



# 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

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## Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes September 9, 2020

### Present:

Ag Education: Martha Clark  
Agritourism: Kelly Dudeck  
At Large Ag Service: Matthew Levi Sellers  
At Large Ag Service: Frank Allnutt  
Direct Farm Market: Amy Crone  
Equine: Michael Pons  
Field Crops: Donald Maring

Livestock: Sean Hough  
Nursery I: James Raley  
Poultry II: Michelle Protani-Chesnik  
Turf: Tom Warpinski  
Viticulture: Matthew Corey Spies

### Absent:

Agribusiness: Thomas Mullineaux  
Aquaculture: Talmage Petty  
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.  
Dairy II: David Pyle  
Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn  
Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry  
Forestry: Elizabeth Hill

Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet  
Organic Farming: Matthew Nielsen  
Poultry I: Michael Levensgood  
State Grange: Clifford Newsome Jr.  
University: Dr. Craig Beyrouthy  
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks

### MDA Staff:

Hans Schmidt  
Julie Oberg  
Cassie Shirk  
Kevin Conroy  
Joe Bartenfelder  
Rich Colburn  
Megan Guilfoyle

### Guest/Speakers:

Allison Roe  
Stacy Kubofcik  
Steve McHenry  
Dan Sweeney  
Sean Clougherty

### Approval of Minutes:

June minutes were approved 1<sup>st</sup> by Michelle Protani-Chesnik and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Warpinski.

## Commodity Reports:

### Martha Clark- Ag Education:

- Work has begun on a Strategic Plan for Maryland FFA – focusing on four main goals: Transition to virtual events; focus on recruitment/membership; increase number of members receiving awards; engage State Officers in a meaningful, well-rounded year of service. Stakeholder input is requested by Aug. 31. Please let me know if you'd like a copy of the draft plan.
- Ag Tag Gaiters have been printed and are being shipped! With 12 partners we raised \$2,850 to cover the cost of production. Thank you to Joe and Cathy Dymek for your leadership gift, which put us over the top!
- Call with MD Horse Industry Board resulted in plans for Horse Discovery Center lesson plans being updated – MHIB has submitted a Rural Maryland Council grant to support the work.
- Work on DPI grant is complete – staff created lesson plans around “The Perfect Chicken Sandwich.” • Completed final report for MSDE Perkins grant which supports MD FFA.
- Grants – Applied to Maryland Soybean Board; RMC/MAERDAF; spoke with MD Egg Council about support of egg game; touched base with Scot Harlowe at Byrd Foundation; touched base with Katie Ward at Farm Credit Foundation. Applied for \$50,000 operations grant from MD DHCD thanks to a lead from John Sullivan!
- Ag-infused Playground – held first workgroup meeting.
- Banquet planning has begun! We need your help this year to source good silent auction items which can be delivered easily.
- Meetings with MD FFA, MD Horse Industry Board, MD Ag Teachers Association, Project Green Classrooms, Rural Maryland Council, State Fair U-Learn Committee, MD Council for Ag Education, Days of Taste, MD Egg Council, MNLGA, Chesapeake Bay Trust, MD Dept. of Commerce, MAEF Lab Teachers, MD Farm Bureau.
- Upcoming Important Events & Dates:
  - Sept. 8 – MAEF Executive Committee
  - Sept. 9 - 2020 Golf Tournament – in person and virtual
  - Sept. 22 – MD Ag Council
  - Sept. 27 – Farm to School Week
  - Oct. 1 – MAEF Elementary Ed Committee
  - Oct. 8 – MD Council for Ag Ed Meeting
  - Oct. 12 – MD FFA Board Meeting
  - Oct. 15 – MAEF Board Meeting
  - Nov. 5 – MAEF Banquet – virtual
  - Nov. 10 – MAEF Executive Committee
  - Dec. 17 – MAEF Board Meeting
- MAEF Ag Tag gaiters are currently in production and should be done by the end of this week. We have already received \$2800 from various organizations who requested a tag, covering the cost of production and allowing for the sale of additional gaiters.
- Currently promoting Ag Literacy, Golf Tournament, and the 1989 Society fundraiser.
- Online AG activities have been completed and assigned to a designated page within the website.
- The website also hosts a live Google Document with all the MAEF AG activity lessons from the expedition site. Teachers will be able to make a copy and access the live document for their own classroom pages.
- August's focus will be on material for teachers to use for digital learning, including MAEF's own material.
- Focused promotion of the September golf tournament to increase attendance and introduce new format.
- The summer fundraising campaign has received over \$17,000 in the past month
- Through the summer campaign, we've also had community members pledging their support by purchasing Ag tags. Ag tag sales have gone up since the reopening of the MVA.
- Every Friday on social media we are asking the community for donations or to purchase an Ag tag after the MVA reopens.
- The Annual Calendar is complete and will be sent out by the end of the month.
- The 2020 Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament will be held on September 9, 2020 starting at 11:00.
- To adhere to social distancing guidelines the tournament will be modified by
  - Virtual award ceremony and raffle.
  - Super socially distant player option (play from any course during the month of September).
  - 8ft apart shotgun start o Endless burgers and dogs instead of the sit-down dinner.
  - Two beer drink tickets (with additional for purchase).
- Annual banquet will be held virtually during a month (TBD) in November.
- We are currently researching virtual methods for delivery as well as opportunities for additional donations/contests/silent & live auction methods.

- Looking for keynote speaker. We have suggested recordings from Gov. Hogan, Dr. Salmon, teachers, and partnering organizations.
- Hybrid Course, “Infusing Ag in the Elementary Classroom”: Fall course will run Oct 10 – Nov 25 (shortened semester from Goucher – my course content will not be affected, just my timeline).
- Lining up virtual workshop presenters and pairing with Peggy on a virtual tour for all participants with differentiated workshop sessions for elem. & middle.
- Mobile Science Labs: All labs booked for fall have been rescheduled to the spring, temporarily.
- Held a virtual meeting with Diana for lab teachers in order to share current status and options for spring, gather teacher thoughts and concerns.
- Working with Diana to update lab display boards on labs that require a refresh Coordinating lab teachers who are working on side projects (like Spanish translations, refreshing and creating extension resources for our labs and elementary Ed curriculum).
- Some of these documents are not lab specific and therefore will be featured on our website resources for parents and teachers to use. Compiling new and updating existing curriculum resources to send in targeted email campaign to teachers, administration, and district science coordinators. Providing these “ready-to-use” curricular resources to teachers for the fall is our main goal. Diana supporting with contact gathering and resource distribution.
- Showcase: All summer events either canceled or in holding pattern, Diana in contact with event contacts.
- Ag Literacy: Existing books and lessons featured in resources shared on social media and will be sent directly to educators & central office staff who can distribute.
- Calendar Contest: 2020-2021 calendar complete and sent to printer Winners and their teachers have been notified and sent their award/cash prize.
- Social Media Support: Standardized Google Doc of daily social media posts so that continued updates can be incorporated.
- This format makes it easy for teachers to grab and use our resources and adapt them for their students.
- Continue supporting Chase Ferguson, our social media intern, on ways that Ag elementary education can be highlighted over the summer for parents and students.
- Distance Learning – Hybrid Course, “Infusing Ag in the Elementary Classroom”: Adjusting and updating course content and resources for fall semester.
- Online payment site and Goucher registration site finalized and published so we can fully push for participants.
- Mobile Science Labs: Continue managing and engaging lab teachers on side projects which will directly impact resources we provide to schools.
- Keeping abreast on school re-opening plans & fleshing out options for ways we can virtually or safely visit schools in 2020-2021 school year (lab teacher safety is primary concern as most of our teachers are in at-risk demographics).
- Occasional meetings and email contact with AITC partners who also have mobile lab programs to continue to share resources and lab options.
- Meetings with AITC partners who have hosted virtual tours or PD so we may gather “best practices” for spring options.
- Recording and reporting PPP and FTE data to Susanne for accurate reporting down the line for loan forgiveness.
- Showcase: Addressing events that pop up on a case-by-case basis. Safety of our lab attendants and guests is primary concern in making any future decisions.
- Ag Literacy: RFP submitted to MAEOE for Feb. conference incorporating Ag literacy into existing Ag kits developed by Great Kids Farm.
- Reaching out to AITC partners in nearby states to collaborate on 2021 Ag Lit book choices before bringing them to committee for final decision.
- AITC State Contac: State Contact Leadership Summit will now be virtual in November
- Excellence in Teaching about Ag Award: Application form developed (formatted in a user-friendly way for easy application).
- Will be working with Amie and Chase to promote it Outreach Data (Institutions, Organizations, and Public Contacts).
- Attended virtual NSTA STEM 2020 conference and NSTA Distance-Learning Web Seminar. Acquired several usable ideas for future lesson/curriculum planning.
- Laura Menyuk from Great Kids Farm with Baltimore City Public Schools and Pam Hosimer (UMD Extension Agent/Master Gardener Volunteer) – partnering on one or more RFPs for MAEOE conference in Feb.
- LSS teachers, administrators, and central office personnel to share MAEF’s existing and always-evolving educator resources.

- Upcoming Important Events & Dates:
  - Oct. 10 – fall course opens.
- Past hybrid course participant, Bev Raynor, applied for and received a White Reinhardt grant towards Ag education curricular resources for her classroom.
- Google Doc formatted and added to website for ongoing, easy “grab-and-go” lesson stems/resources for teachers and parents to access (getting the word out about these resources will be major push for fall).
- Growth of our outreach capabilities as I am now a user on Constant Contact with the ability and plans to send on-brand, content-rich emails to stakeholders.
- Middle School Online Course: Changes in Goucher compressed semester schedule has resulted in changes to launch date to will be October 12 and run thru Nov. 23, 7 weeks. Registration links are ready to share via Goucher registrar.
- All modules are being adjusted to include more online resources and content for teachers working with virtual audiences. The field trip will now be virtual, shared platform with the elementary course teachers.
- Farm-Based Education: We are co-hosting weekly virtual meetings on Zoom with Shelburne Farms in VT for FBE educators and admin. Anyone may join but must register through Shelburne. See here for our topics, dates, and registration - <https://www.farmbasededucation.org/>
- Summer topics have focused on curriculum development that is equitable and inclusive, many excellent guest speakers, two work groups have spun off to work on specific topics through the fall (sustainable ag / FBE curriculum for college campus farms – 37 members representing colleges + anti-racist curriculum/decolonizing ag education, 28 members). National audience.
- Project Green Classrooms – Committee Work: Pre-Service Educators E-Lit/Ag Ed exploration elective.
- Green Schools “growing and learning” campus designs to share (national search) on a MD-based web source.
- Horse Discovery Centers Online Curriculum: Lessons from the original “Horses for Courses” are being transitioned to Soft chalk platform to be available to students and families online by October, Maryland Horse Month.
- New lessons being developed specifically for new platform.
- MAEOE Conference Ag Strand: Five confirmed proposals in the Ag strand, recruiting for 10.
- MAEOE conference will most likely be moving to an online format.
- Recruiting for pre-recorded farm tours and field demonstrations.
- Buzz: Starting its 11th year as of September.
- Accepting 2020-21 events, announcements, resources for all months through the academic year.
- Two additional users can access Constant Contact (Shannon, Amie) to make use of wide range of marketing tools Program Next Steps.
- Long Range Planning: Need to meet with directors to discuss and plan for annual grant cycles, potential projects, and team assignments – September?
- Need a secondary education meeting to discuss next steps for online course development for HS in our Goucher series – September?
- Upcoming Important Events & Dates:
  - Middle school course starts Oct. 12
- Milestones: 90 Zoom meetings since March 14.
- Program/Project Title: Supporting LSS in the hiring of new Agriculture Education Teachers.
- Program/Project Title: Supporting new and existing programs.
- Program/Project Title: Supporting Teachers through virtual professional learning.
- Program/Project Title: Leadership development for new MD FFA State Officer Team.
- Program/Project Title: Maryland FFA Association Strategic Plan Program Next Steps
- Program/Project Title: New teachers hired at Harford Tech/North Harford Hannah Schantz, Urbana-Rachel Summers; Southern Garrett-Bethany Meyers. Teaching position is still open at Hancock.
- Program/Project Title: Currently working with the teacher at the Center for Applied Technology, North (CAT-North) in Anne Arundel County to identify programs and facilities in Maryland which the design team could visit in preparation for designing the next generation CAT-North facility.
- Program/Project Title: Professional Learning for Teachers, Working with MSDE CTE Staff to provide workshops for Teachers/Advisors of Career and Technology Student Organizations in September. Also working with MATA Board to host AET Trainings for teachers in October.
- Program/Project Title: Held an orientation and photo shoot with the new MD FFA State Officer Team. Supported the Team as they participated in virtual trainings through the zoom platform including a four day National FFA Base Camp, team building training; a four day National FFA State Officer Summit and Advocacy Training which included virtual conference with legislators; a three day National FFA Checkpoint training focusing on virtual workshop development and communication and a five session (2 hours each) Joint CTSO Officer training with the MD FBLA and MD Skills USA Officer Teams.

- Program/Project Title: Leading the Development of a Strategic plan for the Maryland FFA Board of Directors and Association.
- Outreach: Coordinated the virtual meeting of the Maryland Council for Agriculture Education (MCAE).
- Hosting MD FFA Association, Alumni and Foundation Board meetings.
- Attending MSDE regular CTE Staff, CTE Directors, DCCR Staff meetings.
- Working with MSDE CTE Staff in developing a Joint State Officer Training program for all CTSO Student Officers throughout August.
- Attended MATA Board meeting. Working with MSDE CTE Staff in developing a Joint CTSO Advisor workshop series to be conducted in September.
- Attended NAAE Region VI virtual Conference Attended NASAE virtual workshop on Diversity and Inclusion.
- Attended Prince George's Co PAC planning meeting. Attending the Washington Co Ag. Marketing Committee meeting.
- Upcoming Important Events & Dates/Notes :
  - MSDE CTSO Advisor Workshops- September 16th & 23rd.
  - Hosting AET workshop for MD Ag Teachers- October 7th & 21st.
  - National FFA Virtual Convention- October 27-31, 2020.
- Milestones: Hosted the first virtual MD FFA State Convention June 23-26 via Maryland FFA site on YouTube.
- News from the State Superintendent (from her July 22nd news conference)
  - Reopening of Schools: Local systems have the flexibility to determine, in consultation with their local health officers, how they will open, and which groups of students and staff will be able to re-enter buildings. Within the framework of local control, the state will set a series of guardrails for school systems.
    - Follow CDC guidelines.
    - Follow state health official protocols.
    - Meet a series of benchmarks before reopening.
  - To address the digital divide, \$100 million has been dedicated to equipping students with up-to-date devices and connectivity, with another \$100 million invested in tutoring and learning programs to address learning loss due to time away from direct instruction and teacher intervention.
  - To enhance broadband access for Maryland students, \$10 million has been allocated to the Governor's Office of Rural Broadband, which will construct a wireless education network in Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, and on the Eastern Shore. In total, the Governor has now committed \$20 million in CARES Act funding to expand rural broadband and an additional \$5 million for urban broadband.
- News from the MSDE Environmental, Agricultural, and Natural Resource (EANR) Career Cluster
  - MSDE Career and Technical Education has been tasked with revising programs of study from 4-course sequences to 3-course sequences, where applicable.
  - Certified Professional Horticulturist (CPH)
    - From Vanessa Finney: "Beginning this fall, we will be implementing a pre-test for the students. A passing grade will need to be achieved on this test in order for students to qualify to take the full CPH Basic exam. Logistical plans are not 100% complete, however I can share the following at this point.
      - The pre-test will be given by the teacher and it will be an on-line test. We are working on establishing the test bank and actual testing platform now.
      - A grade of 70% will be required in order for the student to pass the pretest. The test is expected to include both the traditional multiple choice and plant ID components.
      - The full CPH Basic exam will shift to an online platform, as well. It is expected that the currently planned October exam will be the first online test offered."
- Expanding online professional learning opportunities.
- Looking into working with CASE Institutes to provide evaluations for the fall when students return.

#### **Kelly Dudeck- Agritourism:**

- Many agritourism destinations in Maryland have seen a jump in attendance during the COVID19 pandemic, as well as other parts of the country.
- Several states have begun to implement new guidelines for agritourism as we enter in the fall season – this guidance applies to activities such as Corn mazes, Pick-Your-Own Fruit & Vegetable Operations, Hayrides and Haunted Houses.

- The Maryland Department of Agriculture is currently working on their own set of guidelines for agritourism.
- U-pick operations and other on-farm attractions are doing very well this year. Most have implemented COVID protocols and are following CDC guidance.
- Fall operations are gearing up for a busy season.
- Wineries and farm breweries are also doing okay (places with outdoor space). Business certainly ticked up compared to early in the season, most have not recouped their losses, but otherwise remaining steady going into fall.
- Montgomery County has been slow at opening up businesses because their COVID-19 numbers are trending higher than the State.
- There have been farm breweries, and other establishments, visited by the Health Department because of complaints where more than 50 people were gathering. However, once the farm brewery obtained a food license, the farm brewery was designated as essential as long as they provided 200 feet per person like a grocery store must do.
- A lavender farm in Deep Creek said they had their best summer ever – sales were up something like 30-50% and their visitation numbers are up a lot. In general, Garrett County had more visitors this summer once the vacation rentals were able to open (folks driving from DC/metro area rather than flying elsewhere) and so their agritourism sites (that were open) benefitted. It remains to be seen if the fall sites will benefit likewise.
- Petting farms or tours are struggling. Sunflower farms seem to be popular. Great social media presence.
- Agritourism pick your own operations did very well this summer, but not having field trips has been really tough and there is a lot of worry surrounding fall festival activities.

#### **Frank Allnut- Ag Services:**

- Sixth Annual Agricultural & Environmental Law Conference will be offered online. The online sessions will be free of charge & run on November 2, 9 and 16 from 2-4 p.m. For more information or to register, visit [alei2020conference.eventbrite.com](http://alei2020conference.eventbrite.com)

#### **Levi Sellers- Ag Services:**

- July and August in Maryland this year have been extremely hot and actually set an all-time record in July for the most consecutive days above 90 degrees in the last 126 years (25 days, according to NOAA).
- These record high temperatures and low precipitation created struggles for farmers with late plantings of hemp seedlings. Now that we are in the month of September, temperatures have begun to lower and the hemp has begun to enter into the flowering stage. At this point testing of the cannabinoid content has begun so hemp producers can ensure they are producing hemp within the range of compliance for THC levels. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic a lot has happened over the past few months within the Hemp Industry both nationally and in Maryland.
- **MD Hemp CBD Research:** As I have mentioned in my previous reports, CBD's antiviral, anxiolytic and anti-inflammatory effects have shown some hope as a possible future treatment of coronavirus according to preliminary research conducted in Canada. An article released late July by the Baltimore Business Journal stated that the University Of Maryland School Of Medicine has launched a lab-based study to investigate if CBD could be used to help protect against excessive inflammatory responses from COVID-19 and expand upon the work of Canadian researchers at the University of Lethbridge. The researchers of this study are using a proprietary CBD formula produced by Baltimore-based firm bio Remedies MD to examine the interactions between CBD and the coronavirus. This collaboration has the potential to promote not just cannabinoid based therapeutics but also promote the Maryland Hemp industry. I will continue to report on this particular study as more information is available.
- **New MD Hemp Regs:** In early July, despite the struggles created by COVID-19 restrictions on office staffing, the MDA released their new proposed hemp regulations that were in line with the USDA's Interim Final Rule (IFR) which is set to go into effect Nov. 1. The USDA has received much opposition from the Hemp industry over concerns that the new regulations will cripple the developing industry. The national comment period for these new regs has been extended yet again for another 30 days (till October 31) given the overwhelming input that the USDA has received from the industry. There is currently a request from Colorado Republican Cory Gardner, a US Senator who represents the No. 1 hemp-producing state, to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue to delay the implementation of the IFR which he believes "seriously undermines this burgeoning industry".
- At the release of the MDA's new proposed hemp regulations a period for public comment was opened till August 5th. Kevin Atticks, founder of the Maryland Hemp Coalition, and myself had reached out to those involved in the Maryland hemp industry for input on the new drafted regulations and on July 21 a virtual meeting was set up by the MHC for interested parties to review the draft regs. Many topics had been discussed as areas of concern with the new draft regs. Comments were gathered from respondents in the

community and submitted to the MDA by August 4th on such topics as the addition of a “research license” (which new regs have not adopted from previous regs), clarifying the definition of some terms, grower reporting requirements, and the USDA’s own regulations in flux. On July 31, before the comment period had ended, the MDA had submitted their draft regulations to the USDA for approval and were approved on August 6th. This raised a lot of concern within the Maryland Hemp Community that the request for public comment by the MDA was more a matter of formality than a genuine request for input. As it stands now the regulations are set to begin Nov. 1 without revision from comments and concerns expressed by the Maryland hemp community.

- **DEA Proposes Hemp and CBD Regulations:** In August the DEA proposed its own IFR to establish amendments to the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) for hemp and CBD to bring its enforcement into compliance with the 2018 Farm Bill. The four main amendments include:
- Adding language stating that THC does not include “any material, compound, mixture, or preparation that falls within the definition of hemp.”
- Removing any CBD drug product from Schedule V status that has been approved by the FDA and contains CBD “derived from cannabis [with] no more than 0.1%... residual THC.”
- Removing import and export controls over hemp and its derivatives.
- Modifying the definition of “marihuana extract” to exclude substances that contain less than 0.3% delta-9 THC on a dry-weight basis.
- The DEA states that the IFR is intended to conform the agency's regulations with the statutory amendments to the CSA that have already taken effect and not to add additional requirements to the regulations. At first glance this appears to be the case but careful reading reveals that adoption and enforcement of the IFR could severely disrupt, and potentially destroy the hemp industry.
- This concern has been expressed by many within the national hemp industry and during the open comment period (open till October 20) clarification has been requested from the agency on their interpretation of the IFR in regards to “Work in Progress Hemp Extracts” (WIPHE). A WIPHE means extract of hemp in a partially processed state that is not intended for consumer use or consumption. The IFR has essentially deemed WIPHE to be an illegal schedule 1 controlled substance.
- As a result of specific wordage within the IFR and CSA a cannabis derivative, extract or product that exceeds 0.3% delta-9 THC limit is a schedule 1 controlled substance, even if the plant from which it was derived contained 0.3% or less delta-9 THC on a dry weight basis. By taking this position the DEA is pulling the rug out from under the entire industry because WIPHE is a necessary step and component of all consumer hemp/CBD products.
- Fortunately, it is not set in stone along with the USDA’s IFR. With continued open dialogue between industry leaders and regulators it is hopeful that common ground of mutual understanding can be met to assist in the progress of the developing industry. Given the current state of our country we need regulation that will allow for the increase in jobs and development of new lucrative industries to help stimulate our economy and restore the American dream.

#### **Amy Crone- Direct Farm Market:**

- Farmers markets continue to implement social distancing guidelines and following guidelines – many have the first hour of market reserved for immuno-compromised and elderly shoppers.
- Many also turning to online marketplaces to have customers place pre-orders to pick up at the market / establishing drive-thru pickup options.
- On-farm markets and pick-your-own operations continue to innovate and figure out ways to schedule folks to have separate times and enable social distancing as well as implementing curbside pickup.
- With the increase in SNAP participants due to the pandemic, direct-marketing farmers and markets are taking advantage of a USDA program to accept SNAP directly.
- State Program: <http://dhs.maryland.gov/bureau-special-grants/mobile-point-sale-equipment-program-mposep/>
- USDA-funded program: [www.marketlink.org](http://www.marketlink.org)
- 25% increase from last year in SNAP redemption via farmers markets and direct marketing farmers nationwide; 200% increase in benefits issued from 2019 in February 2020.
- Most conferences that would be attended by farm/farmers markets will be online between now and the spring of 2021.
- [NAFMNP](#) changing to series of seminars.
- [NAFDMA](#) online.
- [United Fresh Produce Association](#) online.
- MDA / UMD / counties continue to provide certification services for these operators online as well – GAP in particular, as well as food safety trainings and other services to be able to sell direct to customers via the farm or farmers market.

**Michael Pons- Equine:**

- October is MD horse month.
- Five star event cancelled till next year.
- Thoroughbred races at laurel open May 30<sup>th</sup> but restricted no public only horsemen and limited owners
- Derby run last Saturday the first time in September had no fans but 1500 horsemen and owners.
- The Preakness will be no public and limited to horsemen and owners
- Even with Covid and the limited attendance the races will continue in that there is still online and telephone wagering.
- The MD fund started making payments since March they did cut percentages a little but cash is starting to flow to businesses again.
- Yearling sales started in Kentucky today, Keeneland Yearling sales starts Monday and is the largest horse sale in the world with two weeks of sales and Maryland sales are the Monday and Tuesday after the Preakness.
- Limited visitation at farms and riding centers are slowly opening up to the public.
- Everything overall is going well and in good shape.

**Donald Maring- Field Crops:**

- September 11, 2020 USDA Crop Production Report is expected to lower corn production about 380mil.bu.
- Ending stocks lower about 300mil.bu.
- Bean production expected to drop 130mil.bu. and carryover to drop 140mil.bu.
- Corn and soybean crop conditions are down slightly from last week but still better than last year.
- Western Iowa is experiencing extreme drought conditions with moderate drought conditions extending into northern Illinois and Indiana.
- Locally, northern Frederick County and NW Carroll County went nearly all of July and August with little to no rain.
- Crops in my area will still be good but not as good as last year.
- Combination of areas of drought and crop losses due to the Derecho Winds in Iowa and improved bean exports may help increase prices somewhat.

**Sean Hough- Livestock:**

- Nationally looking at market animal's cattle, sheep, and hogs. Cattle and sheep prices are holding good but market hog prices are down and depressed. This is due to not exporting to China as hoped.
- Seeing nationally that herds are being reduced because the market is not out there.
- Locally prices are same as nationally.
- Some positive for the kids was that even though fairs cancelled most counties were still able to hold Jr. Shows.
- Attendance at the shows was still good with numbers being up and lots of kids and animals attending.
- There were also virtual auctions for the kids and the auction prices were very strong and good so the kids benefited there.
- The MD State Fair also held a Jr. Show and had a virtual and in person auction.
- The biggest issues we are still seeing is the processors. Now that there are animals ready to go to market all the processors are full and backed up and you can't get dates to get animals processed.
- The processors are so busy because the higher demand.

**James K. Raley, Jr. - Nursery:**

- Mr. Raley informed the commission members that he has been appointed by Chairperson Protani-Chesnik as the Ag. Commission representative to the Maryland Soil Conservation Committee. The position was held previously by Mr. Keith Ohlinger.
- Contacted Mr. Jim Eichhorst, Executive Director of the Farm Service Agency in Maryland, regarding an issue with the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) for the Nursery Crops and Cut Flower sectors.
- Via the program, under both the CARES Act and the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act growers could apply for assistance for nursery crop and cut flower inventory that was shipped but subsequently spoiled or is unpaid due to loss of marketing channels between January 15, 2020, and April 15, 2020. The problem with the program is that for approximately two thirds of the United States there was little to no field cut flower production until May due to cold weather and the possibility of frost. Weather and frost concerns also suppressed nursery and greenhouse crop sales until after May 1<sup>st</sup> in much of the country. Consequently, a large segment of Nursery Crops and Cut Flower producers who suffered losses due to the pandemic are ineligible to apply for relief through the program.

- If Congress considers another round of pandemic stimulus legislation, the hope is that changes will be made to the CFAP program to extend the eligibility time period to June 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Eichhorst said that he will convey the problem with the program to the USDA.
- The Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS) announced it is shifting from an in-person show to an alternate platform for 2021 due to COVID-19 concerns, ongoing restrictions on large indoor gatherings, and the unforeseen unavailability at the Baltimore Convention Center. The 2021 show, initially scheduled for January 6-8, is unable to take place as an in-person event. MANTS organizers are, instead, working to provide an online platform where exhibitors and attendees can conduct business. In 2020, MANTS welcomed over 12,000 total registrants (including exhibitors) to the event. Additional details on MANTS 2021 plans will be shared in the weeks to come.
- Growers in Maryland are dealing with fungal diseases on crops, particularly mums and cut flower operations, due in part to above-average rainfall.
- Another exotic pest has arrived in Florida. The Plant Industry Division of the Florida Department of Agriculture recently posted a pest alert about the thrips *parvispinus* (Karny). This insect, which previously was found only in Europe and Indonesia, is an invasive pest that affects peppers, potatoes, eggplants, beans, shallots, strawberries and a number of ornamentals. Maryland producers may potentially see this insect impacting crops here in the future.

#### **Michael Levensgood- Poultry I:**

- The summer has been focused on hot weather and smoothing out operations due to all the pandemic issues. It seems we have settled into a balance of field inventory that matches the plants staffing issues.
- The following items are happening at DPI:
- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant/Litter App** – DPI has received the NFWF grant to create the litter matching app and market it to growers, farmers and brokers. Throughout the summer, I've been working directly with John Dawes at Chesapeake Commons and designers to build the basic needs of the app. This work is being conducted through a grant that the Campbell Foundation provided to Chesapeake Commons. Feedback was gathered from growers, grain farmers and brokers and a subcommittee of members of the DPI Environmental Committee. The app is close to beta testing and now that the grant has been approved, we'll proceed with final development and marketing throughout the next 6 months.
- **Ambient Air Monitoring Update** – As you saw through a press release we sent out in July, the stations are up and monitoring. You can find daily and monthly data by visiting this website - <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/AirQualityMonitoring/Pages/Lower-Eastern-Shore-Monitoring-Project.aspx>. Results thus far show the average and median hourly value of ammonia higher in Pocomoke City is higher than the other four sites and the fine particulate matter average and median hourly values are highest at the Princess Anne site. However, any of these numbers, including the maximum and minimum, are significantly lower than any MDE threshold (ammonia) or National Ambient Air Quality Standard threshold (fine and coarse particulate matter). We will continue to monitor the data and the environmental committee will look at what, if any, next steps should be considered.
- **Delmarva Land & Litter Collaborative** – the steering committee held its quarterly meeting in July. Due to COVID, the DLLC will not plan an in-person retreat. A survey was sent out to members to determine key topics of interest, including address gap between existing federal/state cost-share and grant programs that support BMPs and engage and educating state and local decision makers. I am the co-chair of the Policy Workgroup, along with Kim Coble of the MD League of Conservation Voters. We will be planning a virtual roundtable in October that focuses on the Impacts of COVID to the Chesapeake Bay WIP goals. I will also be one of several DLLC members that will be on a panel for the Chesapeake Bay Commission meeting on September 11 to share more about the DLLC.
- **House environmental and Transportation Committee Letter from DPI** – I have attached the letter from Smart on Pesticides Maryland to the Environmental and Transportation committee focused on Covid-19 protections for Maryland Farmworkers, Poultry and Seafood Processing workers that the working and living conditions for agricultural and meat processing workers facilitate the spread of COVID-19. I also have attached the DPI Letter that points out the facts of what the companies have been doing.
- **To showcase COVID-19 safety in plants, NCC looks to Delmarva** - The National Chicken Council's Chicken Check In is out with a new video features the many ways the industry has responded to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the national supply chain. [Drone footage](#) from a Maryland chicken processing plant helps share a never-before-seen perspective of a processing plant and the essential workers who help keep our country stocked with chicken.
- **Researchers seeking to link farm clusters and disabled students come up short** - Public health researchers with the University of Maryland told The News Journal they compared livestock farm locations to data about where students with disabilities live on the theory that they'd uncover some kind of connection. But, as DPI's Holly Porter noted after The News Journal ran a [credulous story](#) about their research, "the research paper's own clearly stated findings – I reviewed them – do not offer support for the

CAFOs-disabilities link the researchers posed." The researchers admitted their statistical work "demonstrated that CAFO counts, average nitrate concentrations, and the sociodemographic variables of interest were not statistically significant with regards to predicting disabilities outcomes." The News Journal ran our letter in the Aug. 29 issue; [read the full letter here](#)

- **Perdue Farms honored by HR group for COVID-19 response** - [Perdue Farms](#) has been named the winner of a Silver Stevie® Award for Most Valuable Employer in the COVID-19 Response category in the fifth annual [Stevie Awards for Great Employers](#), which recognize the world's best employers and the human resources professionals, teams, achievements and HR-related products and suppliers who help to create and drive great places to work.
- "As a fourth-generation, family-owned company in our 100<sup>th</sup> year, it's in our nature to put our people first, and COVID-19 is no exception," said Perdue Farms CEO Randy Day. "This recognition reinforces the commitment to our associates since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic when we responded swiftly by instituting extensive incremental safety measures and continued to add to these measures as CDC guidance evolved. In these uncertain times, we remain committed to keeping our associates supported, protected and informed as they continue to serve as frontline heroes in America's food supply chain."
- **Delmarva plants, mills, hatcheries earn safety awards** - The Joint Industry Safety and Health Council recently [recognized](#) 215 chicken and turkey facilities with safety awards. The companies were honored in recognition of their outstanding performance through the implementation of innovative and effective employee safety and health programs.
- Award consideration was based on injury statistics over three years (2017 – 2019) and an evaluation of written applications by academia and other safety experts.  
The Award of Distinction honors facilities for sharing the essential aspects of safety and health training, education and employee involvement and have incurred injury and incident rates equal to or greater than 75 percent less than Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) results. The Award of Honor honors facilities based on the same essential aspects but with incident rates between 75 and 50 percent less than BLS results, and the Award of Merit honors facilities that have incurred injury and incident rates between 50 percent and equal to BLS results.

On Delmarva, here are the companies and facilities that were recognized:

- **Award of Distinction:**
  - Allen Harim Seaford Feed Mill
  - Mountaire Selbyville Processing Plant
  - Perdue Hurlock Feed Mill
  - Perdue Salisbury Feed Mill
  - Perdue Accomac Processing Plant
- **Award of Honor:**
  - Mountaire Frankford Feed Mill
  - Mountaire Millsboro Feed Mill
  - Mountaire Princess Anne Hatchery
  - Perdue Bridgeville Feed Mill
  - Perdue Milford Processing Plant
  - Perdue Georgetown Processing Plant
  - Perdue Salisbury Processing Plant
- **Award of Merit:**
  - Allen Harim Dagsboro Hatchery
  - Tyson Temperanceville Processing Plant
- [Online registration for the Sept. 28-30 National Meeting on Poultry Health, Processing, and Live Production is now open.](#) Your \$99 registration provides access to **all three days** of the virtual meeting. (We're offering a special rate for DPI grower members - only \$49.)
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### **Michelle Protani-Chesnik- Poultry II:**

- July and August were long months for those of us involved in Poultry Agriculture. Weather was all over the board from hot and dry to humid and wet. The hardest part of those months was the uncertainty for poultry producers due to the impacts of Covid 19. The average age of birds going to market was higher than normal. Birds from our farms were 10 days older than the usual market age, but we got them out thanks to

the darkening of the houses and the restriction of feed. Electric costs were through the roof and it was physically hard handling bigger than usual birds. None of that mattered as long as they got out and were not depopulated.

- Lay out times have varied greatly from company to company over the past two months. One is at a six week lay out time, another at 40 days, and a third company was down to 18 days a couple of weeks ago. It all depends on market and backlog due to plant health issues. A main concern I have is what will happen to the institutional suppliers if schools and universities do not reopen or stay open?
- Depopulation of birds resumed for one integrator about a month ago. Plant problems curtailed processing and other integrators were unable to take the birds from them due to their own backlogs and marketing specifications. The process began as two houses a day going to various landfills. I understand that the landfills do not want any more birds and a protein company is hauling some as well as in house composting has resumed. These growers are facing the worst possible situation not only from a financial view but from a mental health view. Outreach is really needed to help these folks, I hope MDA and DDA as well as the company are stepping up to the plate to help them or find the help for them.
- The PMT Advisory committee meeting was held August 21, 2020. I sat in on this meeting. There was a lot good information and discussion on how and where poultry litter will go. Some key notes mushrooms which are 95% of our alternative use of poultry litter is not a viable alternative at this time due to the lack of restaurant sales. Many of these facilities are shuttered due to lack of sales. I have the understanding that if necessary we can still delay the full implementation. Another meeting will be held by year end.
- The Maryland Department of environment issued a letter stating the fees that would be required for CAFO coverage. This was very different than what was previously sent out. See attached letter. This is a hard economic hit in light of Covid: longer layouts, depopulation of flocks and the overall economic situation at hand. I find it ironic that with a State give out of supplemental unemployment of 600 dollars a week, we hit those who supply our food chain with a hefty bill. The decision was made by the Attorney General and an unmade committee, I would presume the AELR (Administrative, Executive & Legislative Review committee) on July 16, 2020. Sadly there was no outreach from any of our 4 Eastern Shore Delegation members who serve on that committee. If that is indeed the committee that did the review.
- The University Extension Staff continues doing a poultry lunch break on Wednesdays with zoom and teleconference. It is a good meeting and you don't have to be a poultry farmer to join in.
- I still have major concerns about the mental and physical wellbeing of the Ag community as whole. The financial concerns the pandemic has created for the farmers and while many of us in poultry production live in very rural areas and are used to a certain amount of isolation the past three months plus have pushed the limit for many. Even a mobile free checkup system in the areas to give folks a chance to get a free blood pressure or cholesterol check and information on counseling and mental health services. Farmers tend to push on and ignore pain, illness, and anguish. I will continue to seek help for this outreach.

#### **Cliff Newsome- State Grange:**

- This past summer was a major disappointment for the 4-H and FFA members throughout the state. The Maryland FFA Convention was held via zoom or you tube. Most of the county fairs were cancelled due to co-vid 19 restrictions. However a few counties and the Md. State Fair were allowed to have restricted livestock shows by members and parents only. They did not have the sponsorship of their 4-H or FFA programs. No other activities were allowed on the fairgrounds. Congratulations to them for their heart and courage to preserve.
- Many Granges could not meet for several months at their normal locations. As restrictions were lifted, they met via zoom or on the lawns of their Grange halls or at member's homes or farms where social distancing rules could be met. Our state session will be reduced to one day via zoom meeting on October 17, 2020. We normally have a 3 day conference. This year, we will have no lunches, degree ceremony, Agricultural Banquet or the Youth Breakfast. Our legislative meetings will be the major portion of our business. Likewise, our National Grange Convention has been reduced to two days at Valley Forge, Pa. It will be open to only national officers and delegates.
- Our local granges have done their best to help their communities by helping at local food distribution centers in their area. Milk was also bought in some areas where available. They have planted gardens and give vegetables to those in need. Some granges established free food pantries and free children libraries. Although there will be continued physical contact restrictions, we will continue to help people whenever and where-ever we can.
- The Grange is a-political! We do not support any political party or any candidate. We do stress that your voice and your vote counts. This year that fact will be more important than ever. Many U.S. Senators and Congressmen are running for re-election. Now is the prime opportunity to voice your approval or disappointment with their voting records. Remember those who promised to vote one way so let your vote speak to them.

**Tom Warpinski- Turf:**

- The weather again really causing havoc for turf here in Maryland. A dry June followed by an unusually moist July and August really set the stage for heavy fungus and disease pressure on turf farms and the entire Maryland green industry. Most storms were heavy downpours, some as much as 9 inches of rain, causing water pooling in lower areas of the fields, especially on the Eastern Shore farms. High temperatures, the warmest July on record, drastically increased the proliferation of Brown Patch and Pythium diseases. Most farms experiencing some delayed harvest or even loss of acreage. Many golf courses have lost turf due to excessive moisture, high temperatures and disease pressure. A number of Maryland courses are converting fairways to newer varieties of warm season grass, namely Bermuda grass. Home lawns also have suffered a lot of damage.
- Fall planting has begun on sod farms. Continued wet weather is making field tillage more challenging than usual. Home lawn renovation will be in full swing soon.
- Overall Turf sales have been at a slight decline statewide. Year over year new home permits are down over 18% as of June, which will translate to reduced sod demand through the fall.
- As of early June, most if not all seed companies report a good seed crop this year. Prices for Tall fescue seed may decline slightly.
- The Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration, thanks to the diligent efforts of our international organization Turfgrass Producers International, has finally officially recognized Sod as an agricultural product causing sod grower operations to be exempt from Hours of Service regulations.
- The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation and the Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association will be co-hosting the Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at the Oakmont Green Golf Course in Hampstead, Maryland.

**Corey Spies- Viticulture:**

- Starting harvest grape season so things are getting busy for the wine industry.
- Has been a pretty nerve racking months with all the rain because the grapes need dry weather and sun shine to ripen up well.
- Looks like a lot of people are going to leave fruit hang and not picking it or will have to add sweetness to the juice to make alcohol the right sweetness.
- All in all down about 30% with the weather and some diseases affecting the grapes.
- Birds also affect the ripening fruit depending on if nets were put on at proper time.
- Even with a lot of outside space the county is only allowing 50 people at a given time. The regulation is to keep people separated but with the space at the tasting room they would be able to have events but the county restrictions are preventing this.
- Started a new program where campers are looking to stay and are encouraged to try the local wine.
- Some sales are occurring online, and retail sales are up because people are not going to restaurants and bars to drink but buying and drinking at home.

**Staff Updates:****Cassie Shirk:**

- Still unsure what session will look like in January. Unsure if the leadership in the legislature has made a decision.

**Kevin Conroy:**

- The Pesticide regulation program is back up and running with drive through exams available to over 200 people. Looking to do another one in October.
- State Chemist lab and turf and seed are up and running. Able to clear back log from when the labs were shut down.

**Hans Schmidt:**

- PMT advisory committee had a meeting a week and a half ago presenting an update on progress that we are making highlighting changes to the manure transport program and the governor's commitment to putting additional funding in the program.
- Have been working on other areas to move manure to other locations. Animal waste technology converting manure to energy on Michelle's farm.
- Working on other things in the pipe line.
- In constant communication with the department of environment as they are going through the process through their new AFO permit. NOI were due back to MDE on September 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Cover crop program is in full swing at the moment. There is an early aerial application for corn and the deadline is September 10<sup>th</sup>. There will not be an extension this year for early application.

- Nutrient Management is putting protocol on ways of going out and do reviews on nutrient management plans. Some being virtual and others being requesting information from the farmers.
- Soil conservation districts adjusting to the Covid situation and are doing some teleworking, main priority is to keep staff safe.

**Julie Oberg:**

- Capital budget meeting.
- We have been operational from the Covid pandemic. Those that can work from home continue to work from home and those that can't are back in the office and in the labs.

**Joe Bartenfelder:**

- Been a very trying year with Covid 19 which everyone throughout the country has had to deal with but it has been tough for those in agriculture trying to change and adapt to do things differently. When you think you have adapted and changed then a tropical storm hits and changed the growing season around.
- The tropical storm was a game changer for those especially in the vegetable and poultry business.
- Poultry business has cut back this year.
- Private companies and growers have been under great strain and the MDA is trying to help relieve some of the pressure.
- There is the capital budget hearing later today.
- Salisbury animal health lab is well on its way.
- MDA is functioning. Those that need to be in the building are permitted to be in the building. The building is open and up and running.

**Daniel Sweeney:**

- SANG Small Acreage Next Generation program
- MVAPG (CAO) Maryland Value Added Producer Grant program

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