



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

March 14, 2018

Present:

Ag Education - Martha Clark
Agribusiness - Thomas Fisher
Agritourism- Taylor Huffman
Bio-fuels - David Burrier
Equine - William Reightler
Field Crops - Donald Maring
Food Processing- Cheryl DeBerry
Horticulture - Cole Mangum

Nursery I - Keith Ohlinger
Organic - Marian Fry
Poultry II - Michelle Protani- Chesnik
Tobacco - Charles Cox
Turf - Thomas Warpinski
University- Dr. Craig Beyroudy
Veterinary - John Brooks

Absent:

Ag Services - Vanessa Finney
Ag Services - David Roles
Aquaculture- Talmage Petty
Consumer - Carroll Shry
Dairy I - Tim Bishton

Dairy II - Jason Myers
Farm Bureau - Jonathan Quinn
Nursery II - Ray Greenstreet
Poultry I - Michael Levensgood
Viticulture - Corey Spies

MDA Staff:

Joseph Bartenfelder - Secretary of Agriculture
Julie Oberg- Deputy Secretary of Agriculture
Jason Schellhardt- Media Relations

Steve Connelly- Assistant Secretary
Matt Tefteau- Director Gov't Relations

Speakers/Guest:

Steve McHenry and Allison Roe (MARBIDCO)
Dr. Memo Diriker (BEACON)

Commodity Reports:

Agribusiness - Tom Fisher: Growers have started top dressing wheat in the last week to 10 days and the wheat market has strengthened recently based on dry conditions in major wheat growing areas of the U.S. Bayer AG's effort to takeover Monsanto has been delayed. Bayer is preparing to sell more assets to win antitrust approval per WSJ. One sector that Bayer plans to sell is its vegetable seed business. Bayer has already sold or agreed to sell parts of its crop science business to German rival BASF. Meanwhile, last week the Ag division of DowDupont announced that the new name of their company once it is spun off will be Corteva Agriscience. The Corteva Agriscience Company will be made up of Dupont Crop Protection, Dupont Pioneer, and Dow Agro Science. Corteva Agriscience will be a standalone Ag Company based in Wilmington, DE per *The Delmarva Farmer* and *WSJ*. Soybean seed dealers are indicating that Xtend soybean seed sales are taking off in some areas. The Xtend technology is a dicamba and glyphosate tolerant trait that allows control of marestail and palmer amaranth weeds in soybeans. Xtend beans sell for \$60-70 per unit (140,000 seed) and represent a seed cost of approximately \$100/acre. The bean market has also strengthened in the

last few weeks to the \$11.00 range. If a grower can double crop a wheat acre with \$5.25 wheat and follow with an \$11.00 bean price that is a positive for 2018.

Agritourism - Taylor Huffman: Provided an updated on proposed Maryland agritourism legislation. HB 252 was heard by the House Environment and Transportation Committee on February 7th. This bill defines “Agritourism” as “an activity conducted on a farm that is offered to a member of the general public or to invited guests for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in the farm operation.” This bill gives the authority to local jurisdictions to adopt this definition by local ordinance, resolution, law or rules. HB 1351, concerning special occasion events on easement properties, was heard on February 23rd by the House Environment and Transportation Committee. 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. There are restrictions such as the requirement for the easement to have been recorded in the land records for more than 10 years and the special event area cannot exceed more than two acres of the property. The state and local laws must allow the events on the property prior to receiving approval from the local agricultural advisory board. The intention of this bill is to provide a means for farmers to have additional income from their easement properties. Cathy Cosgrove, a Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Trustee testified personally in support of the bill. Opponents of the bill raised concerns of increased traffic in these typically rural areas. She personally think the passing of this bill would be very beneficial to easement landowners who are struggling to find means of supplemental income. By allowing other Agritourism events such as corn mazes and U-Pick patches on these easement properties, landowners are able to supplement their otherwise struggling farm revenue. However, even if this bill passes, there are more hurdles to overcome through county planning and zoning. Ms. Huffman will continue to monitor the progress of these bills and update the commission.

Ag Services - Vanessa Finney: Maryland’s ornamental horticulture industry is in full-ramp up mode. The economy has been strong so there is optimism and expectation for a strong season. Notification and awareness of the newest pest threat – Spotted Lanternfly – is underway. This pest has been found in a dozen counties in Pennsylvania and the Winchester area of VA. **LEAD Maryland:** LEAD Maryland expects to open the application period for Class XI by June 1st and will close on October 1st. Information about the program is at <https://extension.umd.edu/lead-maryland>. The application will be made available on the site. LEAD seeks a class with at least 50 percent Ag production representatives from a wide spectrum of commodity groups. Class X is currently at its mid-point of its two-year leadership development program. International travel is confirmed for 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.

Bio-Fuels - David Burrier: Ethanol production continues on a pace for another record year. In almost every report I comment on the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and its impact on the bio-fuel industry. Besides the budget differences on adoption, this is more a debate of reform of the original mandate. There have been several meetings with the President, USDA, EPA, the bio-fuel industry and oil companies at the table to discuss a year-round waiver for the sale of 15 percent ethanol gasoline. The group is also discussing the creation of credits for exported ethanol (and the U.S. has started exporting ethanol to the United Arab Emirates.) The major issue deals with the capping the price of bio-fuel credits RINS or renewable identification numbers, and a transparency measure to temper or eliminate investors from trading in this program. This has gotten much attention because of the Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing by the Philadelphia Energy Solutions. This is

the largest refinery in the eastern United States, blaming the renewable fuels program for its demise. Since they don't have a retail division, the RFS mandate requires them to purchase RIN credits to satisfy the federal mandate for ethanol in gasoline. The EPA contends that RINS were not to be a traded commodity but a way to make sure bio-fuels are blended. Refineries not blending ethanol are to buy RINS and refineries that blend ethanol are to receive RINS. Since the adoption of the RFS, RINS have ranged from .05 and .06 and as high as 1.06. While it seems the RFS is part of the picture, it's not the only factor and may not be the major factor. Philadelphia Energy Solutions thrived while cheap shale oil from North Dakota had nowhere else to go. In the last several years, a pipeline connecting North Dakota's shale oil to the Gulf Coast has come on line, and given the choice it was less expensive to put oil in the pipeline than a rail car east. All while this happened the global oil prices declined as well, which cut deeply into their profits.

Consumer - Carroll Shry: To meet consumer demand, wholesalers want Maryland producers to supply local Maryland grocery stores. Produce Source Partners Inc. and Sudano's Produce want to form a partnership with Maryland growers to supply Maryland grown fruits and vegetables to local grocery stores throughout the state. Maryland residents prefer to buy Maryland grown fruit and vegetables. This valued partnership will assist Maryland farmers in distribution to local grocery stores and ultimately to the Maryland consumer. Any interested Maryland producer should contact Dan Budi 804-412-2564. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is offering a tomato grafting workshop for fruit and vegetable grower at their Princess Anne campus. University of Maryland needs an agronomy weed scientist on staff to assist Maryland agriculturists. Dowdupont Ag division will be Corteva Agriscience to become the leading agricultural company to work with food system to produce healthy food.

Equine - Bill Reightler: The Maryland Steeplechase Race season commences with the Green Spring Valley Point-to-Point races on March 31st. Ten race meetings comprise the season culminating with the Fair Hill Races on May 26th. The Maryland Hunt Cup, the most prestigious race with a purse of \$100,000 is held on April 28th. The Maryland Horse Industry Board's executive director Ross Peddicord announced some major initiatives for 2018. The Horse Discovery Center Network is designed to introduce people of all ages to horse sports. The Maryland Horse Park system is still awaiting clarification on Fair Hill International's elevation to 4 or 5 status. This elite level horse show event was recently awarded to Fair Hill. The Equus Film Festival is filling the void left by the cancelation of the Horse World Expo held at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. Equine welfare issues are also a major initiative. The Maryland Thoroughbred Career Program, started last year by the Maryland Horse Industry Foundation, a subset of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association, is an educational program designed to increase the awareness of the diverse career options in the industry giving access to industry leaders in the Thoroughbred community. Last summer, the participants toured major farms in Maryland. Jordan Egan is the program's director. The Maryland Thoroughbred Horseman's Association announced a plan to pay horses participating in races 4 percent of the total purse from a fifth place back to last place. This will reward them as much as \$1000 per starter. This program paying "off the board" finishers is designed to assist owners in defraying expenses and to encourage additional entries from other racing jurisdictions.

Farm Bureau - Jon Quinn: At Maryland Farm Bureau's February meeting, Jim Hanson, Associate Dean of ANGR and director of Extension, reported that extension continues to hire staff to fill positions. They are also working hard to attract more students to ANGR there are 550 applications for new students up from a typical 330 from 17 counties. Maryland Farm Bureau held their day in Annapolis on February 7, which was well-attended with more than 60 legislators attending the luncheon event. Farm Bureau's lobbyist Colby Ferguson and Parker Welch have been extremely

busy this year in Annapolis with a high volume of Ag bills. We are still getting a high level of deer crop damage reports from around the state. Farm Bureau has held two trucking forums and has one more later this month at UMES. Farm Bureau is working with Nationwide Insurance on getting grain bin safety equipment to rural Fire and Rescue. Maryland Farm Bureau has launched a new website.

Food Processing - Cheryl DeBerry: Not a lot of news to report for food processing. The major thing we are all closely watching is potential legislation, specifically bills that could potentially affect the beer/wine/spirits industry.

Horticulture - Cole Mangum: The next two weeks are some of the busiest planting weeks for greenhouse growers of ornamental bedding plants and outdoor perennial growers. Pansies and hardy perennials are starting to show up in garden centers across the state. No major pest issues to report. The pressure facing neonicotinoids has not subsided and we are starting to hear more about organophosphates being the next class of chemical targeted by environmental groups. Bee Project Update: Started in 2015 after we went neonic free, hired local university students experienced in beekeeping to maintain hives weekly. Lost all 10 hives to varroa mites, small hive beetle, and deformed wing virus pressure. Upped hive count to 20 in 2016, lost 100 percent to the same issues but even heavier varroa mite pressure. Had hive wax samples tested for chemicals by USDA-APHIS labs to ppb levels. Four positive results, none of the positive chemicals are used or owned by us. We can only guess bees picked them up by visiting other local residents. 2017 hired a professional beekeeper from Frederick County who sells bees and honey for his livelihood to take care of our 20 hives. Good success until the fall, then lost 18 out of 20 hives in six weeks. As of February 1st 2018, only one hive has survived. Varroa mites, deformed wing virus, European hornets and small hive beetles seem to be the cause again. They are anecdotal results, but they are being raised in a neonic free environment with staggering losses attributed to other factors.

Nursery - Keith Ohlinger: The orchards are preparing for spring. Hoping the February/March weather flip-flop does not bring temperatures that would damage buds. Spotted Lanternfly has everyone concerned. H2A workers regulations are still on everyone's minds. SB 500 regarding Chlorpyrifos appears to be dead it was sent back to committee. Penn State is studying it to see if it is effective against the Spotted Lanternfly. Howard County News: The Mulch/Compost Bill was passed out of the Planning Board and should return to the County Council for a hearing in April and a vote in early May. Ag Science curriculum has 20 students signed up as of now for the fall semester. As a new member, raised the issues of creating continuity for the executive secretary and requested to review the board's function during the meeting and cited information about the Commission from the Department's website related to its advisory role to the Secretary and composition of Board membership.. The commission currently pursues the following priorities and activities .Encouraging the agricultural community to be more pro-active on issues affecting agriculture and rural life. Evaluating farm/agriculture industry labor and regulations. Increasing public awareness of food safety. Supporting the department's efforts to promote agriculture. We are asked to turn in reports in advance, which we read during the meetings Our Vision and Mission states that we are to formulate and make proposals for the advancement of agriculture. What are we as a group, as a commission, doing to further that mission? Our priorities and activities state that we are encouraging the agricultural community to be more pro-active on issues affecting agriculture and rural life. What are we doing to foster that effort? What are we doing to be more pro-active? Do we evaluate farm/agriculture industry labor and regulations? When? What are our efforts to increase public awareness of food safety? How do we support the efforts to promote agriculture? I recommend that we send in a written report ahead of time, which is circulated and

read before coming to the meeting. If we have any questions we can ask them during the meeting or reach out to the industry representative privately before the meeting. If any urgent issues arise they can be addressed first on the agenda. We can then spend the bulk of our meeting time working on our priorities and activities. Staff reiterated that the Commission serves in an advisory capacity and the Secretary welcomes their input.

Organics - Marian Fry: Attended the 13th annual Organic Production Meeting on March 9th at Chesapeake College on Grain, Dairy, vegetables, Poultry. Was gratifying to see the panel of young producers, and audience members who are 2nd generation from those who began the conference. USDA has withdrawn the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule published in January, 2017, which would have placed increased federal regulation on those organic producers. The prior organic rules remain in effect. A constituent would like to know where MDA is on permission to grow hemp.

Poultry I - Michael Levensgood: Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc., in cooperation with the University of Maryland and University of Delaware, is offering an on-farm chicken grower workshop on March 28. Speakers will discuss tunnel ventilation, farm safety, generator and house maintenance, animal welfare, controller tips, radiant tube heating, water quality, good neighbor practices, and biosecurity. Hundreds of growers from throughout the Delmarva Peninsula are expected to attend. Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. testified before a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to support the Fair Agricultural Reporting Method Act that will relieve Delmarva chicken growers from a pending onerous requirement that they report to the EPA and the U.S. Coast Guard ammonia emissions from their chicken houses. Such reporting is required for various types of animal farms throughout the republic because of the 1980 federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Poultry II - Michelle Protani-Chesnik: It has been a relatively quiet period of time for poultry agriculture on the Shore. The weather has been wet and variable over the past four weeks, but tolerable. There have been no reports of health outbreaks on the Delmarva Peninsula and hopefully it will stay that way. Low path avian influenza was detected last week in turkeys in Missouri. If everyone continues to be vigilant in monitoring and biosecurity practices, all should go well on the Shore. I participated in the Pew Charitable Trust event "Super Moms against Super Bugs." Overall it was an amazing event and I was pleasantly surprised. This was about antibiotic resistant bacteria (superbugs) and how it spreads from animals to people. Attendees included a mixed group of people, professionals such as infectious disease doctors from various areas of the country, people who had lost loved ones due to antibiotic resistant bacteria, an avian veterinarian, a professor/chair of the Animal and Avian Sciences Department at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, a bovine veterinarian, a pasture pork producer, a representative from Niman Ranch beef, a pastured organic poultry producer and myself (a commercial poultry producer). We met and interacted with Federal agency officials on antibiotic use in food animals from the Ag side including Bill Flynn, USDA CVM, Denise Eblen USDA NIFA, Larry Granger, Chelsey Shiveley USDA APHIS and Jeff Silverstein, ARS. On the human side we had the opportunity to meet and interact with Michael Craig from CDC, Dennis Dixon from NIH and Joseph Larsen from HHS Biomedical Advanced Research and Development. The high level of collaboration that occurs between these various groups is impressive. I tried to tie the animal welfare aspect into the total picture and explain that as a farmer I do not want to see over use or misuse of the few medically important antibiotics that exist today, but we cannot allow animals to suffer and die needlessly. I explained that I strongly advocate for the development of animal only antibiotics and increased development of viable vaccines. Many of the vaccines in animals we use

come with other health impacts. There have been no new human antibiotic developed in 40 years, it not profitable enough for drug companies. This is especially true when we want to preserve their usage to avoid building resistance. Cancer drugs and other drugs are much more lucrative for drug companies. We spent a day on the Hill and got to meet with representatives from the Senate and the House and request that the budgets to the agencies not be cut and hopefully increased on the research areas. These agencies do work together and to cut budgets would only slow down any progress we make in finding new antibiotics for people as well as antibiotics and vaccines for animals. We finished our day at a hearing on antibiotic resistance with animal and human health agency officials. Speakers included: Anne Schuchat, CDC, Anthony Fauci, NIAID, Rick Bright, BARDA, Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA, and Paul Auwaerter Clinical Director infectious Diseases, Johns Hopkins.

Tobacco - Charles Cox: The tobacco season has come to a close the market for the most part has shut down at the end of February. It is already started up again and already has been planted. Hoping within a few months to get back in the ground and planted. Had a contract meeting and contracts were all renewed and at this time no new contracts were made. Still struggling because it is contracted crop so prices have been about the same for the last 30 years. The cost of production versus the income is rather high. It cost about \$1,000 an acre to get the tobacco out of the field and into the barn. It all depends on hiring labor, and hiring people for the whole process is not sustainable. If you over produce most contracts will not buy the overage and you are left with it.

Turf - Tom Warpinski: The weather since February 1st has been a roller coaster and turf grass has not known which way to go - stay dormant or green up. We experienced highs in the 20's to highs in the 80's within the same week! Overall average temperatures are above normal and Maryland lawns and turf are showing signs of greening up a bit earlier than normal. Overall sod sales are behind last year's to date mainly due to heavy rains at times. Overall sod supply is slightly tight to adequate. Most farms have slightly increased acreage last fall and should have an abundant supply by May. Maryland issued 1,360 new residential building permits in January, an increase of 30.5 percent over same period 2017. Nationwide January housing starts were up 7.3% over same period in 2017. Lawn care companies are gearing up for the upcoming season, hiring seasonal employees, buying equipment, supplies and servicing mowers, trimmers and blowers. March 1st marked the date that fertilize applications can resume on Maryland lawns, parks and sports fields. Attendance was very strong at the Turf grass Producers International Conference and Field Day, which took place February 12-15, 2018 in Tucson, AZ, and included many educational sessions and large equipment and field demonstrations. An autonomous 21-foot wide mower was the highlight of the equipment demonstrations. Growers and sports turf companies are keeping an eye on Maryland Senate Bill SB 763, which would prohibit the use of State funds to finance any portion of a project to build new or replace existing playgrounds or athletic fields with a synthetic surface. It also requires State and local governmental agencies to give consideration and preference to the use of state of the art natural surface materials in any project to construct a playground or athletic field. The bill, if passed, would take effect July 1, 2018.

University- Dr. Craig Beyrouty: On October 4th, the College is hosting a statewide summit on food and nutritional security. The keynote speaker will be Gebisa Ejeta, who received the World Food Prize, which is the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in agriculture. The summit will address issues on food security along with national security. Dean Beyrouty also raised concerns on the suicide rates in farmers. In the farming community the suicide rate exceeds any other profession such as dentist, teachers and lawyers, and veterinarians. He raised the issue to discuss what should land grant universities be doing, and what can we do to help address and help the situation.

Group Discussion on Suicide in Farmers and Vets: There are a number of reasons given in why the suicide rate is so high in the agricultural community and the farming and veterinary professions, including economic, loneliness and isolation associated issues with farming. Farmers are an independent group that doesn't generally share when they have issues that lead to depression. Farmers tend not to share their emotions with others or seek out help to resolve these issues associated with negative feelings as the farmer almost has a sense of shame. These issues have been around for a long time and are starting to be highlighted more. Groups all joined in to discuss different aspects that could be causes to the rate of suicide in farmers being so high. There are actually even classes at vet schools that focus on mental health. Other causes that lead to high rates of suicide is the debt that occurs after coming out of school. The rate is high in veterinarians because they develop such strong relationships with their clients and the animals themselves and it can get very hard when you are then personally attached to an animal. One really big driver is the economic impact on the farmer and the fact that these farmers are in rural areas and don't necessarily have access to the help that they need. Aspects of the society are demonizing what farmers are doing. Another cause that is leading to more farmers committing suicide is the family relationships changing and the younger generation not necessarily wanting to continue in the family farming business.

Veterinary - John Brooks: Met with the Delmarva Poultry Industry to represent the MD Ag Commission. Continue to try and get feet on the ground and the whole idea behind the committee is to try a have better coordination with the universities research going on and become more of a facilitated committee and continue to expand the poultry industry. Coordinating the research done at the different universities is a bit of a task and getting everyone to speak on the same page. With better coordination can help prevent some redundancies in research that are being done such as bench or lab production. There was a diagnosed low path avian influenza in poultry in southwest Missouri on a turkey farm. So far it has been controlled in the area. There have been two high path avian influenza cases diagnosed in Mexico. We are doing area surveys and continuing bisecurity area is critical in protecting our poultry industry. Dr. Brooks provided background information on chronic wasting disease. Research has come around that states that it can affect humans if eat affected deer or meat that is affected. There is also a new deer tick carrying a new strand of Lyme's disease that has been found on both the East and West Coasts and Canada. Recommended to stay away from meat that is closer to the spinal cord and foods that involve brain pudding.

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**Presentations:**

Steve McHenry and Allison Roe (MARBIDCO)  
Dr. Memo Diriker (BEACON)

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MDA Staff Updates:

Jason Schellhart: Next week will be Maryland Ag Week and we are working with MAEF on the schedule of events for the Secretary.

Julie Oberg: Governor Hogan held a regional cabinet meeting in Southern Maryland on Monday bringing his whole senior leadership team to the region for a variety of events in the community.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:50

Respectfully Submitted by Jessica O'Sullivan

MARBIDCO presentation attached