



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

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Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
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Maryland Agricultural Commission

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Maryland Agricultural Commission

Minutes

June 13, 2018

Present:

Ag Education - Martha Clark
Agribusiness - Tom Fisher
Agritourism - Taylor Huffman
Aquaculture - Talmage Petty
At Large Ag Service - Vanessa Finney
Dairy I - Tim Bishton
Direct Farm Market - Keith Ohlinger

Equine - William Reightler Jr.
Farm Bureau - Jonathan Quinn
Food Processing - Cheryl DeBerry
Horticulture - Cole Mangum
Organic Farming - Marian Fry
Poultry I - Michael Levensgood
Poultry II - Michelle Protani- Chesnik
Veterinary - Dr. John Brooks

Absent:

At Large Ag Service - David Roles
Bio-Fuel - David Burrier
Consumer - Carroll Shry Jr.
Dairy II - Jason Myers
Field Crops - Donald Maring

Nursery II - Ray Greenstreet
Tobacco - Charles Cox
Turf - Tom Warpinski
University - Cr. Craig Beyrouthy
Viticulture - Corey Spies

MDA Staff:

Hans Schmidt
Kevin Conroy

Speakers/Guest:

Kelly Dudeck (Growth and Fortify)

Review of March Minutes: Approval of minutes with the addition of Craig Beyrouthy's report. Motion to approve first by Cheryl DeBerry and seconded by Keith Ohlinger everyone in agreement.

Commodity Reports:

Agribusiness - Tom Fisher: Some business announcements recently: John Deere & Co is raising their equipment prices 8 percent this year. Deere mentioned in a recent WSJ article that material and freight expenses had increased and steel and aluminum prices were up due to tariffs on imported metals. Deere is expecting a 30 percent increase in farm and construction sales for 2018. Last Tuesday, the Justice Department granted antitrust approval to Bayer's acquisition of Monsanto. Bayer sold \$9 billion in assets to BASF for approval. The purpose of the asset sale to BASF was to maintain a competitive marketplace of seed and chemicals for U.S. farmers. This divestiture is the largest ever stipulated for merger approval in the U.S. When all paperwork is completed, the Monsanto name will be dropped and only Bayer's name will remain. In the last two years, Dow, DuPont, Syngenta, Monsanto and Bayer have all been involved in mega deals regarding the chemical

and seed business globally. A lot of stress with crops, weather, and financials continue to be challenging for growers and dealers in MD.

Ag-Education - Martha Clark: Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. (MAEF) Updates: Program Updates: [Annual Ag in the Classroom](#) Teacher Training Summer Workshop June 24 – 28 Westminster, MD. The registration is filled with 50+ teachers from across Maryland ready to earn 3 MSDE credits and learn how to use agriculture to teach core subjects.

[2018-2019 Calendar Poster Contest](#) (Grades K – 12) Over 500 submissions have been received for this popular contest. Award winners will be announced next week.

[2018 Ag Literacy Program](#) – “See What We Eat!” by Scott Ritchie. Volunteer to read to a school, pre-school, summer school, summer camp as part of the volunteer Ag Literacy program. Contact Jeanne Mueller for more information. 410-848-4745

[2018 Urban Youth Garden Grants](#) School Garden Grants ranging from \$250 to \$500 were awarded to 20 school gardens across Maryland totaling \$6,385.

[Seibel & MAEF Scholarship Applications](#) 23 applications were received for (1) \$1K Seibel Scholarship and (10) \$1K MAEF Scholarships. MAEF’s annual meeting board elections in May resulted in retaining the current officer team, electing three new Board members; Kathy Johnson, Barb Glenn and C. John Sullivan, III. Amy Hopkins Daney completed her 1st term and elected not to enter a 2nd term due to other obligations. Additional information for all MAEF programs can be found at www.maefonline.com.

Agritourism - Taylor Huffman: House Bill 252 passed and was officially signed into law by Governor Hogan on May 15. This bill establishes a model definition for agritourism in the Land Use article for county governments to adopt through their legislative process as local ordinance, resolution, law or rule. The law is not a mandate rather a reference in state law to help the counties regulate their agritourism activities. Secretary Joe Bartenfelder said: “Agritourism attractions have become an important source of income for many Maryland farmers...This bill creates a level playing field for agritourism across the state and ensures that our family farms have the clarity they need if or when they choose to diversify their farming operations.” House Bill 1351, concerning special occasion events on easement properties, also passed with amendments on May 8. This bill proposes to permit an additional use of easement properties for “Special Occasion Events” meaning a wedding, lifetime milestone event or other cultural or social events. This bill will allow farmers to diversify their income similar to agritourism. However, the farmer must have local zoning approval first, which is still an issue in many counties. This bill went into effect June 1. The landowners in violation of land preservation programs can now take the necessary steps to become legally operated establishments by following the guidelines set forth in the bill. As for the weather/season update agritourism is in full swing with the U-Pick produce. People are picking strawberries on many farms across the state. We have had a difficult start to the season with a large amount of rainfall, which is a concern for the crops. Heavy rainfall will also likely affect the farmers preparing for the fall season as they try to plant their corn mazes and pumpkins toward the middle to end of June.

Aquaculture - Talmage Petty: Aquaculture in MD is >95% oysters so presentation is about farmed oysters. There is increased competition within region and all east coast and gulf. Markets continue to expand. There is price competition for non differentiated product. Late spring translates to cold waters and later growth for oysters. High rains translate to lower salinity of Chesapeake and tributaries; generally not a problem for approved oyster lease waters due to tidal actions. In MD there are 345 submerged land leases – 6,420 acres (wild diploid oysters grown on bottom like wild oysters) and 75 water column leases – 382 acres (grown in cages or floats) totaling 412 leases and

6,802 acres. Question was asked about annual numbers since 2010 and I will report back with that information in September. In MD, farmed harvest value in 2016 was 60 percent of value of wild oysters today and it continues to increase. With success comes resistance. An undefined Program Review has been initiated at DNR and listening sessions with 'stakeholders' including reactionary watermen and property owners have been held. There is a risk of the outcome significantly deterring additional growth to the industry. The successful legislation was initiated via unanimous vote in MD legislature in 2010. I will update further at September meeting. Anthony Bourdain's death was significant to the restaurant industry because of their connections to his storytelling around global foods and food sourcing.

Bio-Fuel - David Burrier: Ethanol production continues to set records. Production was almost 3 percent higher than at this time last year. For the year, USDA forecasts that annual ethanol production will rise 2.6 percent to 5.575 billion bushels of corn this year. The current grind suggests USDA may have to raise its forecast for usage. Also soy oil used for biodiesel set a record in March. At current production, the USDA's soy oil use estimate needs to be revised up 33 million bushels. There have been numerous meetings regarding new RFS reform, but for now the mandate is dead and not moving forward. There have been proposed deals regarding year round E15, discussions on making exported ethanol eligible for bio-fuel credits. Also, several oil companies have filed with the EPA for RFS waiver exemptions, to not pay for their RINS which are Renewable Fuel Numbers but this move has met stiff opposition from the ethanol supporters contending big oil has made record profits. There is also political fallout that Mr. Scott Pruitt, EPA Administrator has sided with big oil since he resides in Oklahoma and not worked as diligently as possible for RFS reform.

Dairy I - Tim Bishton: It has been difficult for dairy farmers to get their grain cut and dried properly and harvested in a timely fashion because of all the rain. Several farms cut it and then it rained causing problems in the drying and overall harvesting process. It has been a major struggle this year with all the rain. The rain has also made it difficult to get quality hay this year. Milk production in states and globally has slowed down some, which has helped to reduce inventory and will hopefully help to change overall milk prices. Cow numbers are also down in the United States and have dropped 9.4 million over a five month period. California had the largest drop in their dairy herd (19,000), which will lower the milk production, but there is still a lot of milk in the market causing competition among dairy farmers and ultimately the prices circulated around milk.

Direct Farm Marketing - Keith Ohlinger: Rain is causing an expensive year for the orchards in the purchase of sprays, with mud in the fields hard to get in and fields are flooded. There have been several articles related to farmer suicide and I have been reaching out to different programs about what can be done and what programs are available to help identify warning signs in farmers and reach out to them. There is hopefully going to be a program in Maryland in the fall to help identify and help farmers at risk. A Howard County bill that passed for mulch and compost in November had to be reintroduced because it was one day over making it invalid it was then withdrawn because it would have hurt the farmers instead of helping them.

Equine - Bill Reightler: The Maryland Steeplechase season ended with the running of Maryland Hunt Cup on April 28. Senior Senator won the 122nd running for the second time in three years. Coming back from a fall during last year's running, in fact fracturing his neck, won in grand style with jockey Eric Porez up. Senior Senator is owned by Skip and Vicki Crawford, trained by Joe Davies. On May 19 Justify, winner of the Kentucky Derby, won the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course. The win gave Bob Baffert, the horse's trainer, his seventh Preakness win. Justify will attempt to be the 13th Triple Crown winner competing in the Belmont Stakes on June 9. The

Maryland State Fair announced the Thoroughbred race meeting schedule for 2018. The meet will commence on August 24 running the 25, 26, 31, September 1-3. The inaugural running of the Timonium Distaff Stakes on August 25 and the second running of the Coalition Stakes, September 1 will highlight the seven-day race meeting at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. Also on August 25, College Day at the Fair, nine scholarships will be given to registered full-time college students in attendance that day. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources announced in May that the Board of Public Works approved \$1 million for the improvements at the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management area in anticipation of the venues hosting a future 5 Star International horse show event. Cindy Halle, former coach of Garrison Forest School's polo teams, has been named U.S. Polo Association Woman of the Year. Cindy has been a player, coach, clinician and certified trainer of other polo instructors during her 40-year career. Results from the 2018 Economic Impact Study produced by the American Horse Council found that Maryland's horse industry adds more than \$1.3 billion to Maryland's economy. The report found that the horse industry employment impact is over 21,000 jobs with a more than \$500 million impact from the racing sector alone.

Farm Bureau - Jon Quinn: The Maryland Farm Bureau PAC endorsed 106 farm-friendly candidates in the house, senate, attorney general, comptroller, and governor's race for the primary election. Farm Bureau has worked with DNR to come up with a new Deer Cooperator Permit for rural areas. The current use of permits was created to address problem deer on highly populated land, as well as public parks. Recently, DNR worked to create a permit designed for rural Ag areas of the state as well. DNR and MFB will host an information session for FB members interested in applying for this new permit because of the details needed to get the permit. Applications must be filled out before September 1 to be used in 2019. MFB is working with SHA to provide farm safety road signs to members who request them. Anyone interested in applying for a sign should contact Ryan Zimmerman at MFB. At the MFB June 27 Board Meeting, EPA Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio will address the board and take questions. On June 19, MFB will host Ohio FB board and staff. We will start at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation with a panel discussion with Q&A. The panelists will include: Hans Schmidt, Lindsay Thompson, Doug Myers, and Trey Hill. Then we will go to the Wye Research Center. This meeting will be focused on water quality and BMPs, followed by dinner at Harris Crab House.

Food Processing - Cheryl DeBerry: I attended the Maryland Industrial Hemp Stakeholders Meeting on May 30, organized by Grow & Fortify. MDA was well represented at the event. MDA is working to develop the draft regulations for the growing of the crop, which must be done in conjunction with a research institution. A major takeaway was that we need to develop a processing industry (processing of fibers, food products, oils, etc.) before any of our farmers will be able to make money raising this crop.

Horticulture - Cole Mangum: This was a tough spring for greenhouse growers across the state with sales lagging behind last year anywhere from 3-10 percent depending on the business. Cold weather early in the spring made for a difficult pansy season and rain, especially on weekends, has hurt the main spring selling season for ornamental landscape plants. Many growers are producing fewer products than they would have 4-5 years ago because of the bad few years we've experienced so there isn't as much residual inventory as we saw in 2016 or 2017. There were no significant or widespread pest or disease issues this spring noted by the growers I spoke with. In the last few weeks, a whitefly infestation in El Salvador is causing a supply disruption on poinsettia cuttings. So far, replacements for orders have not been an issue with some orders being shifted to Ethiopia and

other orders going to different suppliers. This is significant as whitefly is one pest that would have been controlled by neonics in the past. If infested plants make their way to growers in the U.S., it could create a difficult situation.

At Large Ag Service - Vanessa Finney: *Nursery and Greenhouse:* The Maryland, Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association is continuing its work with USDA Ag Statistics Service to launch a comprehensive economic and statistical survey for Maryland's green industry. The questionnaires will be distributed in early 2019 for 2018 data. *LEAD Maryland:* Applications are now being accepted for LEAD Maryland Class XI. The application period will end on October 1. The application and information about the program is at <https://extension.umd.edu/lead-maryland>. We seek a class with composition of at least 50 percent Ag production representatives from a wide spectrum of commodity groups. Class X is preparing for its international travel to Poland from July 22 – August 2. Class X will be hosting a celebration of LEAD's success in developing leadership for Maryland's agricultural, natural resource, and rural communities on April 13, 2019.

Organics - Marian Fry: Field crops are at significant risk due to extended periods of rain and subsequent wet fields. Organic farmers often plant corn two weeks later than the conventional corn planted by their neighbors to avoid cross pollination. That means there is a significant percentage of Maryland's organic corn seed still in the bag. Vegetables are late, strawberries mushy, season prematurely ended. Some vegetable varieties are showing slow and small plant growth seems to be from lack of sunshine and heat. Farmers are nervous about the season ahead. On a topic related to all of agriculture, I'd like to start a discussion on Food Security through Agricultural Land Preservation and the creation of **FOODWAYS**.

Food Security through Agricultural Land Preservation and Foodways

In late February, I attended a talk by noted journalist and news show host Ted Koppel during which he was asked by an audience member what he has done for his family's security in the face of cyber threats to our national electrical grid. He responded that he has purchased a 3-month supply of freeze-dried food. That recalled one of my bedrock beliefs: the most basic form of homeland security is the ability of a nation to feed itself from its domestic agriculture. That's why it's essential to maintain a viable network of farms and farmers in every state in the country, so our citizens enjoy the variety, bounty and healthful benefits of American grown food every day, and we can move food as needed in the event of disaster. Given the fundamental need for food, and the health, well-being and socialization that take place in the presence of food, I am baffled that the taking of farmland is considered inconsequential when large development is proposed. Granted, development often has a higher dollar return on investment than agriculture, but what's the non-monetary return on investment to our health and national security from agriculture? Just as we have set aside places for parks and greenways, it's time for the federal and state governments to be intentional about preserving large land tracts in the creation of "Foodways" where food, feed, and livestock are grown. Many farmers have already made their intention clear through participation in land preservation programs but that doesn't always guarantee that land can't be taken by eminent domain or bought out of preserved status for other uses. Domestic food security through agricultural land preservation and the creation of Foodways could include: USDA and State designation of an area as a Foodway – possibly with a unique, coordinated regional focus where incentives are given to maintain agricultural production. Federal legislation that every state identifies and maps its Foodways (beginning with existing agricultural use), *analyze agriculture land loss by location and type for the previous ten years and create a ten-year goal for acreage preservation and crop needs to supply 20 percent(?) of the state's food intake on a regular basis. Spring, 2018, The American Farmland Trust created a national map of Ag land lost over the last

decade. Soil Conservation Service could provide additional data by partnering with local land preservation groups in intentionally creating contiguous tracts of farmland to meet state Foodway goals. Legal support is protecting farmers from frivolous lawsuits by activists with an agenda of industry disruption. Tax advantages/incentives for farmers and farm supply businesses. There are also enhanced zoning requirements. "Right to Farm" laws specific federal funding to Land Grant College Extension programs focused on production agriculture. The State Department of Agriculture is outreaching to help consumer's value local food production as a preferred land use. Going forward, our farms will look like lots of different food production models, including urban agriculture. Let's start talking about the concept of "Foodways," ensuring that we have farmland to feed Americans, so we are never at the mercy of a foreign power to provide our daily bread.

Poultry I - Mike Levensgood: DPI awarded \$20,000 to eight undergraduate students and one graduate student from their College Scholarship program. Also, the DPI held a very successful golf tournament on June 6 to raise more money for the fund. DPI is meeting with MDE representatives to learn about state air quality monitoring in anticipation of air quality legislation in the 2019 General Assembly. The General Assembly met with the Maryland State Fair U-Learn committee to plan for contributing DPI-produced signs or exhibits to the Fair in August. Started planning for the live production session and processing/ food safety session at the October 9-12 National Meeting on Poultry Health, Processing and Live Production in Ocean City, Maryland.

Poultry II - Michelle Protani-Chesnik: Poultry has been busy since the March Ag Commission meeting. *March 2018* was a relatively quiet time for poultry as far as disputes over new housing were concerned. Poultry Health remained stable without any disease outbreaks. *April 2018* - no Ag Commission meeting. Problems with new housing pushback from the environmental community saw an uptick with the proposal of a new three house farm on Peerless Road in Bishopville, Maryland. Folks from as far away as Ocean Pines joined in the protest against this project. The facility proposed is on a large piece of agricultural land, ironically down the street from a new marijuana growing facility. *May 2018* - I attended the Animal Agricultural Alliance meeting in Crystal City, Virginia. This was an excellent event and offered me a new insight into the area of animal welfare and Ag Terrorism. One of the main speakers told of the plight and persecution of the mink farmers in the 1980s. He personally had 11,000 mink turned loose by the group and breeding records and buildings destroyed. He also talked of other families in the businesses who were literally burned out. Today he monitors terrorist groups across the web and report's findings to the FBI. Dr. Frank Mitloehner gave an excellent talk on global warming and agriculture's impact / lack of impact upon it. Numbers by the environmental community have been manipulated to put Agriculture on the down side of global warming. (See attached for more details.) Dr. Alison Van Eenennaam gave an excellent talk on genetics and the overall role they play in improving animal health and efficiency. Dr. Randall Singer covered "No antibiotics ever" and the impact of these programs on animal welfare. The Animal Ag Alliance may not be a poultry-driven group as there were few in attendance from poultry, but there is a huge take away from these meetings for anyone involved in animal agriculture production. I hope to attend this again next year it was a tremendous learning opportunity and well worth the time and money to attend. *June 2018* - the environmental community gave a hard push back to Poultry Agriculture with the [Court Ruling to reverse the MDE CAFO permit](#) on an eight house new construction project on Purnell Crossing Road in Worcester County. I suspect with this decision we will see more of the attempts by the environmental community to halt new house construction.

Turf - Tom Warpinski: The wetter than normal spring has been tough on Mid-Atlantic sod growers. It's been difficult keeping large acreages mowed on a timely basis. Lawn care companies are also having a hard time keeping up with mowing and trimming. Many turf farms are experiencing flooded fields for days, at times drowning out the turf. The extended wet weather has been playing havoc on nutrient application schedules on the sod farms and grassed surfaces in general. With all the moisture, the grass has been growing much more than normal requiring some additional fertilizer. Increased weed and disease pressure is also being seen. The excessive moisture is also causing harvesting problems. Mature sod will experience root pruning or dieback with too much moisture, making the sod too weak to harvest at times. Bermuda grass on production fields, sports fields and golf courses throughout the Mid-Atlantic region have experienced significant winterkill. Damage at this year's level seems to happen every 8-9 years. Just about all varieties have been impacted. Labor, specifically the tightening labor pool, continues to be a major issue with the entire industry. The shortage of qualified labor is getting critical, especially CDL drivers and equipment operators. In August 2017, a Montgomery County Judge ruled that the County pesticide ban, set to go into effect this year, was illegal because it was preempted (superseded) by Maryland law regulating pesticides. Montgomery County has appealed the decision, and briefs supporting the trial court's decision are due on June 15, 2018.

Veterinarian - Dr. John Brooks: On the public health side, CDC reported over 125 cases of *Salmonellosis* this year primarily in backyard flocks. It's from the live poultry and how owners are mishandling them by not taking personal hygiene into account and it is translating into a reportable salmonella outbreak. All comes back to personal hygiene and handling them and washing your hands, which will be strongly important with fairs occurring. This is why there is such a rise in hand washing stations located around the fairs. The CWD just identified a deer farm in Iowa that needed to depopulate from CWD. New Castle disease has been identified in California primarily in backyard flocks and they are attempting to keep it there. Off the beaten track are the volcanic eruptions occurring in Hawaii. There is a species of bird there that they are doing studies of that are resistant to the avian flu but the volcanic eruptions are causing some trouble with their natural habitat and resources and the study of the birds is suffering. There is a rise in the suicide rate in veterinarians and it is greatly higher than the general population. The median age for males is 55 and 42 for females. Firearms and poison seem to be the two areas of effect and the causes lead back to the availability of euthanasia products, the stress of work, along with the stress of debt. There are studies involved in trying to improve the welfare of the veterinarian community.

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**Presentations:**

Kelly Dudeck (Growth and Fortify) presentation attached

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Maryland Department of Agriculture Staff Updates:

Hans Schmidt: Resource conservation just announced a new cover crop program this year. There are not a lot of changes, but it will not include a commodity program. We are going to pay for aerial seeding in all double crop beans. Right now it's all hand on deck with WIP we are working on Phase 3. The plan must be ready to go by March of next year. Currently regional meetings are taking place. There will be an Ag leadership meeting in July to talk about WIP. We are working on strategies to help us reach our Nitrogen goals, for which we are currently behind. We are currently in the process of hiring 10 or 11 positions to get more staff in the soil conservation districts.

Kevin Conroy: This is a busy time of year with all hands on deck. Pesticide for cannabis regulations will hopefully be published shortly. One thing discovered with hemp regulations is that each state

has to go back each year and change the regulations. On plant protection side, MDA was recently awarded federal funding to help with the spotted lantern fly issue. We will be hiring five field staff members (four part time and one full time) to trap and identify the pest.

Meeting adjourned at 11:18 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted by Jessica O'Sullivan.