



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary
Steve Connelly, Deputy Secretary

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

410.841.5700 Baltimore/Washington
301.261.8106 Washington, D.C.
410.841.5914 Fax
800.492.5590 Toll Free

Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes September 14, 2022

Present:	Frank Allnutt Amy Crone Joseph Dymek Kelly Dudeck Sean Hough Rajneesh Kathuria Matthew Levi Sellers Richard Pelz	Thomas Mullineaux Paula Linthicum John Murphy Clifford Newsome Jr. Dr. Marianne Bailey Dr. Craig Beyrouthy Far Nasir
----------	---	--

Absent:	Benjamin Sowers Michael Pons Matthew Nielsen Michael Levensgood Gordon Kretser	Corey Spies Rebecca Stoecker
---------	--	---------------------------------

MDA Staff: Ryan Salsman
Shannon Dill University of Maryland
Rich Colburn
Cassie Shirk
John Cribbs
Steve McHenry
Jessica Hackett
Kevin Conroy
Steve Connelly
Joe Bartenfelder
Karen Kirksey
Jill Kubatko MARBIDCO

Approval of Minutes:

June minutes were approved 1st by Joseph Dymek and 2nd by Paula Linthicum.

Commodity Reports:

Ag Education- Joseph Dymek:

- **MAEF:** On September 14th, MAEF, in partnership with the Maryland Nursery and Greenhouse Association, will be holding its annual Golf Tournament for the benefit of their scholarship program.
- For the 2022-2023 school year, there are 54 approved Ag Ed programs in Maryland. 82 teachers serve those Ag Ed program with 31 teachers holding an alternate certification (science, history, another CTE area, coming from industry).
- MAEF was awarded three grants totaling \$70,470 as the lead applicant for the Rural Maryland Council's most recent Maryland Agricultural Education Rural Development Fund (MAERDAF) grant round. These funds will support the development of a new course at UMCP for preservice teachers to learn how to infuse agriculture and environment education in their future classrooms; will build a new outdoor classroom at

Sabillasville Elementary School and new hoop house full of supplies for High Point High School's ag classes; and finally, will supply new environmental sensors to the McDonough High School ag and environmental science classes.

- MAEF participated in the annual review of Maryland Farm Bureau policy related to Agricultural Education.
- MAEF's annual Calendar which celebrates student artwork expressing their view of Maryland agriculture will be release in October.
- MAEF's annual banquet returns on November 3rd at the BWI Marriott with registration opening soon! Check out MAEF's website for additional information.
- MAEF's Mobile Labs have already reached the 100-week mark in bookings for the 2022-23 school year. MAEF's mobile labs visit elementary schools across the state to bring an agriculturally themed science lesson to each class in the school.
- MAEF's Showcases have been booked solid at events across the state all summer, including the State Fair.
- MAEF received an award from the Maryland FFA for their partnership of 20 years.
- MAEF provided a professional development workshop for Maryland High School science teachers, in conjunction with UMCP and IAA, based on "The World Under Your Feet" (turfgrass) funded by National Ag in Classroom.
- **MFB: The MDFB Agriculture Education and Extension Committee**, in preparation for MDFB 2023 Policy Development, recently reviewed all agriculture education policy. As agriculture education is a top policy and program priority for Maryland Farm Bureau (MDFB), they want to assure that ag education remains a sustainable part of Career Technology Education in the new MSDE Blueprint for Maryland's Future, while also becoming part of the overall approved science curriculum. MDFB supports federal funding through MSDE that is necessary for maintaining MD FFA and supports advancing the CASE curriculum into middle schools. The Board of Directors now needs to approve their refreshed policies. MDFB Policy Development process is a grass roots effort, including input from every county farm bureau. 2023 Policy is approved by the full membership at the December Annual Convention.
- MDFB will host a **Next Generation Summit** during the MDFB Annual Convention. The goal is to amplify Maryland Agriculture through the youth voice, including MDFB Young Farmers, by giving measurable value to youth through a targeted workshopping event. Young Farmers will be in attendance and student state leaders will be invited from Maryland FFA, Maryland 4-H, and MANRRS, either from UMES and UMCP. Let the MDFB know if you would like to support this event! Contact Barb Glenn, chair, Ag Ed & Extension Committee, glennbarb6@gmail.com for more information.

Agribusiness- Thomas Mullineaux:

- Ag input suppliers are dealing with transportation issues, fluctuating prices and cash flow issues that trickle down to their growers and retail customers.
- Grower's cash flow issues trickle up to Ag input suppliers.
- BIG vicious circle. Let's blame it on the Pandemic!
- In store sales of "off the shelf" items are very slow. Pet food and Horse feed are flat. The show season has helped with 4-H supplies Feed, Tack, etc.
- Fall small grain seed including cover crop sales are strong. Fall fertilizer orders are flat to down. Praying for a goods corn and soybean crop to play the bills.
- Time to be positive.
- The College of AGNR publishes a quarterly magazine Momentum. It highlights what's going on in the college.
- The most recent issue has an article "FEED THE WORLD"
- I felt after reading this article that the more folks that are aware of what the University is doing in basic food production research the better.
- We are Breeding better wheat at college Park.

- I've arranged for each member of the commission and a number of MDA folks to get this issue.

Ag Tourism- Kelly Dudeck:

- MDA and SDAT have convened a study of the issue of how farm-based value-added businesses are taxed. They've requested public comments via: sdatt.agstudy2022@maryland.gov
- Processing concerns with local butchers and processing plants continues to be an issue. More and more people are taking their business to neighboring states who are better able to accommodate.
- The Spotted Lanternfly has been a big issue for our vineyards this year. Luckily the drought has been helpful to this year's grape harvest.
- The recent downpours have been a concern, since grapes being wet dilute the sweetness. Hoping the grapes dry out a bit before harvest.
- University of Maryland Extension has been conducting trials on a recently discovered native hop they are calling the Monocacy Hop, which is about to hit beer production.
- This hop should be harvested next week, evaluated, and then made into a beer (released in early 2023)!
- This is the first year of cultivation and research, so we'll have more information in the coming months - but we're excited! <https://agmr.umd.edu/research/research-and-education-centers-locations/western-Maryland-research-education-center>.
- Fall is a busy time for value-added agriculture and agritourism operations. Many of our small and medium-sized businesses rely on this season to get by. Visit your farms, buy local!
- ILAC (International Leadership Alumni Conference) was hosted by DE and MD LEAD alumni in August and was a huge success.
- This conference is open to all, and I recommend looking into attending. Next year's conference will be in Wyoming, and the following year will be in California. <http://ilacconference.com/>
- The Grow & Fortify Summit will be 12/1 at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club in Stevensville, MD.
- This conference focuses on the profitability and innovation of Maryland's value-added agricultural and agritourism businesses. Sponsorship opportunities attached, if you know of anyone interested.

Aquaculture- Richard Pelz:

- Oyster aquaculture remains the only significant form of aquaculture in the state.
- Sales are up.
- Most oysters that are produced on farms go to restaurants either direct from the farm or through a wholesaler with only a small percentage going either to grocers or direct sale to consumer. So, the re-opening of the restaurant trade is encouraging.
- With the lessening of concerns for covid restaurant business is increasing and those restaurants that survived the shutdown are now busy
- It is September an R month and the stigma against eating oysters in warm months goes away due to the drought oysters are saltier and more attractive to consumers.
- Current environmental conditions are benefiting oyster growth.
- The drought has raised salinity significantly 5 to 6 PSU Throughout the bay.
 - 13.5 PSU in Annapolis
 - 17.6 PSU in St. Mary's County The highest I have seen in 30 years.
 - 22.5 PSU at York Spit in Virginia. which is typically the same as Tangier Sound
- I have heard no reports of MSX the oyster disease that prefers salinity of 15 PSU and up.
- Dropping water temperatures increase oyster growth due to the seasonal change in forage plants.
- Upcoming event:
 - St. Mary's County Oyster Festival October 15th and 16th
 - National oysters cook off
 - National shucking contest
 - The Winner goes to the international contest in Galloway Ireland

- On the regulatory front: I had a visitor from the West Coast he was hired by the West Coast Shellfish Growers Association to study impediments to the industry. This Association's main concern is over regulation.
- DNR has recently finalized new guidelines for culling market oysters regarding
 - the number and size of attached Spat on shell,
 - numbers of oysters below the 3" size limit per bushel and so on.
- As the days get shorter harvesting times are being impacted.
- Maryland oyster farms are not permitted to be on their leases before sunrise and after sunset
- Maryland oyster farms are required to abide by these regulations.
- Does anyone know if these regulations violate Maryland's Right to Farm Act?
- If so, what is the proper path to redress these issues?
- Lastly Just on a personal note the reason I missed a number of meetings was that I got stuck in the Philippines for 4 months due to a visa issue. On the positive side I had a great time and now have a wonderful Filipina wife.

Ag Services- Levi Sellers:

- Over the past few months, the Maryland Hemp Coalition (MHC) has worked closely with the MDA, USDA and the MD legislature to make needed changes to the MD hemp program. A few changes have been made and have been submitted by the MDA to the AELR Committee for emergency approval with hopes that these changes can be made in time for this season's harvest. We are still waiting confirmation on the changes
- I had hoped to have some data on current licensed hemp producers to report on today, but Jim Drews was out of the office when I requested that info. I hope to have more on that for the next report.
- A study group is scheduled to begin in October to discuss the best path forward to regulate some hemp-derived products. Attendees of this group are representation by the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC), MDA, MHC, and the Maryland Healthy Alternatives Association (MHAA). I have been invited to represent the MHC and hope to have more to report on this in future reports.

Bio-Fuel- Rajneesh Kathuria:

- Federal is looking at alternatives.
- Prices are continuing to fluctuate throughout the state.
- Trying to reduce the cost of fuel.
- Interest in looking into Hemp biofuels throughout the state.
- Have been asked by a lot of hemp producers to look into hemp bio-fuels.
- Produce hemp more for industrial uses.

Direct Farm Market- Amy Crone:

- Last month was National Farmers Market Week (Aug 7-13) as well as Maryland Farmers.
- Market Week: Still a very busy time of year for direct-marketing farmers with the summer harvest waning and the fall harvests beginning to come on.
- USDA ERS shared this week that food insecurity in US households reached 2-decade low in 2021 (article) USDA's ERS recently shared some stats on this sector: Growth in number of farmers markets has plateaued in recent years (article).
- In 2020, U.S. farms sold almost \$10.7 billion of edible food commodities directly to consumer outlets and intermediary supply chains such as restaurant/grocery stores, regional distributors and local institutions—a nearly \$2.8 billion (35 percent) increase from 2019.
- The overall increase in direct sales in 2020 occurred across most direct sales marketing channels, such as farmers markets, farm store/community supported agriculture (CSAs), restaurants/grocery stores, and regional distributors.

- From 2019 to 2020, sales at farmers markets and restaurants/grocery stores increased by 11 and 13 percent, respectively, whereas sales at farm stores, CSAs and other direct-to-consumer channels increased by 79 percent and sales to regional distributors increased by 73 percent.
- Most farm stands and farmers markets will be open through Thanksgiving; although back to school means that farmers markets traffic slows significantly.
- Farmers Market Nutrition Program continues through end of November.
- eWIC is available year-round; eWIC in Maryland has been challenging – few farmers have adopted it and getting the technology to accept it has been difficult for many. A new option may be available in the coming weeks, so that new means of accepting eWIC will be shared with farm direct farmers who participate in that program.
- MDA questionnaire focused on urban agriculture and small farm operations – please share widely with producers:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfpSGyhLqGdimqRVQa3_YEdR_5k505zmAsfrZILg4QTiGGXA/viewform?usp=sf_link
- USDA has announced \$400 million in funding to create Regional Food Business Centers (RFBC); there are conversations ongoing in the MidAtlantic region to see if there is a group that can join together to submit for this funding.
- Anne Arundel County (AAEDC) is working on an Agricultural Business Toolkit; this should be published this fall and will be a good resource for small producers in Anne Arundel County.
- Education & grant opportunities ramping up as we head into fall/winter: University of Maryland hosting The Grazing School 9/29-30 in Poolesville as well as Advanced Grazing Workshop at WMREC 10/20-21.
- NAFMNP conference in Indiana 9/27-10/1.
- Women in Ag webinars.
- Ag Law Educational Initiative (ALEI) Conference.
- Northeast SARE grants now open for farmers (deadline 10/25).
- Grow & Fortify Summit 12/1.
- MARBIDCO new program for small producers (10 to 49 acres) called Small Acreage Next Generations Program (“SANG”).
- LEAD Maryland is seeking Board nominations – please contact Amy (amy@hopscratchfarm.com) if you are interested or would like to suggest anyone that we can reach out to in order to follow up.

Farm Bureau- Paula Linthicum:

- County Farm Bureaus are in the middle of hosting legislative farm tour.
- County Farm Bureaus are starting the annual policy development process.
- The MDFB Annual Convention & Meeting of Delegates will be December 3-6, 2022, at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge - Registration opening soon.
- MDFB Filed public comments with USDA on the proposed poultry transparency rule.

Livestock- Sean Hough:

- Livestock processing and butchering operations a lot of farmers are sending stock to the processing plants.
- Driving to processors in Pennsylvania.
- Meat processing inspection program is working to help facilities work through process and requirements.
- Hoping to see improvements for next year.
- Fairs and shows are ending, and we had strong 4H and FFA livestock shows.
- State fair had a great attendance.
- A lot of cattle show associations were there and brought in some out of state breeders.
- Commodity prices are still strong.
- Due to drought some cattle are decreasing.

- Grain prices could be going higher which could change livestock process prices.
- National level exports to China for pork have dropped this year with them getting past the African Swine Flu.
- US is starting to find other partners to export pork to.
- Locally seeing cost increasing and the farmers are getting squeezed causing profitability concerns for the local farmers in the livestock world.

Poultry II- Far Nasir:

- DAF Tanks are now banned in Wicomico County, MD. It conflicts with the County “Right to Farm Law” and is worrisome for farmers. It has potential to set a precedent for other AG structures in rest of MD and nationwide. Anything considered a nuisance will have a potential to be banned, even if it is AG conforming use.
- Article: <https://mdcoastdispatch.com/2022/09/08/wicomico-council-introduces-ban-ondaf-storage-tanks/>
- The Bill can be challenged, after its voted in the upcoming meeting.
- Public Notice: Legislative Bill 2022-10: AN ACT to amend Chapter 225 of the Wicomico County Code, titled “Zoning” Part 6, titled “Accessory and Principal Uses,” Article XVII, titled “Accessory Uses,” Section 225-62 titled “Outside Storage,” and Article XVIII, titled “Principal Uses,” Section 225-65 titled “Outside Storage,” to prohibit the open top storage of a liquid organic fertilizer or soil amendment.
- Date: October 4, 2022
- Time: 6:00 p.m.
- Place: Council Chambers, Government Office Building, 125 N. Division Street, Salisbury, MD
- Rising costs of operations, supplies and machinery is a major concern for all farmers. Energy Prices for the farmers, i.e., Electric cost alone has gone up 28% year over year and climbing. Farmers are not able to use Net Metering for their own usage, as the electric grids are being blacked out by non-user investments.
- HPAI case in Ohio affecting 3 million Layers, this month. Avian Influenza will most likely be back on the shore this fall. Growers are prepared with proper biosecurity but are in danger of about being without income, if farm ends up in quarantine zone.
- National Meeting on Poultry Health, Processing and Live Production – registration is still open for this meeting, being held October 3 – 5 in Ocean City, MD Registration for the Meeting and Gold Tournament is still available at <https://www.dcachicken.com/events/>
- Comments are all in for USDA Proposed Transparency Rules, with growers speaking both for and against the rule change. Either way, growers feel good about being part of the conversation that directly affects their operations.

State Grange- Clifford Newsome:

- Maryland Grangers have been busy helping with local fairs and community shows since our last meeting.
- We have helped at the Maryland State Fair in many areas.
- We had five exhibits in the Farm & Garden building for all three weekends. I attended the Governor’s Banquet.
- He announced that next year will be the last year for that building as a new one is planned in 2024.
- Our state Grange convention will be at New Market during Oct. 20 – 22.
- The highlights are the Ag. Banquet and legislative sessions.
- I am sure the recent ban of gas tanks in Wicomico County will be a major topic.
- The Right to Farm is being pressured from many adverse groups.
- Great job Kelly on conducting your first meeting as President!!!

Veterinary- Dr. Marianne Bailey:

- Some states are experiencing a vaccine resistant kennel cough strain. We dealt with something similar last year, but this year Maryland is not so far from experiencing an uptick in cases. Pet owners should consider

the influenza vaccine in the bivalent variation if appropriate. However, there have been backorder delays with these vaccines.

- The USDA reported that Connecticut recently had 14 domestic rabbits die from Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease virus 2 (RHDV2). We have not seen this in Maryland at this time. There is a vaccine that is available with authorization from the state.
- On September 2, USDA APHIS issued a stakeholder alert implementing restrictions on hunter harvested wild bird meat/carcasses from all of Canada, regardless of province, due to the risk of transmitting highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).
- There is a list on the APHIS One Health Website of all confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 in animals.
- APHIS has confirmed cases in cats, dogs, animals from zoo and aquariums, mink, white-tailed deer and mule deer.

Staff Updates:

Cassie Shirk:

- The department was given two tasks by legislature this session.
- The first is the legislature is interested in exploring the option of state need processing program. Last Tuesday had our first meeting with group, USDA, FFIF, stake holders and interested parties.
- October meeting open to public if interested let me know.
- MDA was tasked with pulling together a study group to conduct a study of the Assessment of Agricultural Improvements. Had meeting last Thursday.
- Reports are due by December 1st.

Steve Connelly:

- Headed to MAEF event in Hampstead.
- Avian influenza encourage everyone with backyard flocks to follow an enhanced biosecurity plan.
- Had high path avian influenza hit Maryland but also 39 other states.
- 204 commercial operations and 230 back yard operations.
- 44 million birds had to be depopulated.
- Wild bird detections in multiple states in last month include Virginia and Pennsylvania.
- It is in migratory water flocks and in Minnesota in pelicans.
- Really encourage biosecurity plan so we can keep it out of Maryland because it is a financial crippling event for farmers.
- We work closely with USDA, poultry in Delaware to address any positive birds to address the issue.
- As part of our after action we have had a hot wash which is where we see what works well and what we need to do better.
- There is always room for improvement.
- Hot wash with USDA and MDA. The farmers had positives and the companies involved with broilers and egg layers gave great feedback.
- How we can improve our response in the future.
- October is horse month and a lot of events in the equine industry will be taking place.
- October 7th Maryland International Environmental Conference in Odenton Maryland and will have a Mexican rodeo at the end of the conference.
- Maryland Five-Star event October 13-16 at Fair Hill.
- Maryland Million Oct 22nd.
- Washington International Horse Show Oct 25-30th.

Joe Bartenfelder:

- This year is an election year so keep in mind your legislators and who we can continue to educate about agriculture.

Kevin Conroy:

- Normal course of business.
- Update to Hemp rights submitted to ALR last month and waiting on final approval from them.
- Washington County doubled the budget for the black fly budget and we need to decide if we keep going for fall or if we have to rebid.
- Cover crop going well.
- Labs are doing well.

Jessica Hackett:

- Cookout at MDA was a huge success.
- Getting word out about spotted lanternfly with billboards around the state.
- Doing another campaign this fall about the egg masses and keep up awareness.
- On farm stress topic we have connected Shannon to be on farm and harvest to do an upcoming discussion.
- New season on Veteran's Day in November.
- Prepping for home grown school lunch week October 14-16th.
- Invitations have started going out if interested in attending let know add to list.
- Trying to increase our social media presence.
- Everyone working on biosecurity.
- Working on getting the website updated and unified.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 Respectfully Submitted by Jessica O'Sullivan