak in Canada with 30,000 cattle involved. Florida Key Deer are being fed corn imbedded with ivermectin to reduce ticks that carry Cattle Tick Fever. Screw worm outbreak also in Florida, significant issue and is reportable. Baltimore City is the leading MD area with cases of rabies found in bats.

Updates

ACTION ITEMS:

Review of meeting survey/schedule

January meeting will be held at MANTS on January 11th.

March meeting-Milly Welsh made a motion to move the March meeting to March 31st at USDA-DC. Marian Fry brought discussion to floor with the proposal of a May 10th tour. Marian Fry made an amendment the motion to include the April tour to be moved to May 10th of Wicomico and Dorchester Counties. Vanessa Finney seconded the motion to include the amendment.

Commission decided to keep the meeting times from 8:30 A.M.to 11:30 A.M.

Speakers

"Maryland's Best Program and the Maryland Farmers Market Program" by Stone Slade and Shelby Hampton-Watson, Maryland Department of Agriculture

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Rhodes