



# 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 12, 2019

### **Present:**

Ag Education: Martha Clark  
Agribusiness: Tom Fisher  
Dairy I: Tim Bishton  
Direct Farm Market: Keith Ohlinger  
Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry

Forestry: Elizabeth Hill  
Poultry I: Michael Levengood  
Poultry II: Michelle Protani- Chesnik  
Tobacco: Charles Cox

### **Absent:**

Agritourism: Taylor Huffman  
Aquaculture: Talmage Petty  
At Large Ag Service: Vanessa Finney  
At Large Ag Service: David Roles  
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.  
Dairy II: David Pyle  
Equine: William Reightler, Jr.  
Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn

Field Crops: Donald Maring  
Horticulture: Cole Mangum  
Livestock: Scott Barao  
Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet  
Turf: Tom Warpinski  
University: Dr. Craig Beyrouthy  
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks  
Viticulture: Matthew Corey Spies

### **MDA Staff:**

Joe Bartenfelder  
Denise Burrell  
Rich Colburn  
Jason Schellhardt  
Hans Schmidt

### **Speakers/Guest:**

Ross Peddicord: Executive Director Maryland Horse Industry Board

March minutes were not approved because we did not have enough members to meet a quorum.

### **Commodity Reports:**

#### **Ag Education- Martha Clark:**

- Celebrated the millionth student through the lab.
- Was well covered in the papers, Delmarva Farmer, Frederick News Post.
- Labs have been booked all spring.
- Showcase labs are at the fairs and around the state of Maryland.
- This week interviewing new executive director candidates at MAEFS headquarters.
- FFA annual meeting is June 23<sup>rd</sup>, anyone who would like to serve as a judge please contact Terri Shank.

- Online course for additional ag education for elementary schools has been well, received and will start the program at the end of the summer.
- Summer workshop is June 23-27<sup>th</sup> in Westminster and always have a great group of teachers
- If you would like to attend the luncheon contact Jeannie Mueller.
- New executive director for 4-H and will be expanding their fundraising program.
- Farm Bureau hired John Torres as its Executive Director.
- Howard County had its first FFA ceremony in 40 years.

**Agribusiness- Tom Fisher:** There has been a significant attitude change (180 degrees) in the last 6-8 weeks with many growers. Crops look very good with the timely rains and heat units that have encouraged growth. Sweet corn could come in 2 weeks earlier this year and some roadside markets may open earlier as vegetables seem to be ahead of schedule. As of last week some local corn growers were able to contract \$5.30/bushel corn which is a significant change from earlier expectations due to planting and weather challenges in the Midwest. Our wheat crop looks good with few diseases and practically no scab and the market for straw is strong. If you consider \$5.00+ wheat with 80 bushel yield and \$200/acre for straw, it is a respectable return. Last week the name Dupont was officially changed to Corteva Ag. Corteva now is the brand name for former Dupont Ag products. Roundup/glyphosate continues to make the headlines with over 13,000 lawsuits claiming it causes cancer. In a recent court decision, the jury found in favor of the plaintiffs and awarded the couple \$2 billion. Interestingly, the judge would not allow an EPS ruling that deemed Roundup did not cause cancer to be entered as evidence. I was told last week that Montgomery County wants to ban all sales and uses of Roundup. So far, the court decisions have not seemed to affect sales in the Ag arena.

**Consumer -Carroll Shry:**

- There was a meeting in March with the brewery and winery operations in central Maryland. The owners and operators were very affective to enhance their operations with Md. Senators, Delegates, Farm Bureau representatives and the general public!
- Pesticide update for recertification for their pesticide licenses in Central Maryland Update Pesticide in-service for landscapers, groundskeepers, nurserymen and arborist from VA., DC, WV and PA at Frederick Community College, Frederick, MD.
- Through FALCAN (Frederick Area Landscaper and Nurserymen). We had representatives from the Md. Dept. of Agriculture from Entomology. Their main goal was to educate the attendees about the Lantern Fly.

**Diary I- Tim Bishton:**

- Fair Oaks Farm had a recent undercover video come out.
- Fair Oaks Farm is associated with Fair Life Milk, so they have a big target for any activists that are looking to get to a big-name farm.
- It involved rough handling of calves.
- 3 of the people were employees of Fair Oaks Farm.
- The CEO/ President of the company came out an apologized, they are now adding video cameras around the farm and consulting with a third-party person to get more advice on animal handling.
- They have tours and buses going right through their barns and have one of the cleanest calving facilities.
- The message is to watch out for certain employees and do background checks before hiring anyone to work on your farm.
  - 3 dairy organizations that sent a joint letter to congress to ratify the US Mexico Canada Trade Agreement.

- The letter outlined the need for stable trade relationships with Mexico and Canada. If this were to be ratified this would give \$277 million to US exports.

### **Direct Farm Market- Keith Ohlinger:**

1. Federal programs bringing in workers continue to frustrate by blocking the arrival of workers who have been on same farms for over a decade. This continues to create hardship for farmers who cannot find skilled labor locally.
2. Agritourism bills on the county level continue to create wars between residents and farmers. The rub seems to be people want farmers to be successful but not too successful.
3. Pesticide/herbicide bills and court cases continue to cause harassment and battles between residents and farmers. Science, the courts, and public opinion are at odds with the farmers caught in the middle.
4. Maryland dairy inspectors continue to struggle to fill positions which causes a continuity problem with federal regulations and grandfathering of certain practices.

**Food Processing- Cheryl DeBerry:** CBD oil companies are popping up in the state – I spoke with one the other day looking to find retail outlets to sell their CBD oil. They are using hemp sourced from other states for now, and hope to have Maryland-sourced CBD oil by 2021. June 15, Grow & Fortify will hold the “Drink Maryland” event in Centreville, featuring local wine, cider, mead, beer, and spirits, plus artisans, music, food, and more. I wanted to remind folks of a few excellent resources for on farm food processors:

- Grow & Fortify’s Regulatory Resource Hub: <https://growandfortify.com/regulatory-resource-hub/>
- University of Maryland Extension’s Beginning Farmer Success page: On-Farm Food Processing: <https://extension.umd.edu/newfarmer/beginning-farmer-topics/farm-food-processing>
- Maryland Department of Agriculture’s Food Quality Assurance webpage on the Food Safety Modernization Act: <https://mda.maryland.gov/foodfeedquality/Pages/Food-Safety-Modernization-Act.aspx>

**Forestry- Elizabeth Hill:** The Verso Paper Mill in Luke, Maryland announced that it will be permanently closing June 30<sup>th</sup>. According to union officials this will result in the direct loss of 675 jobs and another 2,025 associated jobs will be lost in the region. The closure will impact pulpwood markets for everyone west of the Chesapeake Bay. Southern Maryland loggers are shipping pulpwood out of state to Virginia and Western Maryland loggers are having to find new markets farther away in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, cutting into their bottom line. Everyone was caught off guard by the sudden announcement including landowners and tree farmers that are left wondering if there is going to be a market for the woodland that they’ve invested time and money into. The Verso mill consumed approximately 1 million tons of pulpwood and chips annually. They cited declining markets, imports, rising compliance costs, and infrastructure challenges as reasons for the shutdown.

There have been several meetings with various stakeholders trying to figure out what’s next. Many are hopeful that the plant will be sold to another wood consumer allowing for continued economic stability in the area, but no one knows if that will happen, and ultimately that is in Verso’s hands. There has been significant outreach from the state. Workers were assured that they will qualify for unemployment benefits immediately following the closure. There will also be a job fair held on June 18<sup>th</sup>. This effort should help some, but many have stated they don’t want new jobs, they want markets. They want to keep doing what they know-logging, hauling, and managing an abundant natural resource that is critical to the health of the forest and the Chesapeake Bay.

Fortunately, that may be happening, thanks to many partners including the Governor's Office that pulled together to apply for a federal grant that will provide partial funding for an Economic Adjustment Strategy for Redeveloping Maryland's Forest Products Industry. The goal is to envision what the industry should look like 5 years from now and 50 years from now. It will consider the available resource and assist in planning how to make the industry more diverse and viable. Similar studies in other states have proven to be an effective tool to retain and expand markets, particularly when legislative efforts are required. The grant application did require matching funds and we as an industry thank the Hogan Administration for its leadership in making this happen. We also thank everyone that provided funds for the match:

- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Department of Commerce
- Maryland Department of Agriculture Marketing
- MARBIDCO
- Allegheny Soil Conservation
- Maryland Forests Association
- Association of Forests Industries
- Southern Maryland Agricultural Development

Numerous organizations also sent letters of support for the project. My fingers are crossed that this will help revitalize an industry that is struggling like never before. Sustainable forest management is critical to our rural economies and the future of our forests.

**Poultry I- Mike Levensgood:** DPI held their 63<sup>rd</sup> annual Booster Banquet event at the Wicomico Civic Center on Tuesday, April 16. Nearly 900 folks attended, including growers, chicken company employees, allied business members, legislators, agriculture leaders, and more from around the Delmarva area. 12 Delmarva growers were recognized as Outstanding Growers and other award recipients included: Clark White and J. Frank Gordy, Sr. Delmarva Distinguished Citizen Award; Dr. Dan Bautista, Edward H Ralph Medal of Achievement; Accomack County Board of Supervisor Robert Crockett, Medal of Achievement.

DPI, along with partners MDE and Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment held a public information meeting on Thursday, April 25 at UMES to share with the public more information about the lower shore ambient air monitoring partnership. A presentation shared by MDE talked more about specifications and the public was able to share comments or feedback. A website has been created where all information will be stored on the partnership  
- <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/AirQualityMonitoring/Pages/Lower-Eastern-Shore-Monitoring-Project.aspx>.

Legislatively, many amendments were offered two bills in particular that passed – SB 471/HB 652 – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs and SB 546/HB 904 – Nutrient Management Monitoring Enforcement. The industry looks forward to working with MDA on any further discussions in regard to these bills. Held the DPI golf tournament on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Excellent turn out. The proceeds from the tournament are used for student scholarships. There were 9 scholarships handed out this year worth \$18,000.

Delmarva growers, DPI members featured in chicken sustainability campaign and video. Several DPI members who raise chickens on Delmarva describe what sustainability means to them and their farm in a new [video](#) from the National Chicken Council. Janice Vickers, Terry Baker, Michelle Chesnik, and Rachel Rhodes are featured in the video, talking about solar energy, LED bulbs, vegetative environmental buffers, heavy use area pads, nipple drinkers and other farm features that improve their farms' sustainability. The video was released along with [findings from a nationwide survey](#) the

National Chicken Council conducted to gauge how deeply consumers understand and consider sustainable food practices relating to broiler chicken production. When it comes to factors driving purchase decisions today, the environmental impact of chicken (reported as a purchase driver by 34% of those surveyed) is as important as animal welfare (37%). Of note, taste (82%) and price (65%) continue to be the top two drivers of purchase decisions. The video offers consumers, foodservice experts and others a look into chicken farmers and their various sustainability practices.

**Poultry II- Michelle Protani-Chesnik:** Weather has continued to be wet, humid and for the most part summer like through the end of March and the months of April and May. Rain has been a weekly event on the Lower Shore. Crop planting was pushed behind and is still behind.

Poultry health has remained stable. Lay out times have decreased. I expect that the misfortune of one sector of agriculture (swine) with ASF will help the other protein sectors of agriculture, poultry in particular balance out and develop some profit margins.

Legislative wise while poultry and Ag in general did not come out of session unscathed. The end result was better than I had expected. The Community Health Air Act was defeated and the plans for the Ambient Air Monitoring by MDE with monetary contributions to help support it from Delmarva Poultry Industry and the Keith Campbell Foundation moved forward. I find it exciting that we have a partnership between poultry and the environmental community. This is a big step for both and I hope it continues.

The Nutrient Management bill was not defeated, but a more palatable form of the bill was passed. One of the side effects is that all poultry producers will pay an application fee for the upcoming permit and an annual fee every year to have the permit. If the existing waived fee schedule is followed the annual amount would be \$1200.00 for a large CAFO (over 100,000), \$600.00 for a Medium CAFO and \$300.00 for a Small CAFO (under 37,500). The application fee per John Sullivan has not yet been determined. This may not seem like a lot but over a 5 year period that is \$6000.00 for a large farm. It was my understanding that these monies were to provide more monitoring of farms, however, it seems this money will end up in a general fund, not necessarily a fund designated to monitor poultry CAFO's.

April 16<sup>th</sup> was the Delmarva Poultry Industry's 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Booster Banquet. It was attended by more than 900 people. Most notable among those was our Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford. Our Secretary of Agriculture Joe Bartenfelder, his assistant secretaries and many of the MDA staff were also in attendance.

April 25<sup>th</sup> a meeting was held at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore by Delmarva Poultry Industry, the Keith Campbell Foundation and the Maryland Department of the Environment to communicate to the public, the plans for the Ambient Air Monitoring Partnership. The meeting was well attended by both the Ag community and the environmental community. Unfortunately, the plans were met with an outcry by the activists who attended the meeting. They asked for the poultry community to step up and do something about testing for perceived air quality issues, now they don't want that either. It is the consensus among groups such as Socially Responsible Agriculture (SRAP), Environmental Action and Food and Water Watch that because DPI has made a monetary contribution to this study that it will be tainted. Several famers, including myself, stood up to comment on the planned study and to ask that all support it.

May 8<sup>th</sup> was the Spring Tour for the Maryland Agricultural Commission took place in Cecil and Harford counties. We had an excellent tour and it was a real learning experience for all. I want to

thank Jessica O'Sullivan, our Executive Secretary, for all the hard work and planning she put into making this a great tour! We were honored to have Senators Robert Cassilly, Jason Gallion and Delegates Andrew Cassilly and Kathy Szeliga along with Harford County Councilman Bob Wagner join us for the tour. It was also an honor to have our Governor Larry Hogan's Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Schatz join us on the tour. See PDF of Article Published in *Cecil County Whig* attached.

May 15<sup>th</sup>. I had the privilege to participate in a film on sustainability in poultry agriculture. This was put together by the National Chicken Council to help the consumer understand that poultry farmers do care about the sustainability of our operations and environment. Hopefully it will be about awareness that for most of us this is not just a farm but our home and a way of life. See link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5H\\_VGdHqg-s&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5H_VGdHqg-s&feature=youtu.be)

#### **Tobacco- Charles Cox:**

- *Delmarva Farmer* back in April with headline on Maryland Tobacco up in smoke.
- The tobacco market closed at the end of February leading to a hectic March and April.
- Phil Morris ended up dropping every contract in the state of Maryland.
- RJ Reynolds vowed that they would never come to the state of Maryland.
- The burley production in the world market is so flooded that there's no need for it anymore.
- There is one country in Africa that raises 80 percent of the world's burley.
- Ran into Hail and Cotton from Tennessee which is the oldest tobacco company in the United States which lead to raising cigar wrapper.
- Company out of Pennsylvania, Lancaster Leaf offered contracts to raise 3 acres of MD tobacco and get 1-acre cigar wrapper free because they want MD tobacco but are paying 1980's prices for it. \$1.85 a pound for Maryland tobacco.
- The one benefit for cigar wrapper is if you raise high quality they will pay upwards of 5 to 6 dollars a pound but the labor that goes into it is much more intensive. Cigar leaves must be perfect with no holes. Raising over 1 million lbs. but back in mid to late 50s was raising 50 to 60 million lbs. Have roughly 100 acres of tobacco in southern Maryland and hopefully the market will stay strong to support it. Cigar wrappers are on a climb. A lot of it has to do with vaping and that is pushing down the curve on tobacco production. Cigar wrapping you means hand tying 40lb barrels with wax paper. Cigar wrappers are more a Connecticut broad leaf vs burley. Want 12-14 leaves per plant. The change to cigar wrappers is really labor intense and it does not have a strong disease package. The biggest issue in southern MD is black shank which stays in the soil for years.
- A lot of the Amish community still has black shank so they are still trying to find patches that are clean.
- The tobacco industry in Maryland has sadly decreased over the years mainly due to the labor force.

#### **Turf- Tom Warpinski:**

- There has been more than 76 inches of precipitation over the past 365 days at BWI Airport, 4 inches above the record high set in calendar year 2018.
- Although it may not seem at times, approaching the halfway point of this year, total precipitation is about normal for January through May. April was actually drier than normal, but we've had some very wet spells in May, causing standing water in fields and damage to sod crops.
- The sod supply inventory is beginning to ease a bit as fields slowly mature. April and the first half of May were very challenging for growers.
- Seed suppliers report adequate inventory at this time and new crop looks normal. A few complained on some minor purity issues in the seed production fields.

- Maryland's April housing starts were up about 16% year over year.
- A decision, on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, from the Maryland Court of Special Appeal in Montgomery County, in the case of Maryland v. Complete Lawn Care, found the county's ban on outdoor pesticide use on private property by residents and professionals valid. Most, in the green industry, disagree with the decision, which failed to consider the strong opinion issued by the Circuit Court for Maryland in 2017, finding the county ban was illegal under existing state law and the Maryland Department of Agriculture's comprehensive pesticide regulatory program. One of the main concerns is that this local pesticide regulation undermines the state's authority in regulating pesticides and ensuring they are used properly and safely throughout the state. The necessary expertise and enforcement capability are provided by Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- The Turfgrass Producers International Summer convention and field day will be held July 23-25 in Minneapolis Minnesota.

### **Ross Peddicord Presentation:**

- Horse Industry Board largest segment \$1.6 billion industry.
- Hay, grain, straw, and other components in agriculture.
- License almost 800 riding schools and boarding facilities in Maryland which means there are more than double the number of riding schools compared to dairy farms left in Maryland.
- Maryland Horse Forum.
- \$250,000.00 study showing that we have a need for a horse park in Maryland.
- At 2009 Forum wanted to continue the idea to have a horse park.
- Instead of one horse park they decided to improve and modernize the current facilities we have.
- The big outdoor event area that we have is Fair Hill nearly 6000 acres near Elkton and the state bought it in the 70's. There are 70 miles of horse-riding trails. Still have a fox hunting club that hunts there.
- Fair Hill training center developed for thoroughbred racehorses has nearly 800 thoroughbreds training there.
- Improve and modernize Fair Hill that was built in the 1930's.
- A bid came from the US Equestrian Federation to bid on a five star event, this is an Olympic level sport.
- Only six five stars in the world.
- 20 billion dollars' worth of improvements and construction to take place, groundbreaking was May 24<sup>th</sup> this is 15 years later that we have been working on this project from 2004-2019.
- They are refurbishing the racetrack and will be a full turf track. In the middle of the racetrack will be 3 Olympic size arenas where the show jumping and dressage phase will take place.
- There will also be a cross country course to be designed.
- The first big five star event is scheduled to take place in October 2020.
- These events in England can draw in about 150,000 people over four days and the one in Kentucky draws about 80,000 people.
- The economic impact is estimated between 10-15 million dollars.
- It is going to be a game changer for the horse industry with one of the largest events in Maryland up at Fair Hill.
- Will cost about \$2-3 million to put on the event each year and it will occur each year.
- Going full speed ahead.
- More horses per square mile in Maryland than any other state.
- There are admission fees and sponsorships that get involved for this event.
- People come from all over the world to attend these events.
- Investing in the land is one of the best benefits for this project in keeping the open space and keeping the straw and hay farms continuing.

- 35 different disciplines to get involved in with the horse industry.
- It is the different footing in the arenas. Footing is everything with horse trainers. Footing can cost as much as 1 million dollars for the arenas.

**Joe Bartenfelder:**

- The strategic plan was distributed and it was agreed that the board would review it and we will discuss it during the August meeting when we have more attendance.

**Hans Schmidt**

- Cover crop sign up is June 21<sup>st</sup>- July 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Two new incentives this year.
- \$10 incentive for farmers that are hiring airplanes and helicopters if apply to cover between August 15<sup>th</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- There have been meetings discussing senate Bill 546 and the additional requirements for manure removal.
- There will be more documentation as to where the manure is coming from and where it will be going to.
- Requirements that MDE with the CAFO fees not being waved anymore.
- DNR doing some water monitoring.
- June 27<sup>th</sup> will be a PNT advisory meeting. During the meeting it was discussed that the department has hired Salisbury University to do a PNT study on making sure that the industry and the state has adequate resources to transition to the next phase of the PNT.
- Presentation on June 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30a.m.
- Have hired an assisted for Alyssa Mulkey to work on soil health.
- The Soil Health has one more meeting coming up, trying to formulate a soil health advisory committee that will be appointed by the secretary.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 1<sup>st</sup> by Michelle Protani-Chesnik 2<sup>nd</sup> by Keith Ohlinger.  
Respectfully Submitted by Jessica O'Sullivan.