



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 9, 2021

Present:

Agribusiness: Thomas Mullineaux
Ag Education: Martha Clark
Agritourism: Kelly Dudeck
At Large Ag Service: Matthew Levi Sellers
Direct Farm Market: Amy Crone
Equine: Michael Pons

Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry
Forestry: Elizabeth Hill
Nursery I: James Raley
Poultry II: Michelle Protani-Chesnik
State Grange: Clifford Newsome Jr.
Turf: Tom Warpinski

Absent:

At Large Ag Service: Frank Allnutt
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.
Dairy II: David Pyle
Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn
Field Crops: Donald Maring

Livestock: Sean Hough
Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet
Organic Farming: Matthew Nielsen
University: Dr. Craig Beyroudy
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks
Viticulture: Matthew Corey Spies

MDA Staff:

Julie Oberg
Cassie Shirk
Joe Bartenfelder
Rich Colburn
Jason Schellhardt
Hans Schmidt

Guest/Speakers:

Stacy Kubofcik (MARBIDCO)
Jonathan Cribbs Delmarva Farmer

Approval of Minutes:

April minutes were approved 1st Tom Mullineaux and 2nd Tom Warpinski.

Commodity Reports:

Tom Mullineaux- Agribusiness:

- Agriculture Business managers have seen positive sales in all areas over all.
- Equipment dealers have seen brisk sales of tillage, harvest, lawn and garden and small farm items
- Row crop seed sales are up indicating higher corn and soybean acreage.
- Custom applied acres of crop protection and fertilizer are up with fertilizer prices in some cases extremely high.
- Everyone is expecting big barley and wheat harvest with good prices for grain and straw.
- Spring and early summer sales in garden centers have been very strong. Veggies and flowers and necessary supplies have been leading the way.
- Managers' report positive bagged feed and supplies sales with a number of Fairs and shows back to "Normal"

Martha Clark- Ag Education:

- **Communications:** It's hard to believe that the school year is already coming to an end! It somehow feels like the shortest and longest school year all at the same time, but MAEF was there for it all! People are taking notice too! We have significantly increased our following on social media, we are tracking analytics through constant contact, and our numbers are looking great! We're gaining a bountiful following, and it's because of all of the wonderful things that we've done this year!
- We are happy to report that we're finishing this school year with a bang and are excited for what the summer hold for us! Adding to this excitement and sense of things returning to normal was our first few Amazing! Maryland Agriculture Showcase events in April in May! It was so wonderful to see children and families interacting with our exhibits!
- May also provided us the opportunity to conduct the MAEF External Stakeholder Survey to gain an understanding of our relationship with our partners, and help inform what their views are regarding our place in Ag education. We received good feedback and will use it to further our mission and develop new goals.
- Make sure to follow us on social media to receive the most recent updates on what MAEF is doing in the community @MAEFinc!
- **Elementary Education:** We're gearing back up with our mobile labs for the 2021-22 school year! Diana is taking care of early outreach to schools and districts for a successful return to schools in the fall. Our showcases have been at 2 events so far and we have more lined up as summer progresses. We are also currently recruiting both showcase attendants and mobile lab teachers (especially on the Eastern Shore, central MD, and Montgomery County).
- The spring cohort of our course *Infusing Ag in the Elementary Classroom* successfully ended on May 14th with 22 teachers across 9 local school systems completing the semester. Our "Lab in a Box" classroom lesson kit program was a success this spring, reaching 139 classrooms with the help of additional funding from the MD Soybean Board.
- Our 2nd virtual farm field trip to Days End Horse Farm highlighted their mission and connected students to the natural, human, and capital resources needed to run a farm as well as the many careers involved. 56 teachers registered their classes for the live event in 9 local school systems and lessons were provided to them on MAEF's website for use before, during, and after the live event. Miss the virtual farm field trip? Check it out below!

- We're also pleased to share regular updates to the classroom resources on our elementary webpage which are developed by our lab teachers. Please share them with relevant contacts far and wide!
- **Middle School and Natural Resources Education:** The first run of the Goucher/MAEF online course *Infusing Agriculture in the Middle School Classroom* has concluded with 8 teachers completing the seven-week course. The fall course will run the full 8 weeks, Oct - Dec. online with two planned in-person field sessions. We held our first in-person Leopold Education Workshop (LEP) at Fox Haven Farm May 19 with five attending. We are partnering with Virginia Chesapeake Bay Foundation to begin developing a regionally appropriate LEP-like natural resources curriculum project for middle school. Educational materials for the AgWorks podcast will begin development now and will post to the episodes in July.
- Consulting has begun with Days End Horse Farm to develop a farm-based education program for schools, K-8. Also, a farm-based education program for middle school integrating math, data collection and interpretation, and agriculture is in the planning stage and will be joined by math teachers and farm-based educators (FBE) in Frederick County. This is the first of a series of FBE curriculum projects that will integrate content areas to hands-on agriculture education for the state.
- **High School and Post- Secondary Education:** The Secondary Team has conducted the filming of the 93rd Maryland FFA State Convention to be aired in June. We attended the virtual FFA Banquets for Gwynn Park FFA, Hereford FFA Chapter and in person at the Oakland FFA Chapter.
- We have participated in virtual interviews for the 2021-2022 State FFA Officer team and planning meetings for State Officer trainings. The team virtually attended the BCPS LAC meeting, Danny Rubin workshop, NASAE Workshop, Maryland Envirothon board meetings and awards program, PGCPs Program Advisory Executive Committee Meeting, Environmental Literacy Meeting and Awards Program and the dedication of the Mark A Smith Memorial Park in Sharpsburg, MD, which the Boonsboro Middle School FFA helped to establish and landscape.
- **The Final Word:** Have you ever had a big and important task to do, one that was so large and so important that it was downright daunting? That's my position this week. Most of you know that Bonnie Werner is retiring come June 30. Bonnie has been with MAEF before MAEF was MAEF, some 32 years now! She is, in a word, irreplaceable. Every moment of MAEF history, every system and process we've set in place, every employee hired since her, every program we've ever run? They've all run across Bonnie's desk in some way. As we take time this week to consider MAEF's future through our Strategic Planning activities, I'll be thinking of her belief in our mission and steadfast dedication to MAEF spanning more than three decades, and the changes she's witnessed in that time. We're grateful to have had her resourcefulness and good cheer, and thank her for her service!

Kelly Dudeck- Agritourism:

- As more and more people are getting out and being comfortable business is up across the state which is great news.
- No compromising effects due to the cicadas.
- A few Ag tourism operations curious about being able to do farm camping on their property.
- Had a conversation with the agricultural marketing professionals to talk about steps to take.

- Grow and fortify is working with Ag law education initiative and the center for agroecology. Pulling interns to research and see how other states have handled the situation.
- Always working on agri-tourism related things with each county.
- Currently Worcester County is looking to put in an agri-tourism bill and put in an effective definition for agri-tourism.
- A lot of counties looking at the MDA's definition of agri-tourism as a guide and make their own definition on the county level.
- Harford County is looking to redefine what a farm brewery is.

Levi Sellers- Ag Services:

- June marks a busy time of year for most hemp producers, as transplanting of seedlings in the field begins. This month starts with a few exciting topics in the news that could stimulate growth in the new industry.
- **Law Specialist to Lead Research in Risk Mitigation for Hemp Producers:** Paul Goeringer, senior faculty specialist with the University of Maryland Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics, is leading a team of researchers and Extension specialists in an analysis of risk management tools and the development of educational outreach materials for small and medium-sized farmers interested in transitioning to growing industrial hemp. The team was awarded an almost \$500,000 grant through the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grant Program. Through an analysis of existing legal frameworks and crop insurance tools for the various states, Georinger's team will begin to develop standardization in risk management products to protect farmers and the processors who buy the crops.
- **Hemp Seed in Broiler Feed:** The Hemp Feed Coalition has filed an application to gain approval for the use of hemp in broiler feed. Hemp products are not approved to be used in animal feed by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine (FDA-CVM). An application for the inclusion of hemp in layer feed has already been submitted by the group in 2020. Research on hemp products in feed conducted by Wenger Group, a leading feed and egg company, reported positive findings, no safety concerns and overall improvements in the eggs. In some cases, there were significant improvements with shell thickness, yolk color and fatty acid composition. The group expects to hear back from the applications by this summer.
- **Senate Introduces Bill Requiring FDA's Regulation of CBD:** As the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continues to stall on regulating cannabidiol (CBD) as a dietary supplement, Congress is moving forward on requiring the federal agency to establish regulations. The Hemp Access and Consumer Safety Act was filed in May to create a clear pathway for CBD to be used in food, beverages and dietary supplements, opening the door for non-pharmaceutical CBD producers to market hemp-derived CBD products through additional sales channels. This could help improve consumer confidence in CBD products, establishing a more stable market for farmers/producers, while stimulating innovation and job creation in the growing industry.

Amy Crone- Direct Farm Market:

- Demand for local expected to stay strong in 202.
- Markets are open for the season – approximately 17 closed from last year.
- Maryland Market Money program is open for farmers markets and also added on-farm markets to the locations that can accept the matching incentive this year (now run by SMADC).

- Federal benefits continue to remain at elevated levels; pandemic EBT is still being redeemed by participants and have seen 200% increase over 2020 with regards to SNAP/EBT redemption at farmers markets across the country.

Michael Pons- Equine:

- The Maryland Thoroughbred racehorses, normally stabled at Laurel, have been temporarily moved to either Pimlico or Timonium, while the Laurel Race dirt and turf courses are being repaired. Underground water has created several problems, the biggest being a saturation of the racetrack base. The repairs are progressing, and Maryland Jockey Club officials are hoping to resume training and racing at Laurel by mid-July. Fortunately, live racing moved to Pimlico earlier this spring and will remain there during an expanded summer meet.
- Maryland Horsemen are grateful for the hospitality of the Maryland State Fair officials for allowing hundreds of racehorses to ship in and train at Timonium.
- The 2021 Preakness was conducted with limited fans, only about 11,000 folks attended the races.
- However, the Preakness card attracted nationwide attention, with more than \$100M being wagered, mostly on simulcast, across the United States. Maryland's largest sporting day set a new parimutuel record, attracting international attention. Plans for the construction of a new Pimlico and rebuilding of Laurel grandstand, barns and racecourse are underway.
- The sale of nearly \$400M in construction bonds is scheduled for this fall.
- The 2021 Fasig-Tipton Mid-Atlantic May 2-Year-Old Sales was back on its' regular schedule, being held on the Monday and Tuesday after the Preakness. Records were set for gross receipts and average. The high priced horse was a \$1.5M colt by Quality Road.
- Two Maryland stallions, Divining Rod and Holy Boss, had six-figure selling offspring. This is Maryland's highest grossing horse sale and attracts nationwide attention from the top trainers and owners.
- The Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill, an international equestrian event, is on schedule for its debut on October 14-17, 2021. Fair Hill is just one of two 5 star events in the United States. There will be four days of competition in Dressage, Cross-Country and Show Jumping with horses, riders, owners and fans from all over the globe, in attendance.
- Nearly \$25M in renovations have taken place, including a brand new grandstand, turf course and three-day eventing venue. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available at Maryland5staratfairhill.com

Elizabeth Hill- Forestry:

- Had ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Delmarva lumber.
- Had over 100 people there with a lot of great speakers that talked about the importance of forestry on the industry.
- A lot of local electives there and those within the industry to show their support.
- News also showed up but was a little disappointed with their coverage of the story.
- Working on a booklet called Maryland Forest and is available on the website. Will bring copies when we meet in person again.
- The book is to answer very simple forestry 101 questions.
- Having a regional meeting in August and September.
- The demand for lumber is very high right now and prices are staying stable.

James Raley- Nursery I:

- Mr. Raley reported that sales of nursery products have been going well throughout the state. Consumers continue to purchase nursery products for their homes and gardens.
- Some wholesale and retail operations and landscaping businesses continue to experience problems finding labor.
- The Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association and UMD Extension are hosting a Greenhouse Growers Field Day on July 8, 2021 at Catoctin Mountain Growers in Keymar, MD. Registration for the event closes on July 1st.
- Mr. Raley thanked Vanessa Finney of MNLGA for announcing on the association's website vacant positions available on the Ag Commission.
- Tobacco plants have been transplanted to fields. Mr. Raley did not have an estimate of tobacco acreage planted for this year. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 40 farms that produced a little over 706,000 pounds of tobacco in the state. Those numbers are probably still correct for current production.

Michelle Protani-Chesnik- Poultry II:

- The past few months have been hectic and busy ones for most members of the agricultural community. Weather went from abundant rain to drought conditions.
- Poultry agriculture has seen an upswing in farm placements as the economy has reopened and while this is good the cost of doing business has risen drastically in this segment of Ag just as it has in other segments. Lumber, wire for electrical work and plastics have all risen dramatically in price. Parts to do repairs and new equipment have also risen sharply in price, and in many cases are not even available. A sheet of plywood is hovering at \$80.00 a role of 12-2 was \$188.00 now goes for 600.00 for a 1,000-foot roll. The cost of fuel has also seen a sharp increase in price.
- While the pandemic seems be behind us, it will be a year or longer before family farms fully recover, in my opinion. Farmers are still reeling from the anxiety of the past year and there are definite health needs both physical and mental in the rural communities. While there are initiatives out there the timeline needs to be stepped up.
- Labor has become an increasing problem for farmers it is impossible to find farm help when workers can go to poultry plants and earn 16 to 20 dollars an hour. Many people will not return to the workforce as long as supplemental unemployment is in place, thankfully that will end on July 3rd. Finding farm help currently is an impossible task.
- The Maryland Department of the environment has filed an appeal of the Montgomery County court decision. This is an important step and hopefully this decision will be overturned.
- Poultry health is an issue on the shore we are seeing sporadic breaks of LT throughout the Peninsula, and this poses a threat to poultry agriculture as a whole.
- Delmarva Chicken association will hold their first Chicken Barbeque Banquet on June 18th at the Harrington Fairgrounds. It looks like it will be a great event it has been well received and all are hoping for a great turn out!

Clifford Newsome Jr- State Grange:

- Wanted to thank and enjoyed the virtual tours showing the diversity around the state.
- Glad to hear that county fairs are opening in person and not just virtual.

Tom Warpinski- Turf:

- Overall, the weather seems to be normalizing. We went from a very wet early spring to much drier conditions currently, which is more the norm for this time of year. Eastern Shore growers have been getting some timely rains but northern parts of the state are needing rain.

- The sod supply inventory seems to be adequate. Sod sales tapered down slightly in May following a strong April. This could be due in part to folks hitting the road more, doing less yard renovations, as the economy opens up.
- New home and commercial construction is up year over year but as of April signs of a dip from previous months appear. The materials supply chain has been severely disrupted due to covid shutdowns last year. Hopefully things will even out soon.
- Nationwide, we believe that sports turf and golf course sales will continue to rise now that venues are experiencing usage again.
- Seed suppliers report they are low on inventory at this time. Ryegrass is sold out and Tall fescue very scarce. The new crop is currently suffering from drought. There will be a mad scramble to jockey for position at cleaning facilities and then freight delays to the East coast will cause prices to be substantially higher.
- Overall prices on all supplies are up. Fuel, fertilizer, equipment, both new and used, vehicles and labor are also way up. Substantial wait times for hard goods, equipment and parts are becoming tough to deal with.
- Continued labor shortage in all sectors but especially CDL drivers is becoming critical.
- June 23, Turfgrass Producers of Maryland will be hosting a representative from TPI, our international growers' organization, who will be discussing a nationwide sod checkoff program that we will be voting on in 2022. Similar to other crop checkoff programs, funds would be used for research and promotion of natural grass.
- This is the last meeting for me as my six-year term is up. I want to sincerely thank Sec. Bartenfelder and all of you for the opportunity to represent the turf industry in this commission. I am also thankful to get to know all of your wonderful people who are so dedicated to agriculture here in Maryland. I wish you all good health, prosperity and God's continued blessings.

Staff/Guest Updates:

Cassie Shirk:

- GICA meeting at the end of month, in person meeting with call in option.

Hans Schmidt:

- Have put out a number of press releases.
- Manure transport cap for poultry litter raised to \$28.00 per ton.
- Working hard with NRCS to come up with practice standard for satellite manure storage for farms receiving poultry litter.
- The department had a bill for 100 percent cost share on certain conservation practices that we cost share through the MACS program.
- The state committee is working to decide what those practices will be.
- The Secretary signed off on 4 new practices for climate friendly practices: Windbreaks, hedgerows, silvopasture, three and shrub establishment and pasture fencing.
- Amendment to the fencing cost share systems.
- PNT Advisory committee made recommendation to Secretary. July 1st the PNT will go into full implementation.
- Cover crop program sign up will start July 1st to July 16th. Program will be similar to the program last year where the farmers will receive something in the mail from the department. Not a lot of changes but the base rate has been raised from \$40 to \$45 an acre and added incentives for rye and mixed species.

Jason Schellhardt:

- More media to come on cicadas.
- Working on getting information out about the Maryland Ice Cream Trail.

Julie Oberg:

- In celebration of Earth Day in April, Secretary Bartenfelder signed on to become the first state agriculture official to sign on to the U.S. farmers and ranchers in action executive Ag vision.
- Highlight progress that our farmers have made in addressing nutrient loads in the Chesapeake Bay and the impending impact on climate change.
- During legislative session, language was added to budget to create the frame work to do a climate change assessment.
- Working with Harry Hues Center to create the frame work for the assessment and doing a report for the legislation that will be due December 1st.
- Ag education front, help develop Ag work force opportunities for high school students.
- Launch a new initiative to train high school Ag students to become certified fertilizer applicators, waive exam fees, more opportunity for certification.

Joe Bartenfelder:

- MD Ice Cream Trail kicked off, work on hitting all creameries around the state of Maryland throughout the summer.
- Working on setting up a date with Tom Mullineaux to go to Misty Meadows in Washington County and having a round table talk.
- Farmers Markets coming back stronger this year than last year.
- People are out and about and more shopping with covid restrictions lifted.

Stacy:

- Busy with relief grant programs.
- 6 grant programs and had 250 applications.
- Loan activity has picked up.

Voted to have Michelle Protani-Chesnick as our GICA representative and will send out an email for the advisory committee board.

Motion to have in person meetings with call in being an option 1st Elizabeth Hill 2nd Michelle Protani-Chesnick.

Send email out to change tour day.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 am respectfully submitted by: Jessica O'Sullivan