



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary
Julianne A. Oberg, Deputy Secretary

Maryland Agricultural Commission

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
www.mda.maryland.gov

410.841.5882 Baltimore/Washington
410.841.5914 Fax
800.492.5590 Toll Free

Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes March 13, 2019

Present:

Ag Education: Martha Clark
Agribusiness: Tom Fisher
Agritourism: Taylor Huffman
At Large Ag Service: Vanessa Finney
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.
Dairy I: Tim Bishton
Dairy II: David Pyle
Direct Farm Market: Keith Ohlinger

Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn
Field Crops: Donald Maring
Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry
Forestry: Elizabeth Hill
Poultry I: Michael Levengood
Poultry II: Michelle Protani-Chesnik
Turf: Tom Warpinski

Absent:

Aquaculture: Talmage Petty
At Large Ag Service: David Roles
Equine: William Reightler, Jr.
Horticulture: Cole Mangum
Livestock: Scott Barao

Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet
Tobacco: Charles Cox
University: Dr. Craig Beyrouty
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks
Viticulture: Matthew Corey Spies

MDA Staff:

Julie Oberg

Speakers/Guest:

Paul Goeringer

Review of February Minutes: Minutes for February were reviewed and passed. A motion was first set by Tim Bishton and seconded by Michelle Protani-Chesnik.

Commodity Reports:

Agribusiness- Tom Fisher: In conversations with seed corn companies, all indications are that corn acres will be up this year. Sales are running ahead of 2018 and growers feel that a corn acre has better upside potential than soybeans. Wheat acres are down, crop not looking too good and it's been too wet to top-dress many acres. In the soybean world there are more options for weed control going forward as companies are stacking traits to broaden control and manage resistance issues.

Corteva/DuPont/Pioneer plans to include 2,4-D tolerance into their seed lines in the future and BASF has included Liberty Link into their seed lines. Bayer, who purchased Monsanto last year, is only offering Xtend/Dicamba treated seed for 2019. Dicamba, which is an excellent broadleaf herbicide, has drift issues. Users must be certified and have annual training. Many retailers are hesitant to custom spray due to liability issues from potential drift. Bayer is confident that these issues are manageable.

Syngenta has a new wheat fungicide for Scab called MIRAVIS-Ace. It has a longer window of application and will replace the triazole products, about \$19/acre. Syngenta hopes to get label approval in MD, DE, and VA in the next 30 days. Roundup is taking a life of its own and there have been over 9,000 law suits focused on its use.

Ag Education- Martha Clark: Events coming up that are important:

- Maryland Ag in the Classroom summer workshop - received Rural Maryland Council grant to offset the cost for rural counties teachers to attend the workshop. There are 22 teachers enrolled to date.
- One millionth student through the mobile labs event May 15th at Urbana/ Sugarloaf Elementary School
- Entered into contracting with Goucher College to present an online Ag in the Classroom 4 credit college course for elementary teachers to follow on to the Ag in the classroom summer workshop. Teachers can only attend the summer workshop once so this will give them a chance to further their education and knowledge. The class will hopefully be online in the fall.
- Special grant came in so all the Ag labs are out and booked for the rest of the school year.
- Process of hiring a new executive director.
- The MD 4H Foundation has hired a new executive director, Kevin Kennedy from Prince George's County.

At Large Ag Services- Vanessa Finney:

- Nursery and Greenhouse: The industry is ramping up as the busy season begins! The industry, via its participation in the Maryland Green Industry Council, MaGIC (a coalition of Maryland's Green Industry Associations), continues to both monitor and react to proposed legislation before the General Assembly, including noxious weed, nuisance insect, nutrient management, and the proposed Chlorpyrifos ban bill, to name a few. In this light MaGIC works closely with MDA and Maryland Farm Bureau.
- Horticulture industry economical and statistical survey is underway.
- We thank UMD Extension and MDA for keeping industry abreast of emerging and recurring plant disease and pest issues – i.e. Spotted Lantern Fly, EAB, Boxwood Blight, etc.
- March 1st starts the ramp up for the busy season for the horticulture industry. Good outlook for the market prices will go up for nursery growers.
- A few issues with drift spray where crops are being damaged by neighboring farms that are spraying. The situation is predicted to get worse. People are working with MDA to identify where the spray is coming from and who is at fault.

Ag-Tourism- Taylor Huffman: Report focuses on spring and Agritourism opportunities. When people think of spring, they think of flowers. Small farms looking to diversify and add something extra to their farm market stand or CSA offerings should consider fresh cut flowers. There are over 35 large and small "Flower Farms" that belong to the Maryland Cut Flower Growers Association. They meet three times each winter, in Annapolis, to discuss ideas, issues and stories. There are several opportunities to supplement farm income with fresh cut flowers. From U-Pick flower fields, to supplying local vendors for weddings and events, offering on the farm flower arranging classes, to offering Fresh Cut flowers for sale at local stands and CSAs. These are all forms of Agritourism with flowers!

Another growing trend in other parts of the Country is the Sunflower & Wine Festivals. Wineries are planting Sunflower fields and customers are using these for picture opportunities all while enjoying their locally sourced wine. All great ways to get the public on the farm! Social media is a huge help in advertising ag-tourism. An issue aroused when a farm planned a sunflower patch next to their creamery for people to take pictures and they did not make a path for wheel chair accessibility and a group of

women went after the farm. Handicap accessibility is a big issue for some farms because it is not always easy to say add a path or build a ramp.

Consumer- Carroll Shry: The attendees of the Maryland Agricultural Dinner demonstrated a strong consumer demand for Maryland agricultural commodities. There was a very positive attendance for the celebration to honor The Linthicum Family, Maryland's 2018 Agricultural Family of the year.

One of the biggest potential markets for hemp products CBD. CBD is a non-psychoactive compound in cannabis that is low in THC. CBD is generally marketed as relief for various illnesses and symptoms such as epilepsy, post-traumatic stress disorder, nausea and other disorders. There is some concern that some products derived from industrial hemp, such as hemp oil, are being marketed as having comparable therapeutic uses to CBD extracts, but this issue is unresolved. However, research into potential uses for industrial hemp-derived CBD products is an important area being investigated and was included in 2018 Farm Bill. Hemp is a biobased material for industrial history of high quality rope and cloth as well as biobased foodstuff as a great resource for animal agriculture production. As well as people touting its products shift from fossil fuel to biofuels.

BMW has indicated they plan to bio based products on the interior of their automobiles rather than the ecobased products i.e. plastics and petroleum based products. In accordance to Dr. Larry Smart of Cornell University they have forecasted 20,000 ac of plant-based protein of Hemp less productive farmland up 50,000 in ten years and he forecasted that CDB oils mkt to 5,000 to 10,000 ac in 5-10yrs.

Chesapeake Bay: Pa. has contributed to the pollution to the Bay and has had trouble meeting their program goals. Now they have a broader plan to commit to get 95,000 ac of buffers by 2025 according to the Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Director Dunn. And they are also assigning ¼ of their service foresters to establish the buffers.

Dairy I- Tim Bishton: In 2018, 2,731 dairies closed in Maryland and 300 in Pennsylvania. There were a lot of losses last year. Received a letter from the American Dairy Association Northeast about a potential employee on a farm that was hired and that employee took some pictures of the facility that could be used against them. The facility was trying to stay on top of the issue. This is a great reminder to be vigilant on who you are hiring and bringing into your facility. There is a check list of things to look out for when bringing someone into your operation. We were hoping to get an update on the Antibiotic bill (SB471/HB672), but it is currently constantly changing and there is no update at this time.

Dairy II- David Pyle: While the dairy industry is still depressed, markets are showing some positive positions in the last half of the year. Farms are continuing to liquidate at a rapid pace. Dairy cows and heifer inventories are decreasing, which will allow the market to correct itself. As of Jan. 1, dairy cow inventory was at 9.35 million down 0.8% from a year ago. The more alarming stat is the heifer inventory being down for a 3rd year straight. With nearly 67,000 less heifers entering the milking herd compared to a year ago. Also, farmers are continuing to breed more with beef breeds and raising fewer heifers. Therefore, less opportunity for cow inventories to grow for a few years to come. Last, several farmers testified on SB922, which prohibits anyone to sell or advertise a product labeled milk or milk product if the product does not come from a cow or other type of an animal. While NC has passed a similar bill in 2018, there is also federal legislation happening at the same time.

The group discussed Governor Hogan's announcement of including \$1.5 million in his budget to cover full premiums for farmers to participate in the new federal Dairy Margin Coverage program, which will allow MD farmers to leverage up to \$17 million in federal funds this year. Farmers can sign up for the

program in their local FSA offices starting in June. More information and answers will be available in the near future. Steve Connelly is the contact person for more information.

Direct Farm Market- Keith Ohlinger: Mental health workshops were held last week and were very well attended. Part of the session included QPR training: Question, Persuade and Refer to help assess people who may be at risk for suicide. Farming is a hard business where your mental and physical health and your family are the most important thing. You have to do what you have to do to save your family. Supporting each other and working together is what will help us in the future. It is a wet and cold season and it is difficult with the birth of cattle and trying not to destroy and disturb the soil structure. LEAD Maryland Class 11 started. Soil Conservation Districts and Farm Bureau have been very active reaching out to the general public to help explain what farmers do. A realtor class took place focusing on ACREs and the Right to Farm Act. The realtors are redoing their right to farm disclosure to make sure as many people get it as possible. Doing regular trips to what is called the green fest. It is an environmental get together every spring and we make sure farm bureau and the soil conservation districts are there. For the first time ever Farm Bureau was invited to participate in county spending affordability advisory committee where they analyze county finances and reports and make suggestions. There is a spotted lanternfly training course online to allow you to travel in and out of Pennsylvania.

Farm Bureau- Jonathan Quinn: Farm Bureau is busy in Annapolis working on bills to protect Maryland farmers.

- **HB532/SB744** creates a commission that is to develop a blueprint for solar energy in Maryland. This would be an 18 member commission with the farm bureau having 2 representatives, 1 from the eastern shore and 1 from western Maryland. HB277 would allow the Governor of Maryland to impose a gas emission fee on the sale of motor fuel if Virginia or DC imposed one, this would cause cost of production to go up for Maryland farmers.
- **HB904 Agricultural Nutrient Management Monitoring and Enforcement** – has 4 parts:
 - addresses non-compliance with nutrient management laws. Fines planers who fail to submit soil samples for the PMT and higher fines for farmers who don't have plans and fines when a farmer uses phosphorus where PMT prohibits it.
 - requires CAFOs and MAFOs to use only certified commercial haulers for the removal of manure.
 - requires a person must have a discharge permit from MDE before any construction can begin.
 - requires continuous water quality monitoring on lower eastern shore at 9 locations.Most of this bill was gutted before the hearing last Wednesday afternoon before the house hearing.
- DNR is still taking comments on their website for the 15 year deer management plan until March 15th. Many Sunday hunting bills this year.

Field Crops: Donald Maring: EPA has proposed a rule ending the summertime ban on higher blends of ethanol gasoline. US Trade Representative Bob Lighthizer said he hopes the USA China trade deal is just weeks away although there are still some major issues to be resolved and if they aren't resolved in our favor there will be no deal. Brazil's first corn crop is down from last year but their overall corn production is expected to be up with the second crop they plant after soybeans. Their soybean crop is expected to be 5% less than last year's record setting crop with exports to be down slightly also. Corn and soybean prices have been sideways to down while wheat has seen pretty good gains. It seems most farmers will stick with their same rotation of crops while there has been talk that some may switch to more beans just because of the lower inputs required to plant. While at the Commodity Classic two weeks ago in Orlando there was talk that some farmers may have trouble getting financing this spring. Also it didn't seem to matter who you talked to and where they were from everyone was glad to be

done with 2018. Much of the country was too wet just as we were. Corn has been moving very well, it seems demand at the Virginia mills has been very high with some of them opening to receive corn on Saturdays a couple times since the first of the year. There will need to be a lot of time spent this spring fixing ditches and waterways that have washed out from all the heavy rains last summer and fall.

Food Processing- Cheryl DeBerry: The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments released a study this winter called, “What Our Region Grows to Eat and Drink” and provides ‘snapshot’ of the state of the D.C. region’s agriculture, as well as the general food production and demand and economic contributions. Full report is downloadable online:

<https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2019/01/18/what-our-region-grows-farmers-market-farming-urban-agriculture/>.

The minimum wage bill is one of big concern – if agribusinesses, agritourism, Ag co-ops are exempt, will that include farm food processors as well? It’s going to be tough on all small businesses if it goes through.

Forestry- Elizabeth Hill:

- Things are continuing to change on the forestry front. Dorchester Lumber Company goes to public auction on April 27th. It is unknown at this point whether it will be sold as an ongoing operation or pieced out and hauled away. Landowners, loggers and longtime employees are all very concerned. It is very saddening to me.
- Today marks 5 years since my father passed away. I cannot stress to everyone in this room how important succession planning is. Death and retirement are always hard topics to talk about especially in a family business or farm, but take the time to work out the issues, don’t leave a mess for the next generation to clean up. The impacts of a business closing reach far beyond your family.
- Luckily because the wet weather has slowed everyone down, loggers that normally supply the sawmill in Linkwood have been able to haul into the other area sawmills to meet their demands. This is very likely to change once it dries up and loggers are more productive.
- On a brighter note, several folks are returning from EuroBioFor 2109: A Learning Tour of European Advances in Biothermal Energy with Value to Forest Health. The group toured facilities in Austria, and with the goal of being able to learn how and why these systems work and can we apply this knowledge to create or maintain markets in Maryland. I have had some conversations with the participants and found it interesting that everyone in Austria knows about forestry. All woodland is managed, regardless of size. Foresters are prominent people that write plans which landowners are required to follow. They view their forests as national assets and therefore their health is in state interest to ensure. The Austria Ag people were shocked to learn that we subsidize the production of crops and conservation. CRP and EQUIP were of great interest to them. They instead subsidize the markets. They make sure that people have places to sell their products, and then they step back and get out of the way, a very different approach but, it is working for them. Austria has set a goal to be energy independent by 2050 and is well on their way. The creation of these woody biomass plants account for more than 50% of their renewable energy production. These plants are scattered throughout the landscape, not only making them self-sufficient, but also adding green jobs, and providing environmental benefits. I am looking forward to hearing about some of the more technical aspects of the trip, and seeing how it could be applied here in Maryland.

Poultry I- Mike Levengood:

- DPI hosted dozens of legislators and their staffers for lunch and conversation about how Maryland's General Assembly can help the chicken industry and growers at Chicken Day in Annapolis on March 1. The focus for all has been the legislative session and working to improve the bills effecting the industry. The burden of this legislation continues to put pressure on the industry and raise the cost of operating for the farmer and the integrator. This continues to make us

uncompetitive in the industry. The result of being uncompetitive is extended layouts, with 4 out of the 5 integrators with operations off Delmarva it is easy for them to cut back here and keep other operations full.

- The largest poultry show in the US (IPPE) was held in Atlanta on February 12th-15th. It set many records this year with over 600,000 sq. of exhibition space, over 1400 exhibitors and 32,000 plus attendees. This shows the strength of the industry as a major protein supplier in the world. Jim Perdue, chairman and advertising spokesman for Perdue Farms, was inducted into the American Poultry Historical Society's Poultry Industry Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the recent IPPE. This is the first ever father and son to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.
- April 16: DPI Booster Banquet will be held in Salisbury at the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center.
- The University of Maryland Extension has created a one-day workshop for new and existing poultry farmers on Delmarva focusing on poultry farm management on Thursday, April 25 at the Lions Community Center in Snow Hill. The topics that will be addressed are: farm management, site management and maintenance, best management practices, mortality, manure handling, litter management, windbreaks/vegetative environmental buffers, finances/recordkeeping, nutrient management, inspections and emergency preparedness. The workshop will also share all the information in a memory stick to take back to the farm for future reference. Certificates of completion will be awarded to each participant.

Poultry II- Michelle Protani-Chesnik:

- The weather has continued to be unpredictable in both temperature and rainfall. We have had over 4 inches of rain in the first 12 days of March. Temperatures have been from 16 degrees to 65 degrees.
- Layout times for 3 of the integrators have improved and are down to 3 weeks or less, which is healthy for the birds. I wish I could say this progress was the same for all, but it is not. I suspect cash flow difficulties will continue. Some will catch up. For others with long lay outs recovery will be harder. Agriculture as a whole is still in a downward cycle nationwide and the impact is felt in all sectors and all levels.
- Bird health continues to be good overall and we are still able to grow without LT vaccinating. That is a great boost to poultry health.
- I attended the Maryland Agricultural dinner in January. It was a well-attended event. Since our last meeting, I attended the Taste of the Eastern Shore dinner. That was a good place to meet legislators and talk about Ag and family farms on the shore.
- Last week participated in The Pew Charitable Trust Event in Washington DC: the Pew Superbug Fly In, which is about Antibiotic Resistance. The goal is to bring attention to the problem and to speak with legislators to hopefully increase funding to USDA and CVM. There is hope that with funding to create an agricultural version of BARDA (Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority). Most people do not realize that USDA receives 1/30 of the funding that NIH and CDC receive. If we are to improve human health we must also look at animal health, as they go hand in hand. The few medically important antibiotics we have for people are the same ones for animals. The antibiotics we have are all derivatives of one's developed about 40 years ago. Our group met with Chelsea Shively USDA- APHIS, Kim Cook USDA ARS and Bill Flynn FDA CVM on the animal side and Michael Craig CDC, Mark Albrecht BARDA and Ann Eakin from NIH, it was an opportunity to understand where they are and what is needed. One message that was clear is that antibiotic development is lacking. Companies prefer to develop drugs that have a better ROI, such as cancer drugs or drugs that a person will use for a life time once they start. Companies do not want to spend millions to develop antibiotics that will be used sparingly and with stewardship. I worked to explain the changes that have occurred on family farms and the fact that antibiotics in integrated poultry if used are under the guidance of a veterinarian and by prescription. I explained many operations are no antibiotic ever and other such as mine are under CRAU programs (certified responsible antibiotic use). Commercial poultry only accounted for 4.71 percent

of total animal antibiotic use last year. The Pew group includes: survivors (those who have had resistance or lost a loved one to antibiotic resistant bugs) doctors, epidemiologists, veterinarians and those of us who are farmers or ranchers. I worked to put a face on the family farmer, speak to animal welfare and how in order to feed an ever growing population, the need for integrated agriculture. I visited 10 Senators and Representatives and discussed the needs for increased funding, USDA alone is facing a five percent decrease in funding in the current federal budget. I hope that in the end I will have given a small glimpse of animal Ag to these folks and their staff. I also hope they will have a better perspective of what integrated agriculture really is instead of viewing us as factory farms. I also attended a briefing on the Hill. Fixing a Broken Market: Encouraging Antibiotic Research and Development to Protect the Public's Health. This was presented by Helen Boucher from ISDA (International Swaps and Development) and Tufts and included folks from Merck and Entasis Therapeutics.

- On the home front it appears that the Community Healthy Air Act will be defeated thanks to the proactive effort of Delmarva Poultry establishing a study with the Keith Campbell Foundation and the Maryland Department of the Environment. This ambient Air monitoring study should be up and running by late summer and last for a year. Senate Bill 546 which is the nutrient, CAFO and overall soup to nuts let's get poultry bill is under negotiations and hopefully a livable bill will come out of this. The Antibiotic Bill is still not settled. The constitutional amendment for Healthy Air/ Environment (I fear this the most) looks like it has died in the house.

Turf – Thomas Warpinski: 2018 was the wettest year on record in Maryland and seems so far 2019 is continuing this trend. Turfgrass statewide really suffered from this overabundance of moisture. Heavy disease pressure, standing water, water logged soils causing very shallow root systems and root dieback. Quality sod is in tight supply in our multistate area. There is adequate acreage but many of those acres have been damaged and set back. Sports fields, commercial and residential lawns have all been impacted. Take notice of lawns in general, you'll see a lot of bare ground now that last year's weeds and crabgrass have decomposed. Much of this can be attributed to the successful anti-fertilizer campaigns of recent years creating a general decline in turf quality. Malnourished plants, of just about any type, are much more susceptible to environmental extremes. March 1st marked the date that fertilize applications can resume on Maryland lawns, parks and sports fields. Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine in DE, PA, and NJ. Basically the entire area surrounding Philadelphia. Businesses planning on doing routine business in the affected area must obtain a permit. One company representative must receive quarantine training and pass along safe working measures to employees entering the area. The Turfgrass Producers International Conference took place February 18 – 20, 2019 in Charlotte, NC. Many educational sessions were offered. Attendance was very strong. HB 275 and SB 270 (identical bills) pick up after last year's failed attempt to ban the use of Chlorpyrifos (perhaps better known in the industry under the name Dursban), including insecticides containing Chlorpyrifos and seeds treated with Chlorpyrifos effective January 2020.

Presentation Notes:

- Right to farm laws protect against the idea of nuisance suits.
- The right to farm laws came about in the 70s and 80s.
- In the 60s and 70s people moved out to the country. There were a number of farmers being sued for creating nuisances and they lost being forced to close or move.
- Laws were used by state legislators as a means of protecting farms against said nuisance suits.
- All 50 states have a Right to Farm law - they are different but have similar features protecting farms against nuisance.
- These laws do not protect you unless you are a farmer - you must be using your property for agricultural purposes.

- Example: storing septage waste on your property is not covered if you do not use the farm for farming.
- If you change the operation of your farm you still get the original establishment date.
- The farm must be operational for at least a year to be covered by the right to farm.
- If a farm changes hands it then has to be with that new person for a year to be protected.
- Ongoing issue in Iowa, if the farm was there before the neighbors and they try to sue you are usually good but if you open a farm after the neighbor has been there they may be issues.
- The cause and effect of adding a hog farm, how neighbors will feel and accept the farm.
- You are not actually suing the farm owner, you are suing a larger company (e.g., Smithfield).
- The NC nuisance lawsuits were all based on smells that were apparently coming from the hog farm, dust that the farm can stir up.
- Complainers are running people out of their farms. Kids are not wanting to take over the family farms and are worried and don't want to deal with everything.
- In order to be covered individuals must follow the ordinance of each county.
- There is a lack of education of consumers and the general public as to what the Department of Agriculture and farmers do.
- The right to farm law also protects seafood operations, follows under general right to farm operation.
- Statue of repose: work in the defendants favor, once hit one year if you didn't bring a law suit it doesn't matter they are now protected under the right to farm law, focuses on immunizing the alleged injuring party from long-term liability, and thus may even be based on elapsed time from an event, even if the potential cause of action cannot reasonably be discovered until a later date
- The ACRoS program at MDA is staffed by Kay-Megan Washington.
- GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY/PROGRAM.

Staff Updates

Deputy Secretary Julie Oberg:

- It is National Ag Week – thank you for what you do every day to help promote agriculture and to produce a healthy and safe food supply all while preserving our natural resources and protecting it for future generations. Tomorrow is National Ag Day and Secretary Bartenfelder and I will be reading the book “Right This Minute” and talking with Caroline County students about where their food comes from.
- As of March 1, people can start to spread manure so coinciding with that, the MDA launched its Manure Happens campaign, which includes a number of creative social media and print ads, which are also on our website MDA.Maryland.gov/manure.
- On January 18, MDA started accepting applications for the Industrial Hemp Program. The new program requires farmers to partner with institutes of higher education to develop research projects. Farmers would then be allowed to sell their crops for profit at the end of the growing season. So far Salisbury University and Chesapeake College have the first projects approved by the program and we have heard that there are several others interested. We look forward to working with them as the program unfolds. The Federal farm bill however will change all and make hemp a commodity. Del. Cassilly and Del. Fraser-Hidalgo have sponsored legislation that is moving forward to ensure MD law is in compliance with the new federal law. It will eliminate the need for the institute of higher learning. Once the MD law is passed, MDA will developed a program that will need to be approved by the MD Attorney General and Governor, then approved by USDA. USDA is expected to announce program requirements this summer. We are working with NASDA to push USDA to announce the requirements quickly.

- We have five departmental bills and are monitoring a number of others. One particular issue we are monitoring is palmer amaranth. Last year house bill 515 required MDA to conduct a summer study to assess the impact of this invasive weed and to determine the best approach to minimize that impact. Delegate Jeff Ghrist has sponsored a bill that based on that report would give MDA the authority to add palmer amaranth to the noxious weed list. Additional information about departmental bills, including testimony is available on our website.
- Responded to question from Elizabeth Hill regarding the FY20 Budget Bill that withholds \$200,000 of MDA's General Fund Appropriation until MDA, in coordination with the **Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc.**, submits a comprehensive Maryland agriculture strategic plan to the budget committees. MDA is working on a draft strategic plan for the MD Department of Agriculture that included input from the MD Ag Commission and other ag leaders. MDA will present the proposed plan to the Commission for input and discussion at the June 12 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 1st by Elizabeth Hill 2nd by Tim Bishton, meeting adjourned
Respectfully Submitted by Jessica O'Sullivan.