



**Maryland
Department of Agriculture**

Office of the Secretary

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

Maryland Agricultural Commission

Agriculture | *Maryland's Leading Industry*
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Maryland Agricultural Commission
Incomplete April 12th, 2023 Minutes
September 19th, 2023

Full meeting minutes were lost due to technological glitch and could not be recovered. This report covers only the information submitted electronically to the Executive Secretary after the meeting.

Ag Education- Joseph Dymek:

MAEF

- MAEF Scholarship application period has closed; Secondary Committee will meet April 17 to

determine recipients. Over a dozen students applied for either the MAEF Academic Scholarship (for upperclassmen or graduate students pursuing Ag Education or Extension degrees) or the Seibel Scholarship (for students pursuing an agricultural degree).

- MAEF Calendar Contest is open until May 1st for K-12 grade students. Winners receive a \$50

prize and have their art featured in the annual MAEF calendar. More information online at www.maefonline.com.

- MAEF's next two professional development workshops are:

April 22-23 – Cecil County – LET'S GRO a Nation – Elementary and Middle School Teachers – History-focused.

July 17-19 – St Mary's County - LET'S GRO in Water – Elementary and Middle School Teachers – Focused on natural resources and aquaculture. Registration is online at www.maefonline.com.

- MAEF continues to work through the Blueprint and its effect on Career & Technical Education, including how to create the best possible outcomes for agricultural career exploration and Agricultural Education by:
 - Reaching out to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to remind them that Agriculture is the state's largest industry and offer our services for career exploration activities. LWDBs are tasked with working with school systems to promote career exploration beginning in 6th grade.
 - Working with allies to create a plan offering solutions to the challenges presented by the Blueprint, including identifying new industry recognized credentials, new opportunities for apprenticeships, additional resources for curriculum and teacher support, and more.
- MAEF intends to add a fifth Mobile Science Lab to its fleet this year, and to refurbish one of the

Mobile Showcases. Sponsorship opportunities will be forthcoming!

- MAEF's 2023 Banquet will be held Nov. 9 at the Clarion Inn "Champion Center" in Frederick,

Md. (This was previously a Holiday Inn, and sometimes referred to as the Frances Scott Key Event Center).

FFA

- Over 480 FFA members and guests attend the FFA Spring Judging Career Events held at Westminster High School on April 1st.
- The 95th Maryland FFA State Convention will be held at UMCP on June 27-29 at UMCP.
- FFA Livestock Evaluation, Dairy Evaluation and Dairy Handler Career Development Event will be held on July 20th at the Washington County Ag Expo & Fair.

4-H

- 2022 Annual Report shared with the Ag Commission. Highlights: 78,829 youth and education contacts through 4-H, 92 Extension educators and staff, 2,005 volunteers
- Maryland 4-H Foundation provided \$502,625 In total program support.
- Youth enrolled in 6,618 animal science projects in 2022, a 4% increase from 2021
- Maryland 4-H hosted 19 state animal science workshops and competitive events

MAEF, 4-H and Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association appreciates Secretary Atticks for recently meeting with each organization.

Direct Farm Market: Amy Crone

- Markets and farmers getting ready for the season with hoophouse production in full effect and waiting to see what the weather decides for field planting.
- Now is the time for farmers to finish up any GAP / PSR requirements.
- Most farmers markets will open in April for the season; working on ensuring that their SNAP authorizations are current and that their systems are all ready for 2023 season.
- Online Course for MD Cottage Food Processors & On-Farm Home Processors ([registration](#))
- Ongoing challenges for this sector: processing dates, HPAI, seed shortages, labor
- Upcoming events:
 - Million Acre Challenge [events list](#)
 - List of all through UMD [here](#)
 - Urban Agriculture Education Grower Meetings list [here](#)
- Grants available:
 - ARPA eWIC Modernization funds available for states to implementing electronic FMNP solutions (due April 2023 or January 2024)
 - USDA Grants:
 - [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) & [Local Food Promotion Program](#) (due May 2)
 - [GUSNIP](#) (due May 4)
- Job Opportunities:

- Farmers Market Coalition seeking Executive Director ([opening](#))
- PASA openings ([here](#))

Nursery I- John Kelly Lewis:

- After an early warm up, temps were cooler in mid-March and very warm in early April. This has put most plants close to their normal time coming out of dormancy and facilitated a close to normal harvest period for field grown nursery stock.
- Some of the low temps in the 20's after the initial early warm-up will likely show up as reduced fruit on peach and plum trees.
- It has been very dry in late March and early April creating concern for field growers.
- Spotted Lantern Fly continues to be a concern after the quarantined Maryland Counties was expanded in March.
- Most Nurseries are reporting good spring sales and are busy.

Poultry I- Michael Levensgood:

1. – Chicken Day in Annapolis arranged by DCA

- We brought Chicken Day in Annapolis back this year, and it was a golden opportunity for DCA members and chicken community allies to speak with many lawmakers from the Maryland General Assembly, as well as Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks, about how the state can backstop and boost our chicken farmers. The governor sought out a new attraction DCA brought to Chicken Day in Annapolis: VR headsets to show a 360-degree video tour of a chicken farm, produced by the National Chicken Council. A grant from the Rural Maryland Council made the VR tour possible.

2 - For the first time, Delmarva's chicken GDP comes to \$5 billion

- In 2022, the Delmarva chicken community raised 596 million chickens, produced 4.4 billion pounds of chicken and generated \$5 billion in wholesale value – the most productive year ever in Delmarva's 100-year history of producing chicken for consumers. Those are some of the insights in [new data about Delmarva's chicken industry in 2022](#), released by DCA this week.
- In the spirit of doing more with less, Delmarva's chicken industry was able to increase production by 38 percent in the past 10 years even as the number of chicken houses in operation during that time dropped by 11 percent, and inflation-adjusted feed ingredient costs more than doubled. Year over year, the chicken community on Delmarva increased production by 4 percent while slightly decreasing the number of chicken houses in active use

- Through DCA's vegetative environmental buffers program, we helped DCA members plant 1,729 trees, shrubs and tall grasses in 2022. Chicken companies purchased \$359 million in packaging and processing supplies in 2022.

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- Chicken companies purchased 89 million bushels of corn, 39 million bushels of soybeans, and 428,482 bushels of wheat primarily from Delaware, Maryland and Virginia grain farmers for chicken feed in 2022.

- Delmarva's chicken companies invested \$168 million in capital improvements in 2022, including investments in wastewater treatment, hatcheries and processing plants.

3 – Several cases of vLT in broiler flocks found on Delmarva

- vLT is a serious challenge to the health of poultry flocks, even though it is not as challenging as avian influenza. Spread can be airborne or by contact with sick birds or contaminated equipment, clothing, and vehicles.

[Broilers with vLT may show gasping, coughing bloody mucoïd exudate, rattling or squawking, and extension of the neck during inspiration 5–12 days after exposure.](#)

They may also have [puffy eyelids with foamy secretions](#). Affected birds are anorectic and inactive. Even after birds recover from the symptoms of vLT, the virus can persist in their airways, according to Dr. Claudia Osorio, the chair of DCA's Poultry Health & Welfare Committee. "The birds become carriers," she noted. "In broilers it goes into latency and is reactivated in cases of stress. And when the virus is found in a particular area, it can spread to other farms quickly if biosecurity measures are not followed properly." Controlling vLT and preventing it from spreading is helped by practicing strict, consistent biosecurity -- the same measures that combat the spread of HPAI can combat the spread of vLT. There are also vaccines to fight vLT, and mass [vaccination](#) can be done by water, spray, or in ovo methods.

4 - The word is out: We're bringing back the Delmarva Chicken Festival!

- The Delmarva Chicken Festival, our long-running and beloved event from 1948 to 2014, will return in 2023 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first broiler chicken farm on Delmarva. The festival will take place October 7, 2023 from 1-7 p.m. at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury, Maryland and will be free and open to the public. Attractions at the 2023 Delmarva Chicken Festival include local food trucks, vendors, historical and educational exhibits, children's activities, and more. Live music will be performed throughout the day by The Jones Boys, Jimmy Charles, and Mike Hines & The Look. The 'Chicken Capers' contests, which pit teams of employees from Delmarva's five chicken companies against each other in field day-style games, are returning for the 2023 event. A fireworks show will round out the event at 7 p.m. All five chicken companies – Allen Harim Foods, Amick Farms, Mountaire Farms, Perdue Farms, and Tyson – are presenting sponsors of the 2023 Delmarva Chicken Festival. We've been thrilled by the reaction to this news on social media and in notes and calls from DCA members. [WBOC](#), [WMDT](#), [WDEL](#), [Delmarvanow](#), and [other outlets](#) covered the announcement and shared the news. You'll hear more from DCA about the festival in the coming months, but for now, save the date on your calendar - we hope to see you there! Sponsors, vendors, food trucks and exhibitors interested in taking part in the festival can [sign up here to get more information from DCA](#).

5 – HPAI is still a concern for the industry

- Everyone needs to stay focused on BIO- SECURITY. Pa. has been the latest hot spot with ducks, and live bird market birds having the majority of cases. 818 confirmed flocks with 58.7 million birds depopulated, since the start of outbreak. March overall was a down month for cases.

Vegetable – Rebecca Stoecker

- Farmer's markets have begun across the state and customers are excited to buy local produce.
- The growing drought is a big concern. Looking ahead if the drought continues what will smaller farms that don't have access to a body of water on the farm, do for water collection.
- SNAP customers at the market have been feeling the pinch of losing the higher allotment of benefits from the pandemic Era funds.
- There is a weed management tour on the eastern shore on Wednesday, June 28th which will include a tour of watermelon integrated weed management projects
- Questions still come up at the Farmer's markets such as where are the bananas? What else can be done to help show customers what they are getting at the Farmer's markets is local and what is considered local produce for Maryland.
- Spotted lanternflies are still concern. So far in Northern Baltimore County we haven't seen many nymphs.