



**Maryland
Department of Agriculture**

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
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Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

Maryland Young Farmers Advisory Board

Agriculture | *Maryland's Leading Industry*
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**Maryland Young Farmers Advisory Board
Minutes**

July 17th, 2024 – 10:00 am

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84810224543>

Meeting ID: 848 1022 4543 Passcode: MDA

Present:

Charlie Sasscer
Jennell Eck McHenry
Martin Proulx
JT Albright
Edward Goodman
Tyler Mercure

Brandon Boyer
Emily Jackson
Nora Crist
Amy Rowe
Miranda Rounds

Absent:

Mason Grahame
Kelly Stevens
Harry Huntley
Matt Hurd
Tyler Rill
Gale Livingstone

MDA Staff:

Hans Schmidt
Harrison Palmer

Guests:

Andrew Amoruso, MD DNR
Ella Burrier, MD FFA

Welcome:

The April 2024 Young Farmers Advisory Board meeting was called to order by Jenell Eck McHenry, Chair, at 10:05 am.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the April 2024 minutes made by Brandon Boyer seconded by Charlie Sasscer

MDA Staff Update:

Hans Schmidt, Assistant Secretary for Resource Conservation at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, provided the following updates:

- Cover crop signup ends on 7/17/2024
 - o Approximately 450,000 acres were certified from 2023, anticipating an increase for 2024
- Food Processing Residuals regulation were submitted to AELR after the Nutrient Management Committee reviewed.
 - o Interim guidelines were published were published for those applying FPRs after July 1 & the regulations are approved.
- Board of Public Works meeting on 7/17 – Governor proposed \$148 million in budget cuts
 - o 4 Programs at MDA will be affected:
 - \$100k – Urban Ag Grant Fund
 - \$250k – MDA District Operations
 - \$100k - Native Plants Program
 - \$2.25 M – Rural Maryland Council

Young Farmer Reports:

- Charlie Sasscer
 - o Hot & dry weather is easier to manage cattle in versus wet years and mud.
 - o Challenging to breed in 95 degree heat.
 - o Cattle market is high contrary to grain market.
- Jennell Eck McHenry, Chair
 - o Maryland Commodity Classic – 7/25/2024 at Queen Anne’s County 4H Park
 - o Heat & drought have severely impacted all farms this year
 - Lots of dead corn, beans, and any rain seems to be coming too late.
 - Commodity prices are down across the board.
 - o Mid-Atlantic 4-R Symposium – 9/12/2024 at Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Martin Proulx
 - o Establishing navigation pathways for existing regulations, and helping to change the regulatory framework as needed.
 - o Developed a regulatory analysis
- JT Albright
 - o Baltimore County Fair was held during the 2nd week of July
 - Hosted a Young Farmers Social with high attendance, engaging with new & existing young farmers

- Farmers markets have had lower attendance due to the excessive heat
- Governor's Buy Local Cookout will be held tomorrow, 7/18 at MDA HQ.

- Edward Goodman, Vice Chair
 - Participated in the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant Review Committee
 - Delegated \$4 M to multiple agricultural and food system businesses.
 - Maryland Native Plant Specialist potentially being hired at University of Maryland Extension
 - Extreme heat is creating challenges for direct-to-consumer sales, getting people out to markets.

- Andrew Amoruso, MD DNR
 - Will start to represent DNR Forest Service
 - Located in Queen Anne's & Kent Counties

- Brandon Boyer, MD FFA
 - Maryland State FFA Convention was held at the end of June at the Wisp Resort in Garrett County
 - Over 400 members, advisors, and guests
 - MDA's Ag Ed Summit was held on 7/16, productive conversation on how all entities can collaborate to advance Maryland agricultural education
 - Fair & show season is kicking off, MD FFA will be representing.
 - 2024-2025 officers have been elected:
 - Abigail Effland, State President
 - Ella Burrier, State Vice President

- Emily Jackson
 - Dry & hot on the Eastern Shore
 - Hosted the Maryland Horticultural Society tour
 - Pumpkins & flowers are flourishing under irrigation and limited rain, but most other crops have suffered
 - Buy Local Week kicks off soon, hoping for a boost for agritourism and direct to consumer sales.

- Tyler Rill
 - Hot & dry in Southern Maryland.
 - 0" of rain from May 26 – June 27, ideal time for corn jump-starts.

- Nora Crist
 - Excessive heat has dramatically impacted agritourism attendance.
 - Hopeful for fall & cooler weather to boost attendance.
 - Sunflower farms have proven successful for 1-day events.
 - Pick-your-own (strawberries & peaches) has remained successful but people are spending less time in the field, opting to pick quick & return to the AC.

- Amy Rowe
 - Lower shore received some rain but not enough to boost corn crop significantly.
 - Electricity bills on poultry farms have been higher than average due to the excessive heat.
 - Farm Credit –

- Farmers on the Rise Award Program
 - Launches mid-August. Open to farmers who have been farming between 3-10 years – up to \$10,000 in awards
 - Jump Start Program was recently awarded.
- Miranda Rounds
 - Wells / springs are drying up – most farmers are hauling water to livestock
 - I have noticed an increase in producers reporting to me that they are getting solar offers, and I think some are considering the offers.
 - Per the 2022 census:
 - Out of the 1231 producers
 - Age <35 = 168
 - Age 35 - 64 = 674
 - Age 65 and older = 389
 - Good reports from first crop hay making which is good because a lot of people have concerns for winter feeding, with the drought a lot of producers may not receive much of a second cutting.
 - MD FFA State Convention was hosted in GA County. Seen several GC farms. I volunteered Monday and Tuesday. Great reviews from all

Board Discussion:

- Issues of Concern Document
 - Land Access:
 - Land access continues to be a concern and a priority for young farmers, whether they are new & beginning, or if they are looking to get into agriculture.
 - Projects such as the Naval Academy Dairy Farm solar proposition are of serious concern, given that it will take away the opportunity for new agricultural operations in a continually developed area.
 - The proposed power lines throughout northern Maryland are also concerning for the board and for young farmers, recognizing that the loss of land and the breaking up of properties pose additional challenges.
 - The Department of Natural Resources is the largest landowners in the state and are responsible for the management of thousands of agricultural acres.
 - Contracts between DNR and farmers are often restrictive to infrastructure, so farming anything besides conventional row crops is not feasible.
 - Edward Goodman proposed reaching out to have a larger conversation with DNR to understand their ag leasing program and providing input on how they can be working in conjunction with farmers to protect the future of the industry. He agreed to initiate conversations with the DNR Forestry representative.
- Statewide Survey

- The board discussed the status of the statewide young farmers survey. The board decided to postpone a large-scale push for responses until after the harvest season wraps up. The board will decide what incentives and outlets it should pursue at the next meeting.
- Brandon Boyer moved to split the funding in half between incentives and advertisements, this motion was seconded by Charlie Sasscer.
- Fall Meeting Location
 - The board will pursue a tour in lieu of the Fall meeting. A business meeting will be held during the luncheon of the tour.

Executive Secretary's Updates:

- Appointments to the YFAB are staggered between 2 and 3 years, several members are up for reappointment and will need to apply. Harrison will send direct emails to those whose terms are expiring. Re-appointments are not guaranteed.
- The Maryland Food System Resilience Council's agricultural committee meetings are open for participation, young farmers are encouraged to engage and provide feedback.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Charlie Sasscer, second by Brandon Boyer at 11:20 am.

Respectfully Submitted by Harrison B. Palmer, Executive Secretary