

Approved Oct 16, 2025

State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
September 18, 2025 (Hybrid)
MDA Headquarters, Annapolis, MD
Minutes

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM

The minutes of July 2025 meeting were approved. (Posey/Feldt)

SSCC ADMIN

Appointments: None

- Oct 16 meeting (hybrid) @ St. Mary's Soil Conservation District
- Nov 20 meeting (hybrid) @ MDA Headquarters
- Dec 18 All-Day (in-person only) 2026 Workplan meeting @ MD Farm Bureau (Davidsonville, MD)
- SSCC Annual Chair Election: Van Funk, Chair and Amy Posey, Vice-Chair
- SSCC Area Representative Appointments by Secretary Atticks: Area 2 (Southern): Amy Posey, Area 5 (Lower Shore): Anne-Meredith Webster
- Brief introduction by recently appointed FSA State Executive Director, George Turner: *I began my USDA career in 1983 as FSA County Executive Director in Worcester County and later served as FSA District Director providing oversight and guidance on commodity and farm loan programs across Maryland. During my 41 years of service, I have mentored future leaders, contributed to national FSA training initiatives, and earned multiple USDA awards, including three Administrator's Awards and an Under Secretary's Award. I am a graduate of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore with a degree in Agriculture, and a lifelong Worcester County resident, living in Bishopville.*

Statewide Guidance Document, Value-Added Agriculture & Agritourism

Guest Speaker: Martin Proulx, MDA

Summary: MDA's Statewide Guidance Document is intended to educate State and Local agencies and officials on the diversity and evolution of agricultural industries, to include agricultural processing and Agritourism, for the sake of regulatory and policy-based decision making. The document intends to: 1. Familiarize local officials with the trends, challenges, and opportunities in Value-Added Agriculture across the State of Maryland; 2. Provide examples and benchmarks of how an effective regulatory framework can accommodate this evolving industry; 3. Unclutter the existing web of how farms and agricultural activities are regulated, offering clarity and opportunities to strengthen the regulatory framework in Maryland. Martin discussed the process of document development as well as associated opportunities and challenges.

Abbreviated Q&A:

Q: Who is the guidance geared towards? A: *Primarily regulators and decision-makers. It's a broad document but it is a starting point to help both state and local regulators. It should inform future discussions. Lack of clarity in definitions have caused a lot of confusion across the board.*

Q: Who did you talk to when consulting the counties? A: *It was left it up to the counties (Ag and Econ development offices). Groups ranged from three to thirty participants. We know*

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that regulators and industry interact differently in different counties, so we wanted to leave it up to them.

Q: Do you foresee legislative action in the future? A: *Yes. The guidance could have a bearing on legislation. The document is expected to be a living document subject to change, and to serve as a foundation for effective conversations.*

Q: How receptive have state agencies been to this process? A: *It's been a productive conversation in both directions. The document helps the state better understand and respect county-level processes.*

Comment [Proulx]: Considering a 2026 project to create guidance tools for the county-level.

Comment: Ag Commission is considering a formal definition of agriculture and seeking comment (See Ag Commission report below)

Agricultural Use Assessment:

Guest Speaker: Adam Lewis, SDAT

Summary: Adam described the rules associated with assessing land as agricultural.

Q: What do I do if the ag use assessment was incorrectly denied? A: *This can be appealed up to the state. Adam Lewis is an effective point of contact at the state level.*

Q: How often are criteria and tests for ag assessment revisited? A: *Upon an initial application SDAT will review it. Upon reassessment if something looks questionable, SDAT will send out a new application. If for some reason ag use is removed, the landowner can appeal the change.*

Post Meeting Q&A

Q: In June's SSCC meeting MEA did a presentation on solar to our group. A question was asked about solar placement on ag ground and whether that ground would stay as ag in the future. MEA said that the Department of Assessment would have to answer that question.

A: *The procedure for our Solar Valuations is found by clicking here: <https://dat.maryland.gov/Pages/ProcedureDetails.aspx?AspXPage=g%5F2D618D9BF A134A4D8514F0C99765B324:%2540ID%3D78>. To summarize, agrivoltaics is defined as the simultaneous use of land for both solar power generation and agricultural production. The land under and around the solar panels must be "actually devoted" to a farming operation and meet the department's regulations as stated in COMAR 18.02.03 or the Maryland Assessment Procedures Manual.*

Land used for solar generation may be eligible for the agricultural use assessment rates, provided the owner makes an application with our local office and the area within the solar lease has an approved agricultural activity occurring. This activity must meet those within our regulations such as crop production or grazing of animals. If used as pasture for animals, the land must meet the animal unit equivalency test per acre.

Please note that the law for agrivoltaics strictly prohibits beekeeping from being considered in the determination of "actually devoted" lands for eligibility in the agricultural use assessment rates. The land within a solar lease area of the farm is not eligible for the agricultural use assessment as "associated land" as described as part of the ratio in determining "actively used land".

Q: The criteria presented for being considered a farm with large livestock was 1 large animal per acre. I assume this is the minimum to be considered a farm. This is a very intensive rate

for grazing management that likely can only be achieved with a very high level of grazing management. It really is not an appropriate rate. As a rule of thumb, we use 2 acres for every 1 animal unit, where an animal unit is 1,000 lb of live animal. 1 animal unit is about equal to a full size cow. So the criteria being used would push people to overstock their pastures at rates that would be difficult to maintain cover on the pasture.

A: The basic animal unit equivalents have been in place prior to when I started with the department over 31 years ago, and have only been expanded over recent years to better define certain farm operations, such as poultry and beekeeping. I agree that it would be very difficult for one acre of pasture to accommodate grazing of one very large animal without considerable cost in feed.

However, for parcels less than 20 acres, the regulations allow for the department to utilize an income test if the actually devoted lands are at least 3 acres and less than 5 acres. If a parcel is less than 20 acres and the actually devoted lands are 5 or more acres, the department may use the "Use Test" without the need to verify the gross income requirement. Each test does incorporate a regional ratio test to provide for associated lands in our determination of approved actively used lands. These associated lands can be used to rotate or expand the area used to pasture the livestock.

With the amount of time we were provided at your meeting, the presentation was intended to be a basic overview. Agricultural laws and regulations related to the use assessment can be much more complex in explaining the details.

With smaller parcels of at least 3 acres or more, the \$2,500 gross income test is not difficult to achieve when it comes to larger livestock like horses and beef cattle. At least 3 acres must be actually devoted lands, but if the parcel is 5 acres, it would not require all the acreage to be used as pasture with 5 large animals per acre.

For example, an owner with a 7-acre parcel that has 3 acres of actually devoted land because it is used for 3 horses (with no house or homesite on the parcel) can reasonably be expected to yield at least \$2,500 of income per year from boarding those horses. This would allow for the remaining 4 acres of land to be eligible for the agricultural use assessment. Even if the income is not directly received by the owner, the law provides the ability for our department to consider the nature of the farm activity and determine if it would reasonably be expected to yield an average gross income of at least \$2,500 from the approved activity.

It should also be noted that it continues to be easier to meet the \$2,500 gross income requirement because the required income amount hasn't changed in law since its inception in the early 1980s.

When actually devoted land is greater than 5 acres, we can apply a Use Test. This test is used to determine actively used land and includes both actually devoted and associated lands meeting our regional ratio requirements. So, if a 10-acre parcel had 5 horses or cattle used in pasture, it would be considered the actually devoted land. The additional 5 acres would be considered associated lands and can be used to rotate or expand the livestock pasture area. Our regulations provide for a regional ratio of associated land to actually devoted land (5:1 or 10:1 depending on the region of the State). Thus, no agricultural livestock operation is required to have 1 large animal for every pasture acre of its parcel to meet the animal unit equivalency test, as long as the actively used lands meets our regional ratio requirements.

Q: Is there consideration for properties that have land in a conservation easement that doesn't allow agricultural use and where forest management is not occurring? Some of the land in the easement may not be forest land.

A: We do consider conservation land within a CREP/CRP program to be actually devoted land in use within the farm operation. This prevents that land from being excluded or ineligible for the agricultural use assessment. Our procedure related to this is found here: The Tax-Property Article §8-209.1 provides that land in a perpetual conservation easement is to be valued at a rate equivalent to the highest rate that is used to value land eligible for agricultural use assessment. Often, any lands within a perpetual conservation easement on an existing farm operation are already receiving the agricultural use assessment rate and are considered actively used lands as part of the existing actually devoted or associated lands.

Q: A new property owner that purchased 33 acres with a house on it, the actual farmland is around 7 acres. Would this land qualify for the ag assessment less the one acre around the house site?

A: Our use test requires at least 5 acres "actually devoted" lands that are engaged in the approved agricultural activity. The regulations allow for a regional ratio of "associated land" to the "actually devoted" land. Combined that acreage is the "actively used" land eligible for the agricultural use assessment. The agricultural use assessment Class 3 Rate is \$500/acre for farmland.

The regional ratios are as follows:

- (1) Western region—Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties, 10:1;*
- (2) Central region—all counties on the western shore of Maryland, except Harford County and those listed in §A(1) of this regulation, 5:1; and*
- (3) Eastern region—all counties on the eastern shore of Maryland, and Harford County, 10:1.*

So if a parcel was located in a region with 5:1 ratio, and the minimum of 5 acres was in "actually devoted" land, it would allow up to 25 acres considered as "associated land". In this scenario, up to 30 acres would be considered "actively used" and eligible for the agricultural use assessment.

I am not sure of the parcel's location in your owner's situation, but using the lower 5:1 region ratio and having 7 acres of cropland as actually devoted lands engaged in the activity would qualify the 33 acre parcel for agricultural use assessment (less any homesite). So if they were only doing the minimum in a 5:1 region, it would only qualify up to 30 acres. If the parcel is in a region with 10:1 ratio, it would qualify a parcel up to 50 acres (less any homesite). I would say with either region they're located as long as they have at least 6 acres that are actually devoted in cropland, the parcel would qualify (less any homesite).

The owner would need to make an application to their local assessment office. The link to the agricultural use application is found by clicking [here](#). A list of our local offices is found by clicking [here](#). Our website has more information about the [Agricultural Use Assessment](#) and [Agricultural Transfer Tax](#) that you may want to share with them as well. I advise that they contact the local assessment office to discuss their plans and to seek more information.

Q: Would a Soil Conservation & Water Quality plan developed by the SCD be sufficient to certify cropland acres? A: *They are welcome to include that with their application, but it would not be required*

Q: If the cropland was less than 7 acres, would a forest stewardship plan suffice? A: *If the cropland was less than 5 acres, they would need a forest management/stewardship plan to qualify for an agricultural use assessment because the area in crops would not qualify the parcel. Only the wooded acreage listed in the forest plan would be eligible for the agricultural use assessment Class 2 Rate for woodland is \$187.50 / acre. Information on DNR Forest Plans can be found on their website [here](#). The owner would need to contact their local DNR Forest Service Office to speak with a forester about the requirements of those plans.*

MEMBER REPORTS

MD Department of Agriculture – Hans Schmidt:

- Resource Conservation is hiring an attorney general. It's in the recruitment stage. Hoping to hire by early November. Will be assisting Resource Conservation, including District Offices, with legal matters (in addition to Tom Filbert and Justin Hayes).
- 2025 progress on MD's Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) was submitted at the end of June. Conservation Tracker is currently locked down. Continue tracking BMPs for when it opens back up.
- There is a meeting tomorrow with District staff to discuss MACS policy issues as a follow-up to MASCD Annual Meeting discussions.
- Two Resource Conservation staff are leaving through the Voluntary Separation Program (VSP). For the time being, a hiring freeze is still in place for state positions.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program Ag Advisory Committee met in-person at the end of August. The committee includes an enthusiastic group of farmers that will be influential through its access to the CBP's Principals' Staff Committee (PSC)
- Trust Fund agreement has been signed with DNR
- Cover Crop Program- reminder that aerial-seeding into soybeans is not subject to cost-share this year. The budget is tight but expected that pay-outs will stay within the \$23 million budget.
- Fiscal Dept is understaffed and hiring process is slow, resulting in bottlenecks in getting payments out.

MD. Department of Natural Resources – Rob Feldt:

1) Maryland dispatched one 20-person crew and one wildfire suppression engine to assist western states with wildfire suppression needs. Both safely returned after two and three week deployments.

2) Seed collection is in full swing--two seed collection training sessions with the Antietam Conococheague Watershed Alliance were held by DNR Forest Service staff.

3) Urban Forestry staff updated the Forest Conservation Act Technical Manual available on the DNR webpage.

4) The Forest Service's Chesapeake Forest Lands Lottery was completed for two tracts, and randomly selected two entries. The tracts are leased to hunt clubs and is a carry over from leases that were previously held by the Chesapeake Corporation--the original owner of the 50,000 acre state forest. Today the forest is around 95,000 acres

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5) The DNR Fall Foliage Report will be active soon. Check out the DNR webpage for updates for peak fall leaf color in your area.

6) Maryland has been selected to participate in the 2026 American Tree Farm System Certification Audit. There are over 800 Tree Farms in Maryland, most are just private woodlands or small municipal forest plots. 95% of these Tree Farms are able to sell timber that is certified as sustainable by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). As such, there must be periodic audits to confirm participants are following the standards. Maryland last participated in 2020. The audit will take place sometime between April and June.

MD. Department of Environment – Greg Sandi:- No report.

University of Maryland Extension – Chuck Shuster:

Dean Wendy Powers is conducting Meet and Greet events across Maryland. Events have been held at the Wye Research and Education Center (REC), Charles Soil Conservation District, and the University of Maryland campus. The next two events are from 3-5 p.m. at the following dates and locations:

- Tuesday, September 23 – Central Maryland Research & Education Center-Clarksville (Ellicott City, MD)
- Thursday, September 25 – Western Maryland Research & Education Center (Keedysville, MD)

Please register at https://agmr.umd.edu/about/office-dean/meet-greets-dean-wendy-powers/?utm_source for this free event.

SNAP-Ed program operations have been affected by the loss of federal funding. University of Maryland Extension is working to place people internally who are qualified for open positions.

Extension Workforce Development Program interns completed their 10-week full-time internship. The program is supported by an AFRI Competitive Grant from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Student blogs can be accessed at go.umd.edu/umeinterns25.

Applications for participation in the next LEAD Maryland Fellowship class are due October 1. The online application form and details are at:

<https://extension.umd.edu/programs/agriculture-food-systems/program-areas/integrated-programs/lead-maryland/>. Farmers are especially encouraged to apply. The final virtual information session will be held September 15th from 7:00–8:00 p.m. Program graduates will share their experiences, including how tuition was paid, how they managed the time commitment, and what participation meant to them. Register at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScANS6ThbWL9-tZUAYoxPOdYWERUDqP-j3BdE-P7ysTyjIM8Q/viewform>.

Dr. Kurt Vollmer, AgFS Extension weed specialist, was promoted to senior agent with tenure.

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Dr. Laura Nixon is the new AgFS Extension IPM Entomologist for the Commercial Horticulture Team. Laura brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in chemical ecology and integrated pest management (IPM). She earned her Ph.D. in Chemical Ecology from the Bio-Protection Research Centre at Lincoln University in New Zealand where her research focused on identifying biogenic volatile organic compounds for improved border biosecurity. Laura also holds a B.Sc. (Hons) in Forensic and Analytical Science from Robert Gordon University in Scotland where she optimized analytical procedures for detecting taste and odor compounds in water. Laura's research experience includes serving as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Rutgers University where she currently works on novel IPM research for arthropod pests in apple, peach, and grape production, utilizing advanced biomolecular techniques. Prior to that, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the USDA-ARS Appalachian Fruit Research Station, focusing on the chemical and behavioral ecology of invasive and native pests in temperate fruit systems. September 22nd will be her first day at University of Maryland Extension.

The current UME AgFS openings are:

AgFS Extension

- AgFS county educator, Frederick County: Position is open at https://umd.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/UMCP/details/Extension-Educator--Agriculture-and-Food-Systems_JR102142?q=extension. The best consideration date is September 11, 2025.
- AgFS county educator, Prince George's County: Funding is being secured for the position.
- AgFS county educator, Talbot County: Open top internal candidates.

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

- Program director and faculty specialist: The position description will be revised and reposted in early spring
- Nutrient management advisor positions in Baltimore, Harford, and Montgomery Counties have posted at https://umd.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/UMCP/details/Coordinator--Nutrient-Management-Advisor_JR102354?q=extension. The best consideration date is September 26, 2025.

Awards

Veronica Yurchak was named to the Fruit + Vegetable Magazine 40 Under 40 for 2025. The recognition is determined by a panel of industry experts.

Chuck Schuster received the Dr. James R. Miller Award that recognizes professional non-grower or farmer leader for contributions to the grain industry. The award was given at the Maryland Commodity Classic.

National Association of County Agricultural Agents Award Recipients

National Winners:

- Erika Crowl: Achievement Award
- Jonathan Moyle: Distinguished Service Award
- Andrew Kness and Erika Crowl: Search for Excellence in Farm and Ranch Business Management

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National Finalists:

- Amanda Grev and Raven Herron: Applied Research
- Poster
- Emily Zobel and Haley Sater: Newsletter
- Kelly Nichols, Catherine Savage, Mona Habibi, Chandini Montgomery, and Iany McDonald: Search for Excellence in 4-H Programming
- Sarah Hirsh, Shannon Dill, Megan Todd, Kelly Nichols, Neith Little, Ben Beale, Erika Crowl, and Andy Kness: Search for Excellence in Environmental Quality, Forestry and Natural Resources

Regional Winners:

- Emily Zobel, Rachel Rhodes, Mikaela Boley, and Haley Sater: Audio Recording
- Haley Sater and Emily Zobel: Event Promotional Package
- Sarah Hirsh: Fact Sheet
- Sarah Hirsh, Shannon Dill, Kelly Nichols, Neith Little, and Megan Todd: Learning Module/Notebook
- Amanda Grev: Published Photo

Grants

- Kumar, H. and D. Jarboe. 2025. Maryland NRCS Irrigation Services Agreement. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. \$1,437,526.
- Jarboe, D. 2025. Agricultural Nutrient Management Program. Maryland Department of Agriculture, \$1,271,000. Award #FY2026MOU1139.
- Jarboe, D. 2025. Agricultural Nutrient Management Program. Maryland Department of Agriculture, \$475,000. Award #FY2026MOU841.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Eric Hines:

- Wrapping up FY obligations and closing things out.
- Spent \$6.5 million in CSP , \$18 million EQIP, \$2.1 million in RCPP agreements
- Nationally focused on streamlining processes through impact trainings looking at obligations, contracts, reducing paperwork to ease burden on farmers. Will know more as new FY starts.
- Kendrick Flowers is leaving. Eric Hines will cover Eastern Shore for next 120 days.
- Leon Tillman will cover Western and Central MD.

Q: Have the local workgroups met?

A: Waiting on final changes from national office before taking any action on discussions coming from Local Workgroups.

Farm Services Agency – George Turner:

Conservation Reserve Program –

- 2025 CRP SU63 accepted contracts, 296 with 3027 total acres
- CRP authority ends September 30, 2025, with the 2018 extended Farm Bill

2025 Acreage Reporting –

- Producers completed 2025 crop reporting August 15

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- Top commodity reported acres:
 - Soybeans – 460, 248
 - Corn – 439,567
 - Cover crop – 273,529
 - Wheat – 107,395
 - Mixed forage – 93,709

Supplemental Disaster Relief Program –

- Stage 1 of SDRP continues for those producers growing crops covered by crop insurance suffering losses due an eligible disaster event in crop years 2023 and 2024
- No announcement has been made by the Secretary as to when the sign-up period for producers of crops not covered by crop insurance or were not eligible under stage 1

MASCD – John Swaine:

MASCD's 2025 Annual Meeting

- District Supervisors, staff and partners convened August 4-6 at Rocky Gap State Park in Flint. From the pig roast on the first night through the banquet and auction, attendees were able to network and share information and updates about current programs, successes and challenges. A few highlights include:
 - Monday's Supervisors' Meeting kicked off the meeting with good discussion about the roles, responsibilities and priorities of district supervisors.
 - Alice Crothers, Cecil SCD Associate Supervisor, as our keynote speaker for 2025 talking about the importance of conservation as part of the business plan for Long Green Farms
 - A panel discussion with representatives from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association and The Mill
 - Alex Soroka and Andrew Sekellick from USGS talked about hydrology in Maryland and how it impacts the lag time and effectiveness of conservation practices on water quality
 - Open Meetings Act Training was informative to board supervisors on how to maintain transparency in their decision-making while also protecting the private information of cooperators
- **At MASCD's Quarterly Board Meeting on 10/28 at MDA** in Annapolis, we'll follow up on some of the action items identified in our General Business Meeting, including updates on the MACS program, authority to share conservation plans and telework documentation.
- **MASCD Committees** are coming together! We still have a few vacancies on our Legislative & Policy and Budget & Finance Committees. MASCD is looking to ensure that we have representation from throughout the state to provide guidance on these important issues. Current status of the committee appointments is attached below.
- **MASCD Awards-** We heard your feedback regarding the MASCD Awards Program! MASCD's Awards Committee will be looking at opportunities to update our service awards and the application process for next year.

Grants and Funding

- The Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming Program is seeking farmers for certification! Please help us spread the word to good candidates, including those farmers who were certified through FSCAP. Contact Chelsea at Chelsea.Gebbia@resourcesmartllc.com for more information, or fill out an application

online at https://bayfriendlyfarms.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/MD-BFF-Program-Sign-Up-Application_fillable.pdf

- MASCD is working with ShoreRivers to implement three wetland restoration projects in Kent County, DE as part of our NFWF Grant for “Nature Based Structural Practices in Tax Ditch Watersheds”. Once completed, these projects may serve as good projects to highlight through a field day or webinar. Additional funds are available through the grant to fund other wetland restoration projects, floodplain reconnection, two stage ditches, riparian buffers and other water quality practices. Jen is working with NFWF to extend the grant through April of 2027.

NFWF Tax Ditch Grant Funding Status	Total Budget	Committed Funds	Remaining Funds
Implementation Funds for projects in Chesapeake Tax Ditch Watersheds	\$750,000	\$256,000	\$494,000
Incentive Funds for Tax Ditch Organizations	\$75,000	\$20,000	\$50,000

Other Items

- **Save the Date for MASCD’s 2026 Winter Meeting in Annapolis!** We’ve reserved the Westin for February 9, with our Day in Annapolis visits planned for February 10. Invited speakers include Scott Raubenstone from Perdue (who was unable to join us for the industry panel at our Annual Meeting), and Jimmy Dick, with Environmental Quality Resources.
- **2026 MASCD Annual Meeting-** The Southern Region is looking for venues to host MASCD’s 2026 Annual Meeting. We’re working on a short list of contenders and should have more details to share soon.
- **Grow Your Knowledge to Grow Your Farm Series-** MASCD worked with Farm Credit of the Virginias to record a short video about conservation districts as part of their informational series for farmers. You can learn more and watch the recorded sessions here: <https://www.farmcreditofvirginias.com/knowledge-center/events/grow-your-knowledge-grow-your-farm-series>
- **Patuxent River Commission-** With Luis Dieguez retirement, MASCD is seeking a new representative to serve in one of two seats for soil conservation districts. If you are interested in serving, please reach out to Jen for more information.
- **District Managers Roundtable Topic: Supervising Employees Remotely-** Our next DM Roundtable discussion will be held on October 20. Bryan Peterson from Associated Employers will use the first half of the meeting to present and discuss effective management of remote employees. Others are welcome to join!

Upcoming Events & Deadlines

DATE	EVENT
October 28, 2025	MASCD BOD Meeting, MDA Headquarters
November 12-14	NFWF Chesapeake Ag Networking Forum, Hershey, PA
February 9-10, 2026	MASCD Winter Meeting, Westin Annapolis
February 15-19, 2026	NACD Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX

Aa Commission- Gordon Kretser:

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MDA does not specifically define agriculture in statute. This has been intentional to allow innovation over time within the ag sector without barriers to fit within the definition. The unintended consequence is that other agencies have needed a definition and don't have one to reference. The Ag Commission has been tasked with drafting a definition for review by stakeholders. Send feedback directly to Gordon.

Definition of Agriculture:

Please review the revisions made from September's discussion to the draft definition of agriculture. This will be shared with industry stakeholders on behalf of the Commission for review and comments, which will be brought back to the committees in November:

"Agriculture is the production of food, feed, fiber and fuel. It is a comprehensive and dynamic industry that includes, but is not limited to, the cultivation, production, management, storage, processing, and marketing of crops, turfgrass, livestock, forestry, horticulture, aquaculture, and refining of agricultural products into biobased products (including but not limited to biofuel and biochar). Agriculture is a life science that encompasses millennia of evolving practices centered around the nurturing of growing food to nourish people, producing feed to nourish animals, processing fibers to clothe, and refining fuel to power civilizations. Agricultural practices manage the nutrients in soil to support biochemical processes that nourish plants, including the application of fertilizers, manures, and soil amendments to replenish critical elements of life, and the adoption of technologies and management practices to maximize soil health. Agricultural processes encompass pest management practices throughout the growing season, the storage and application of soil amendments, nutrients, and crop management tools like pesticides, and the harvesting of products that were nurtured throughout the season. The processing of agricultural products that were raised is critical to the agricultural industry and a vital component of the principle of agriculture that leads to food, feed, fiber and fuel. Further processing of raw agricultural products for human or animal consumption has forever been a function of agriculture's theories and practices, and continues to connect all people to agriculture. Agricultural innovations continue to advance the success of agriculture and sustain the industry, allowing for maximum output with fewer inputs. All discretion and determinations of agriculture shall be deferred to the Secretary of Agriculture."

Area 1 (Western) – Diane Flickinger:

Washington County:

- WCSCD is beginning to partner with "SMORES". SMORES builds and installs expert-designed wildlife habitat nesting/roosting boxes; as well as conducts outreach and education. They work with Towns, Schools, Clubs and local organizations, etc. They create habitats for pollinators, raise awareness, etc.
- WCSCD hosted a tour of our Hamilton Run Stream Restoration Program to DNR Leadership and Legislation in partnership with the City of Hagerstown and Catoclin Land Trust.
- WCSCD hosted their 85th Anniversary Open House on August 20, 2025. They received a Citation of Recognition from Senator Corderman's Office and a Certificate of Recognition from the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners, Legislation, County Administrator, Washington County Business Development, Developers, Design Consultants, Legislation, Farmers, Partner Agencies, etc. were in attendance.
- WCSCD Staff and Supervisors attend the MASCD Annual Meeting at Rocky Gap,

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August 4-6, 2025.

Frederick County:

- On September 4, the FCSCD along with Frederick County Farm Bureau and Horizon Farm Credit held the Soil Smart Farm Tour. We hosted Local, State, and Federal Legislators on a tour of various Frederick County farms. We visited a dairy farm, winery, orchard and vegetable farm.
- On September 9, FCSCD hosted a Drone Field Day. We learned about seeding cover crops with a drone - successes and challenges, and licensing and insurance. Our host farmer was a recipient of a Soil Health Grant from MDA. They spoke about their reasons for transitioning to planting green, the challenges this presents, and how they have overcome these challenges. They also spoke about modifications to their machinery.
- The Great Frederick Fair started Friday, September 12 – 20. The Staff is demonstrating a soil texture activity to all 4Th Graders in Frederick County throughout the week.
- FCSCD mailed out and posted their quarterly Newsletter.

Area 2 (Southern) - Amy Posey:

Anne Arundel: Nothing to Report

Calvert: Nothing to Report

Charles:

- Charles SCD will be hosting a Forestry CSP Training on 9/24/2025 @ 9 am. The training is being put on by Chase Kolstrum and is designed to help planners incorporate forestry and wildlife practices into their Conservation Plans. The training is recommended for Southern Area partnership planners, but space is available for others who would like to attend. Please contact Chase Kolstrum or Charles SCD for more information. (Flyer Shared)

Prince George's:

- Completed construction of a 48' x 65' Roofed Ag Waste Structure for UM Extension Upper Marlboro Research Facility. This was a team effort, including District, MDA, and NRCS staff. The project is cost-shared through MACS. This is the 1st roofed ag waste structure in Prince George's that was surveyed, designed and supervised through the Upper Marlboro Field Office.
- Hosted a tour through Prince George's for LEAD MD class. Topic was "urban farming and food access".
- Participated in County Executive Braveboy's Business Roundtable Forum.
- Exhibited at Prince George's County Farm Bureau's Farm and Family Day.

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- Letter of interest to collaborate with the University of Maryland on a grant to study "forever chemicals" in selected crops and cover crops.
- Hosted a stakeholder "open house" for the County Council "Food as Medicine" legislation. Testified in favor of legislation at County Council Hearing.
- We are reviewing letters and digesting information regarding the potential closing of Beltsville Ag Research Center.--> What is the impact on Maryland Agriculture and the continued efforts for the Chesapeake Bay Cleanup?

St. Mary's:

- Supervisors participated in the Farmers Feeding St. Mary's food distribution on Saturday, September 13, 2025
- Held an EQIP Local Workgroup meeting on August 28th to provide funding priorities to NRCS. Representatives from the SCD, MDA, NRCS, FSA, Agriculture & Seafood program, University of MD Extension, and DNR Forestry provided information.
- Completed the SCD Annual Work Plan which was approved by the SCD supervisors and submitted to MDA and NRCS.
- St. Mary's County Fair is September 18 - 21 and the District will have a Display in the Extension building.
- Staff and supervisors will attend the County Commissioner meeting on Tuesday, September 30th for the proclamation presentation for the Homegrown School events.
- Corn has been harvested during the last 3 weeks and cover crop is being planted.

District Wide

- Collecting interest from Districts to cover the open MASCD Committee vacancies need representatives for Legislative & Policy, Awards and Budget & Finance
- Area 2 Dinner is being hosted by AASCD, October 23rd

Area 3 (Upper Shore) – Steve Freeman: NO REPORT

Area 4 (Central) – Van Funk:

Baltimore County SCD

- The board met with the office staff for a positive and informative luncheon focused on gaining insight into their professional roles and personal interests.

Cecil SCD

- On August 4-6th, CSCD attended the MASCD Summer Meeting at Rocky Gap State Park, hosted by the Central Area Districts.
- On August 27th, CSCD hosted a legislative Ag Tour for elected officials with 26 in attendance. The tour visited several ag operations within Cecil County and

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concluded with lunch at Bohemia River State Park. The tour highlighted agriculture, conservation, and partnerships.

Harford SCD

- From July 20th – 26th, the North Harford High School Envirothon Team represented Maryland at the National Envirothon Competition in Mt. Royal University, Calgary, Canada. The team did exceptionally well. Competing against over 50 Envirothon teams across the United States of America, Canada, and China, North Harford took 2nd place overall with 619.67 points. They lost to the winning high school from Massachusetts (620.67 points) by one (1) point. North Harford won the aquatics event and tied with Massachusetts for the soils event.
- The District sent out a Newsletter in July.
- On October 8th, Harford SCD and Cecil SCD will be participating in a MD Ag Commission's Cecil/Harford tour event.
- The Harford SCD Board of Supervisors voted to move their normal scheduled Board meeting from Wednesday, October 8th to Thursday, October 9th.
- On October 23rd, the Harford SCD will be hosting its annual Cooperator's Dinner at the Level Volunteer Fire Hall. Invitations have been mailed. We ask those who would like to attend to please RSVP by October 7th.

Howard SCD

- Supervisors and staff participated in a Howard County Planning and Zoning listening session regarding proposed Zoning Regulation Amendments designed to provide flexibility for agritourism operations and to streamline processes for these operations.
- Staff manned a booth at the Howard County Fair and participated in a variety of ag education events at the Fair.
- Howard SCD hosted their annual Cooperators Dinner on a local horse farm. About 130 people attended the event, including 2 County Councilmembers and 3 local Delegates.
- Howard SCD will be participating in an Ag Tour and a Farmer Roundtable discussion with MDA Secretary Kevin Atticks at the end of September.

Area 5 (Lower Shore) – Anne-Meredith Webster:

Worcester:

- WO Continuing to provide PDA MOU funding on ditch repairs, mowing, and maintenance completed: \$43,345 paid to-date
- WO Completing Annual updates to District Website with Owl Creek Consulting from Berlin, MD: adding enhanced features, document pages, and updating clickable links
- WO Staff are focusing on new Lead Planner, MACS Capital Project workload, and Grazing Specialist roles.

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- Outreach: Worcester, Wicomico, and Somerset Managers and Staff attended the UME Poultry Expo Day in Princess Anne, MD on 09/03

Wicomico:

- MACS Capital projects - applications and claims and setting up visits for Status reviews.
- We are working with some of the folks on cover crop providing seeding information, etc.
- New planners are getting training to get plans up to standards for approval.
- Erosion and sediment control review is busy with many projects coming in.

Somerset:

- Somerset SCD has been updating conservation farm plans and assisting poultry producers with a variety of different tasks.

Dorchester: None

The meeting was adjourned to closed session at 11:45 AM (Posey/Feldt).

Respectfully Submitted,



Loretta Collins
Executive Secretary

SUMMARY OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON September 18, 2025

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:

Time of closed session: 11:45 AM

Place (location) of closed session: MDA Headquarters, Annapolis, MD

Purpose of the closed session: Discuss applications submitted for Soil Conservation District Supervisor Positions

2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:

Names of members voting aye: Motion: Posey Second : Feldt

Members opposed: NONE

Members abstaining: NONE

3. Statutory authority to close session:

This meeting was closed under the following provisions of General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b):

4. Topic #1: § 3-305(b) (x)

“To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals”

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Listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

Topic description	Persons present for discussion	Action Taken/Each Recorded Vote
#1: Cecil SCD Supervisor Applications	In-Person: Posey, Funk, Schmidt, Feldt, Sandi, Swaine Virtual: Flickinger, Kretser, Webster	Discussion of application materials- no vote
#2: Talbot SCD Supervisor Applications	In-Person: Posey, Funk, Schmidt, Feldt, Sandi, Swaine Virtual: Flickinger, Kretser, Webster	Discussion of application materials- no vote
#3: Worcester SCD Supervisor Applications	In-Person: Posey, Funk, Schmidt, Feldt, Sandi, Swaine Virtual: Flickinger, Kretser, Webster	Discussion of application materials- no vote

The meeting was adjourned from closed session at 12:35 PM (Feldt/Posey).

Respectfully Submitted,

Loretta Collins
Executive Secretary

Attendance: Sept 18, 2025

*in-person

SSCC Member	Name	Present	Absent
Area 1- Western	Diane Flickinger	X	
Area 2- Southern	Amy Posey	X*	
Area 3 - Upper Shore	Steve Freeman (until 11:00)	X	
Area 4 - Central	Van Funk (Chair)	X*	
Area 5 - Lower Shore	Anne-Meredith Webster	X	
MDA	Hans Schmidt	X*	
DNR	Rob Feldt	X*	
MDE	Greg Sandi	X*	
UMD	Darren Jarboe (Chuck Schuster, proxy)	X*	
MASCD President	John Swaine	X*	
Ag Commission	Gordon Kretser	X	
USDA-NRCS (non-voting)	Suzy Daubert (Eric Hines, proxy)	X*	
FSA (non-voting)	George Turner	X*	

Organization /Office	Attendee(s)	Organization /Office	Attendee(s)
Allegany SCD		Howard SCD	David Plummer
Anne Arundel SCD		Kent SCD	
Baltimore County SCD		Montgomery SCD	
Calvert SCD		Prince George's SCD	
Caroline SCD		Queen Anne's SCD	
Carroll SCD		Somerset SCD	Mark Carey
Cecil SCD	Chris Brown*	St. Mary's SCD	Bruce Young
Charles SCD		Talbot SCD	
Dorchester SCD		Washington County SCD	Dee Price
Frederick County SCD	Heather Hutchinson	Wicomico SCD	
Garrett SCD		Worcester SCD	Chelsea Tyson
Harford SCD			
MDA (HQ)	Alisha Mulkey*, Loretta Collins*, Martin Proulx* (until 10:45)	MDA	Adam Lyon (Southern MD)
MASCD	Jen Nelson*	NRCS	Steve Strano*
Office of Attorney General	Tom Filbert	SDAT	Adam Lewis, Bob Yeager