



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
mda.maryland.gov

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Maryland Agricultural Commission
Minutes
June 14, 2023

Present: Kelly Dudeck
Richard Pelz
Clifford Newsome, Jr.
Matthew Levi Sellers
John Murphy
Amy Crone
Stephanie Reiser

Joseph Dymek
Frank Allnutt
Thomas Mullineaux
Michael Pons (By Phone)
Michael Levengood (By Phone)
Dr. Marianne Bailey
Dr. Craig Beyroutty

Absent: Rajneesh Kathuria
Benjamin Sowers
Paula Linthicum
Sean Hough
John Kelly Lewis

Matthew Nielsen
Far Nasir
Gordon Kretser
Rebecca Stoecker

MDA Staff/Guests:

Kevin Atticks
Steve Connelly
Cassie Shirk
Hans Schmidt
Michael Calkins

Jessica Hackett
Rachel Jones
Brian Tracy (MDG)
Sierra Criste (MARBIDCO)
Jonathan Cribbs (AFP)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

April minutes could not be found.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE:

Kevin Atticks, Secretary of Agriculture:

- On June 1st, MDA announced that we would be working toward a new plan for nutrient management writing and also analyzing the actual plan to make sure it's relevant to all industries going forward. We will not be contracting directly with the University of Maryland Extension to hire writers to write plans in the form that it's in right now.
- MDA is hosting a workgroup summit on July 17th, location TBD.
- There will be three listening sessions before that, dates TBA. We want to hear ideas on how to proceed.
- So far, we have heard that people get their plans for free and want to continue to get their plans for free. We are going to try to accommodate that request and have options for folks to get free plans. We are worried about the small farmers because, in some cases,

there is not a lot of revenue coming in through their farm to pay for a plan. We are also going to try to have options for the larger farmers who have been getting their plans for free as well. The law states that we may offer a cost share. We are trying to revise our training, the plan, and our certification to make it easier for farmers to engage themselves. We are looking at an addition to cost share to help cover some of the costs of having a plan written.

- We have heard a concern from some of the non traditional ag industries. The produce folks have a hard time writing a plan.
- The plan was written for larger farmers with more acreage.
- We've toyed with the idea of offering grants to organizations to hire plan writers for their constituents.
- The point of the nutrient management plan is to be intentional about what you put on your land that could end up in the Bay. It's a tool to meet our Bay goals.
- It was time for a new model.
- We are going to need the University as a partner to work on training. We are going to have a strong, ongoing relationship with the University and Extension.
- MDA is the regulator so we shouldn't write all the plans. We are looking to stand up an industry of plan-writers, public and private.

Hans Schmidt, Assistant Secretary Resource Conservation:

- There's going to be a transition period. We really want a buy-in from the farmers and to make sure a nutrient management plan is part of your business plan. Bear with us during this transition. We've had some really good conversations and we hope that continues through the listening sessions. This is the opportunity for farmers to tell us what they want while we try to meet our departmental goals.
- We want to minimize the language barrier the best way that we can.
- Confidentiality is important and we want to make sure we still have that.
- There may have been a push to do one year plans for one reason or another. We would prefer three year plans. That takes a lot of stress off of the writers and farmers.
- A soil test is good for three years and I don't see that changing.
- The Bay Program and the EPA recognize that Pennsylvania is not doing their share in taking care of the Bay. Kevin just had an Earth Day event with all of the Secretaries. He has had multiple conversations with the EPA Administrator about Pennsylvania. That discussion continues to happen, at the Secretary's level and the Governor's level. 50% of the fresh water that comes into the Bay comes through the Susquehanna River.
- Pennsylvania does not have a soil conservation district setup like us. They also have the Plain Sect Community who do not always take government support so we have to work with them to find that balance.

COMMODITY REPORTS: COMMITTEE REPORTS WERE SUBMITTED FROM THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS AND ARE INCLUDED BELOW.

Ag Education- Joseph Dymek:

MAEF

- MAEF's Annual meeting will be held on Thursday, June 15th at the Maryland Horse Library in Reisterstown. New officers will be elected.
- Organizing professional development workshops for teachers in July and August.
- Assisting the Maryland Ag Teachers Association with sponsoring, planning, and conducting the annual ag teachers conference in July.
- The MAEF Showcase session is starting. Please find to visit the Showcase at your local fair or ag event.
- A record number of MAEF Mobil Lab bookings was achieved this school year, reaching approximately 70,000 students.
- Secretary Atticks' leadership on behalf of agriculture education already has elevated the profile of agriculture education at MSDE and is receiving increased attention.

FFA

- UMCP will be hosting the 2023 MD State FFA Convention June 27-29.

Maryland Farm Bureau, Reported by Dr. Barb Glenn

- Ag Education is once again the top policy priority for MDFB for 2023. A draft policy will be considered by counties for 2024 on MDFB's position on the Blueprint for AG Education, as authored by MDFB, MAEF, and MATA. Maryland's Blueprint for the Future initially cited MD Department of Labor and the appointed CTE Committee as the leads for the Blueprint pillar on CTE, however there is a new effort to more clearly define the role of MSDE.
- MDFB continues to enhance relationships with land grant universities, within the University System of Maryland – University of Maryland, College Park and University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. A discussion was held recently with AGNR leadership about routes for students to gain entrance into UMD, and the application process.

Ag and Extension Education, University of Maryland, UMCP – Report by Dr. Melissa Welsh

- Dr. Welsh was recognized by the National Association of Agricultural Educators with the Region VI Outstanding Post-Secondary Agriculture Program. Additionally she was honored to participate as a panel member for the International Association for Agricultural Sustainability's discussion on Deepening Agricultural Literacy to Enhance the Value of Agriculture. Dr. Welsh will also present at the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture, American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences this summer.
- Two new courses will be offered this semester
 - Extension Research Methods with Applied Data Analysis
 - Program Planning and Evaluation in Agricultural Education

- The Agricultural and Extension Education Program continues to offer many courses under the College of Education and is taught by AGNR faculty.
- Planning for the 1st Maryland Agricultural Teachers Association professional development night at UMCP on March 1, 2024.
- There were 15 applicants for a new tenure-track Ag and Extension Education position at UMCP, 3 applicants were invited to campus. The name of the individual selected for the position will be announced by the Dean's office shortly.

Ag Education News on the National Level

- Proposed legislation: Community College Agriculture Advancement Act
 - Create new opportunities for community and technical colleges through Capacity Building Grants for Community College Agriculture Programs
 - Give priority to institutions who work directly with local agriculture operations to provide experiential training for students.
 - Include farm business management-related subjects such as accounting and finance, so that farmers, ranchers, and others in the industry have the tools to build thriving businesses.
 - Authorize the program at \$20,000,000
- Bottom line: Congress has authorized Department of Agriculture grants and assistance to institutions of higher education that generally have not benefited the nation's nearly 1,100 community colleges. This bill is a commonsense step to ensuring that all education institutions have the capacity to meet the needs of future farmers and agriculture service providers.

Agribusiness- Thomas Mullineaux:

- The University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is embarking on a program to renovate the dairy barns. Everything down there that is the center of the College of AGNR is going to be brought up to speed.
- Exceedingly dry weather in the last 30-45 days has negatively affected retail business. No Brainer!
- Retail operations with garden centers have taken a severe hit with plant sales and associated high-margin products suffering.
- Recent rains have helped with corn and early soybeans. The hay crop was excellent.
- Barley crop was excellent. Late-maturing wheat is suffering.
- Seed dealers are looking at very large amounts of double-crop seed that will be dumped.

Aquaculture- Richard Pelz:

- Aquaculture oyster sales are booming.
- As I have reported before oysters are the only significant aquaculture species raised in Maryland. Oysters are considered to be a luxury good. As such there is a different effect

on prices. The more oysters that are available the more the demand is released and that drives up the price. 2022 was a banner year for oyster production in Maryland both wild-caught and Aquaculture. The best since the 1980s The demand has jumped and prices are up. So, it is no wonder Watermen are unhappy as reported in the Delmarva Farmer that DNR is considering limiting the catch during the next season impacting negatively both the harvest numbers and prices simultaneously. Those in oyster aquaculture need to keep an eye on this possibility and plan for it.

- Effective December 26, 2022, DNR DNR implemented updated size limits on oysters. Oysters change sex and become female at about 3 inches which is the size that must be returned to the bay. Oyster diseases typically impact younger oysters, although disease mortality has reduced in recent years and is less of a factor. Faster-growing oysters are less impacted by Dermo the prevalent disease in Maryland waters. Slower-growing oysters are more likely to carry the disease. The cull law is required for Maryland Aquaculture operations. The result is Male Diseased Runts are returned to the water. While fast-growing disease-resistant female oysters are harvested. Disposal of cull oysters by aquaculture operators is available through (SOAR) Supporting Oyster Aquaculture and Restoration (SOAR) program. Implemented by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) Governor Moore awarded \$22.8 million in grants and a contract for oyster restoration.
- The ongoing and recent topics at the Aquaculture Coordinating Council include:
 - Shellfish Lease Bulk Tagging
 - Wicomico River Dredging Project Update
 - Alternative Substrate
 - Summer Harvest Time
 - Vessel Identification Equipment
 - LoRa Data Communications Project for Lease Protection
 - Water Quality Trading: Oyster Size Addition
 - Price Change for Shell Purchases
- As you can see, they all concern oyster aquaculture, no diversity.
- As a personal note, I came back from the Philippines with pneumonia and did not wish to give it to anyone. Aquaculture there is quite diverse and fairly widespread with farm-grown species enjoying higher prices than similar commercially harvested animals and plants.

Direct Farm Market- Amy Crone

- All markets are open. Direct Farm is going heavily into the summer season so please get out to your farmer's markets and buy directly from your farmers.
- The Farmer's Market Nutrition Program position is open at MDA.
- Jeremy Chris' position in Montgomery County is also open. That covers a variety of things like helping with the farmer's markets.
- Buy Local Week is the last week of July.

- National Farmers Market Week is the first full week in August.
- SMADC is hosting a Buy Local Event on July 31st.

Equine- Michael Pons:

- The 2023 Preakness Stakes attendance was down considerably, from nearly 125,000 in 2019, pre-Covid, to an estimated 65,000 fans. Maryland Jockey Club officials were disappointed, especially after hiring 8-time Emmy-winning rockstar Bruno Mars, as the headliner for the popular infield concert. However, the 2023 pari-mutuel handle was \$104M, which compares favorably to \$100M+ pre-Covid betting totals. The Preakness Stakes featured a field of only seven horses, with Kentucky Derby winner, Mage, being the lone Derby horse to run here. Mage ran a pedestrian third to the Bob Baffert-trained winner, National Treasure, who won in wire-to-wire fashion, in a time nearly three seconds slower than Secretariat's record 50 years ago. MJC needs to address: attendance, Preakness field size, as well as numerous customer service and facilities issues.
- A six-month extension to the 10-Year-Plan was recently signed by: MJC, MTHA (Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen Association, and the MHBA (Maryland Horse Breeders Association). This agreement provides a game plan for all three participants, regarding the number of racing days, racing schedule, marketing plans, etc. Discussions about a new 10-year plan have begun.
- **The Sport of Thoroughbred Horse Racing has been severely impacted by the recent deaths of racehorses across the country. So far, there have been at least 12 horse fatalities at Churchill Downs, two on the Pimlico's Preakness Card, and one on Belmont Stakes Day, and another the following day.** Extensive pre-race veterinarian inspections have been enacted, as well as blood tests and physical examinations, yet these breakdowns have still occurred. The Churchill Downs track was closed on June 7th, about three weeks prior to the end of the meeting, so that more extensive track safety testing could be done. **The CD Meet has been shifted to Ellis Park, in Henderson, KY.**
- **Maryland racing has also had troubles with horse fatalities at Laurel Park.** A total of 15 horses have died at Maryland racetracks this year, including two on the same day. In April, racing was canceled for several days after Maryland horsemen boycotted the entry box until the Laurel Park racetrack was examined by an independent expert, former Maryland racetrack superintendent John Passero. **After repairs were made to the surface, the track reopened and, so far, it is a safer and more uniform racetrack on which to train and race.**
- **Despite the passage of the 2020 Maryland Racetrack Improvement Bond Bill, which pledged nearly \$400 Million to rebuild Pimlico and Laurel, no progress has been made.** The Stronach Group, which owns the Maryland Jockey Club, is faced with formidable capital gains taxes on the cash value of the improvements, significant cost-overruns, and interest-rate hikes, which have stopped the project. Negotiations have, so far, been unproductive. The Maryland Legislature approved a new six-person racing board to oversee Maryland racing issues. **It's hoped that this board will facilitate**

racetrack improvements and act in our sport's best interest if anything happens to the Stronach Group, the Canadian-based owner, who currently operates the MJC.

- **In the good news department, this year's Kentucky Derby winner, Mage, was sold last spring here at Timonium. He's the first Derby winner to have been sold in Maryland in my lifetime.** Mage brought \$290,000 at the 2022 May 2-Year-Old in Training Sale and was bought by a syndicate, which includes a micro-share partnership. Mage is the first Classic winner sold in this sale since Afleet Alex, winner of the 2005 Preakness. He ran third in this year's Preakness, unable to catch the leaders in a much slower-paced race than the Derby. The 2023 May Sale had a \$1M sales-topper and several \$500,000+ horses as well. But the overall clearance rate, the number of horses sold, dropped considerably as did the median sales price. **Nonetheless, several top racing prospects, who might be famous one day, were sold here again this year.**
- **Fasig-Tipton has added a June 2-Year-Old Sales to our calendar, cataloging about 150 horses for the sale, scheduled for Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at the Timonium Sales Pavilion.**
- **The Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Act, known as HISA, which provides uniform racing regulations, central racing office and numerous other reforms, began on May 22, 2023.** Opponents have stalled enactment from its planned beginning on January 1, 2023. **HISA is a federal law governing the sport of horse racing and will provide uniform mediation regulations for participating racing states.**

Farm Bureau- Paula Linthicum:

The continued drought remains problematic for farmers across Maryland. These types of growing conditions are typically encountered in late summer.

Maryland Farm Bureau has named Parker Welch as its new Executive Director. The organization is currently seeking 2 Regional Field Managers. See below for position descriptions:

JOB DESCRIPTION

Exempt

Date Written: May 30, 2023

Job Title: Regional Field Manager (RFM)

Reports To: Executive Director

Department: Organization & Field Services

Territory: Flexible upon hiring two new RFMs to create a three-manager field team. Strong preference for one RFM to reside and manage the Eastern Shore.

Pay: \$52,000 – \$56, 000

Company Vehicle: Yes

Other Benefits: 401(K) w/ company match, health insurance, vision, dental, BYOD phone stipend, vacation and sick leave.

POSITION SUMMARY: Provide high-quality, professional service, and support to promote growth, productivity, and effectiveness of county farm bureaus in the assigned region, acting as the primary staff liaison between state and county Farm Bureaus.

PRIMARY DUTIES:

1. Provide leadership and direction to county Farm Bureaus for the purpose of improving the organizational strength, effectiveness, visibility, and profile of the organization in pursuit of defined Maryland Farm Bureau (MDFB) and county Farm Bureau strategic goals, programs, and services.
 - Manage an effective annual membership growth campaign in the region in conjunction with county leaders and MDFB staff.
 - Surface, develop, and train new and existing leadership.
 - Serve as the resource person to the county Farm Bureaus in finding answers to questions that may arise.
 - Maintain organizational integrity by encouraging counties to develop annual budgets and strategic goals, and review by-laws and other pertinent organizational documents annually.
 - Assist county boards of directors and county secretaries in overseeing organizational finances and the development of an annual or biennial budget that is aligned with the county's strategic plan and goals.
 - Engage county Farm Bureaus in advocacy activities and encourage attendance at regional, state, and national public policy events.
 - Assist county leaders in local issue action.
 - Promote participation in Member Services programs.
 - Develop and enhance working relationships with other organizations, government agencies and community groups within the region.
 - Collaborate with other MDFB staff to promote regional Farm Bureau activities, surface content for MDFB communications, and coordinate advocacy efforts statewide.
2. Contribute to the advancement of Maryland Farm Bureaus' strategic goals.
 - Work in conjunction with the Executive Director to execute strategic partnership plans and meet Nationwide sponsorship goals to maximize benefits for MDFB and county Farm Bureaus.
 - Provide staff support to various MDFB state-wide programs and initiatives, as assigned.

- Coordinate American Farm Bureau Federation programs and initiatives, as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Graduation from an accredited high school or possession of a high school equivalency certificate.
- Valid Maryland driver's license with a clean driving record. Must be insurable to drive a company vehicle.
- Must live in the State of Maryland. To develop strong relationships within regions, it is strongly preferred that the candidate lives in the assigned region.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS:

- General understanding of food, agriculture, farming, fishing, forestry, and conservation across the state of Maryland is preferred.
- Preferred experience working with volunteers and/or in a business or nonprofit association environment.
- The ability to work nights, weekends, and some holidays to accommodate the nature of the volunteer structure of the organization.
- Self-starter. The ability to take proactive initiative to identify problems, assess situations, identify potential solutions, and design and implement strategies to achieve desired outcomes and measurable results with minimum supervision. Strong positive attitude, energy, drive, confidence, and tenacity.
- A high degree of Emotional Intelligence, empathy, and active listening skills.
- To conduct oneself in a manner that is beyond reproach, to be a role model brand ambassador for the organization who is reliable, honest, accountable, and has a high level of integrity.
- Skill, comfort, and ability to speak in front of groups of various sizes, in public, and with local media and press. In addition, the ability to teach and train volunteers through appropriate adult teaching and learning methods.
- Exemplary written communication skills with regard to clarity, brevity, spelling, grammar, and composition. The ability to communicate complex agricultural subjects, public policy subjects, and to provide written instruction to volunteers.
- Proficient computer skills and familiarity with software including but not limited to Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, etc.), Adobe applications (Acrobat, Lightroom, Photoshop, etc.), web-based applications accessed through an internet browser, and social media applications.

TELECOMMUTE OPTION:

- 80% travel, including some overnight stays – primarily in the district, some travel required across state and to national conventions.
- 20% in Davidsonville office.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY:

Maryland Farm Bureau®, Inc. provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

Resumes with cover letters should be submitted by mail or email. Please include qualifications, background, education, references, and salary requirements by Friday, June 30th. Resumes will be accepted until the position is filled.

RESUMES SHOULD BE SENT TO:

Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Attn: Parker Welch, Interim Executive Director 3358 Davidsonville Road
Davidsonville, MD 21035

Email: pwelch@marylandfb.org

Questions: Contact Parker Welch at 410-922-3426

Hemp- Matthew Levi Sellers:

Disappointments and Setbacks for the Hemp Industry in Maryland Legislative Session

Introduction:

The recent legislative session in Maryland brought forth a series of disappointments and setbacks for the state's hemp industry. Despite the introduction of several bills aimed at supporting and regulating the industry, such as HB 1204 and HB1067/SB0508, none of them garnered sufficient support from the legislature and subsequently failed. This report highlights the consequences of this legislative inaction and explores the adverse effects of the Cannabis Reform Bills, SB0516/HB0556, on the hemp industry in Maryland.

1. Failure to Establish Regulatory Framework:

HB 1204 and HB1067/SB0508 were crucial bills that sought to establish a much-needed regulatory framework for hemp-derived products and provide greater opportunities for those interested in producing hemp for fiber and grain in Maryland. HB1204 was inspired by the findings of the MMCC's summer study, which provided valuable insights into regulating the industry effectively. However, the legislature's lack of support for these bills dealt a devastating blow to the MD Hemp Industry hindering its growth potential.

2. **Setback with Cannabis Reform Bills:**

Contrary to the industry's expectations, the passing of the Cannabis Reform Bills, SB0516/HB0556, turned out to be a major setback for the hemp industry in Maryland. Unbeknownst to many, these bills contained provisions that effectively removed the sale of certain hemp-derived products from small family-owned and minority-owned hemp businesses. Instead, the responsibility for selling these products was handed over to large out-of-state corporations that currently dominate the cannabis industry, further consolidating the market and removing valuable revenue streams for local businesses.

3. **Impact on Hemp-Derived Products Market:**

The exclusion of certain hemp-derived products from small businesses had a significant impact on the market. These products accounted for approximately 85-90% of the hemp-derived products market, meaning that a large portion of the industry has been affected. The sudden shift in sales dynamics, favoring out-of-state corporations, threatens the survival and growth of small businesses within the MD hemp industry.

4. **Breakdown of Maryland's Hemp Production:**

According to data collected from the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the total acreage of hemp produced in the state was allocated to different commodities as follows: 69% for CBD extraction (hemp-derived products), 17% for fiber, 5% for grain, and 8% for seed. This breakdown illustrates the significance of CBD extraction in the hemp industry, which is now facing severe challenges due to the new law.

5. **Impact on CBD Extraction:**

The passing of the new law has had a detrimental impact on the CBD extraction sector, which constitutes a majority of the hemp-derived products market. With the removal of sales opportunities for small businesses, the ability of CBD extraction businesses to operate profitably and sustainably is greatly compromised. This setback poses a significant threat to the economic viability of the hemp industry in Maryland.

6. **Failure of the Maryland Department of Agriculture:**

The Maryland Department of Agriculture's failure to address the concerns of hemp farmers and support their options to resolve these issues further exacerbates the problems faced by the industry. By not actively advocating for the interests of hemp farmers, the department missed an opportunity to protect the industry from the adverse effects of the legislative session.

Conclusion:

The recent legislative session in Maryland dealt a series of disappointments and setbacks to the hemp industry. The failure to establish a regulatory framework and the passing of the Cannabis Reform Bills have had severe implications for the industry's growth and sustainability. The exclusion of certain hemp-derived products from small businesses and the subsequent consolidation of the market by out-of-state corporations have caused significant disruptions, of which the MD Hemp Industry may never recover.

The Maryland Hemp Industry has voiced its concerns regarding Governor Moore's ownership of nearly \$1.2 million worth of shares in a prominent Cannabis Multi-State Operator (MSO), suggesting that it may have influenced the legislature's decision to pass a new law that has had devastating consequences for the local hemp industry. Critics argue that the governor's financial stake in the cannabis industry raises questions about potential conflicts of interest and the impartiality of the legislative process.

It is crucial for policymakers and relevant authorities to address these concerns promptly and work towards creating a favorable environment for the hemp industry in Maryland.

Kevin Atticks:

- This was a situation where an industry split and one side was trying to offer a certain path forward that is in direct conflict with the Maryland Code, USDA Code, and against the policy intent of the legislature and asked the Department to ignore its own law, federal law, legislature's intent, and the Cannabis commission's intent. I think the expectations were unreasonable.
- Our team was at a SUSTA conference where every state is dealing with the same issues regarding hemp and other potentially intoxicating ag-related products.
- I ask that the industry be willing to continue toward positive change and understand that our hemp law allows us to have a hemp program that operates under the rules and regulations of USDA.
- We see a future for a vibrant hemp industry. Rachel had some great ideas put forward.

Nursery II- John Murphy:

- The drought has affected the nursery, landscape, and greenhouse industries.
- The good news regarding supply chains, inventories have been replaced, replenished, and prices are starting to come down.
- Received a call from a soil company the other day. They are going to waive some transportation costs to offset the cost of soil.
- Met with a large fertilizer company who is bringing fertilizer down about 5%.
- Containers have come down about 15-20%. People may have overbought so the prices are being reduced.
- Still having problems with labor costs. We've been mandated to increase our costs and our payroll.

- Some folks have been pushing to see if our industry can get some kind of credits to offset labor costs. We need something to help our industry with these costs.
- Planning for Chesapeake Green, our two-day symposium, starts this week. We have about 20 people to come up with the educational and accredited sessions that we have.
- We have a volunteer day this Friday at MDA headquarters. MDA asked Maryland Greenhouse Growers Association to put some color out front for the Governor's Buy Local Cookout. So far, we have thirteen volunteers and more donations than we can accept.
- Greenhouse Growers Day is going to be at Tidal Creek on the Eastern Shore this year on July 11th 8:30am-2:30pm. They are a large commercial grower of annuals and perennials. They've been gracious enough to open up their facility where we will have some educational tours as well. I've opened up my doors as well if anyone would like to see another greenhouse that operates differently.
- Abby Farms in Waldorf is going to host our Field Day on September 13th. They have about 700 acres of trees in Waldorf and 80 acres in Delaware. Everyone is welcome to come. Please visit mnlga.org for more information.
- As members of AmericanHort, we have an impact day from September 18-21 where we go to the national Capitol to talk to legislators to express our concerns about the industry. The number one complaint I get from our legislators is that not enough people talk to them.
- October 2-6, we have a fall CPH basic exam online.
- MNLGA just approved the donation to UMD to research new varieties of hazelnuts. We have a lot of disease problems so the University asked for money for research.
- Looking at the different salaries and positions at the State, as a business owner, I think MDA employees are underpaid. I bring this up with our legislators. If we want to fill these positions, we need to put more money into MDA to raise people's income.

Poultry I- Michael Levengood:

- **Maryland puts CAFO permit bills in the mail starting June 6th week**
The Maryland Department of the Environment gave DCA a heads-up that annual CAFO permit fee bills and letters will start arriving in farmers' mailboxes this week. The deadline for CAFO operators to submit annual fee payments is July 8, according to MDE. This annual fee requirement includes CAFOs that are already registered under the 19AF GD Permit, in addition to those still covered under the previous 14AFA GD Permit, while they await coverage under the 19AF GD Permit. The fees range from \$120 for small farms covered by the permit to \$1,200 for CAFOs with a house capacity of 350,000 square feet or more.
In the past, MDE policy was to waive this fee for CAFO operators. But in 2019, the Maryland legislature removed MDE's statutory ability to waive the fee, and so MDE began collecting it.

- **Deadline for Malone Award nominations extended to June 23**

For the second year, DCA will recognize a chicken grower who goes above and beyond to make his or her farm environmentally responsible and compatible with neighboring properties with the George 'Bud' Malone Environmental Award. This award shines a spotlight on Delmarva chicken growers who integrate vegetative environmental buffers and other conservation measures, ensuring their farms are sustainable and are good neighbors. The winner of the award also receives a \$500 prize from DCA.

Applications will be accepted from a grower, his or her family, friends, flock supervisors or state or federal agencies. Which means, growers, you can self-nominate, or you can nominate a fellow grower whose farm you admire! To be nominated, a grower must be a DCA member at the \$150 level or above.

To apply for the George 'Bud' Malone Environmental Award, [print and complete this form](#), and send it to DCA's communications manager, James Fisher, by June 23, 2023.

- **Farm Credit opens applications for JumpStart, Grow Ahead grants**

Horizon Farm Credit is now accepting applications for its JumpStart grant program, which awards \$10,000 to top applicants in the start-up phase of business and is part of the larger, comprehensive [Grow Ahead](#) program, which provides additional resources and support for those just starting out in agriculture. This year, 15 JumpStart grants will be awarded.

Eligible applicants must be at least 18 years of age or older as of July 31, 2023, must have two years or less of farming experience (or be planning to begin farming within the next two years), and must reside in Horizon Farm Credit's territory. Those meeting program requirements are encouraged to apply at horizonfc.com/jumpstart.

Applications will be accepted June 1 through July 31, 2023. There is no cost to apply.

- **NCC op-ed critiques proposed USDA regs on Salmonella, line speeds**

National Chicken Council President Mike Brown wrote an op-ed for The Hill taking USDA to task for the agency's "unnecessary intrusion into the chicken industry," touching on proposals to declare Salmonella an adulterant in some chicken products, change the tournament system for compensating growers who perform well, and end a pilot program that has increased processing plant line speeds. [Read the op-ed here](#).

- **Wild bird HPAI detections relatively low on Delmarva**

USDA APHIS continues to track detections of HPAI in wild birds, but has recorded only a few dozen such cases in the Delmarva states. As of May 23, There had been 12 birds in Delaware, 22 birds in Maryland, and 41 birds in Virginia found with HPAI since January 2022. On the East Coast, New York (336) and Florida (417) saw the most wild bird HPAI cases. Minnesota is the state with the most cases: 604 birds.

- **DCA Presents Awards to Growers and Allies of the Chicken Community at Booster BBQ**

The Outstanding Grower awards were presented during [the third annual Booster BBQ](#), an event for DCA members and invited guests at the Delaware State Fairgrounds. ([Check out a gallery of photos from the event here](#).) More than 700 DCA members and others in the chicken community attended the event, which featured barbecued chicken prepared

and served by Greenwood Volunteer Fire Company and Harrington Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary, ice cream from Vanderwende's, door prizes, more than 40 vendors, lawn games and kid's activities.

Delmarva Chicken Association also presented awards to three people – Virgil Shockley, Dean Walston, and Del. Sheree Sample-Hughes – whose support, work and advocacy have been crucial to the success of Delmarva's \$5 billion chicken community. The chicken industry on Delmarva supports more than 1,330 family farms and more than 18,300 chicken company employees, along with hundreds of allied businesses.

State Grange- Clifford Newsome:

- Each one of the farm operations we visited on the tour in May seemed to be more interesting than the one before. I encourage those who would like to have a tour, to sign up within the next year.
- Preparing to conduct the many county fairs and community shows in the area. The Maryland State Fair changed their schedule last year and we transitioned with that.
- We plan to have five exhibits at the farm and garden building. We had to eliminate fruits and vegetables unless they were canned. This gave us the opportunity to display our latest and local activities and reveal what the grange does to support our communities as well as the local 4-H and FFA chapters. We hope you will stop and visit as well as encourage others to visit the Farm and Garden Building
- State grange picnic is June 26.
- State grange convention is October 19-21 at New Market.

Turf- Gordon Kretser:

- Turf Producers of Maryland (TPM) met with Secretary Atticks on June 8th at MDA Headquarters.
- This was a meeting setup to introduce the Secretary to the sod growers and give the sod growers an opportunity to address some issues going on in their industry.
- Secretary Atticks commented on some steps MDA is working on to improve the Nutrient Management Plan and asked for feedback from the sod growers.
- The sod growers brought up some issues they are having with MDA Sod Certification program and discussed possible ways of fixing them. TPM is realizing that very little Soil Conservation Districts are enforcing their own guidelines for turfgrass sod which is required to be Maryland Certified. There has been a serious erosion of confidence both from the grower and the installers of Maryland Certified Sod because of this. Secretary Atticks will be gathering information from his team and reporting back to TPM within 30 days with his findings.

- TPM formed a committee with 5 members to continue to gather information with the ultimate goal of educating the soil conservation districts and helping to enforce these regulations.

University- Dr. Craig Beyrouthy:

- Regarding the nutrient management plan announcement, we're spending a lot of time internally in terms of identifying and discussing what that means to Extension and how Extension is going to position themselves for this.
- The five faculty specialists will still be involved with the program.
- We're working very closely with MDA in coordinating this and trying to develop a smooth transition for the producers as well as for our folks within the College of AGNR.
- Had a good meeting yesterday with folks in the Ag and Food Systems program. It was an opportunity to hear their concerns. We're putting together an internal task force to identify the main issues and how to address them.
- We continue to provide excellent service for our counties and also to communicate externally to the county commissioners and county executives about what this means for their respective counties. We will be developing a letter coming out of my office to those counties to try to clarify some of their uncertainties and also to get feedback from them to develop a FAQ document that will be used externally through MDA and internally to our own folks.
- We have a new Associate Dean, Jinhee Kim, who started in October. She came to us from the School of Public Health.
- Last year, the state legislature approved funding for two urban ag positions. We really appreciate MDA and Farm Bureaus for supporting those positions.
- This year, the state legislature approved funding for a Maryland native plants position. Both of these initiatives came from the industries.
- We received two major grants to support mental health and rural opioid training to address challenges and disorders. We have a brand new website and a call center that was launched to assist Maryland residents with digital accessibility. It's part of a \$400 million statewide package, with \$6 million of that coming to UMD Extension.
- Last year, Maryland 4-H ACTS was re-established to expose youth from all over the state to the legislative process.
- We are hosting the Maryland FFA State Convention on Campus for the first time in many years June 27-29.
- We had the largest number of applicants that this University has ever experienced in its history— over 59,000. They accepted over 5000 students. We don't know what those numbers translate to the College of AGNR. Our student numbers have been stagnant over the past 5-6 years— about 1000-1100 students. We'd like to see those numbers at 1500. 1700 would be ideal. We've invested a lot of money into recruitment.
- We have two brand new undergraduate programs. One is our ag extension education program and our fermentation science program. We are just completing our laboratory for that program.

- This year there was a legislative effort to pass a bill that is effectively called the “Sip and Spit” bill. That passed overwhelmingly in the House and Senate. It allows any student between the ages of 18-21 to be in the presence of an alcoholic beverage that is manufactured in a classroom setting for educational purposes and to sip that beverage and spit it out.
- We’re doing a lot of research on hemp in a controlled setting. We are not allowed to work with cannabis, anything with THC level above the threshold. We are not able to risk the federal dollars that come to us.

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 a concern. So far in Northern Baltimore County, we haven't seen many nymphs.

Veterinary- Dr. Marianne Bailey:

- Since COVID, all of the continuing education requirements for veterinarians have been allowed to be online. Across the board, veterinarians would like to continue to keep doing continuing education requirements through online options. Veterinarians are overloaded with cases.
- From the Maryland Veterinarian Medicine Association, there were several bills that came up in the legislature this year that may not have gone the way that MDVMA had hoped. There have been some bills that may be beneficial to pets but are hurting veterinarians and how they work. The MDVMA has been trying to get more veterinarians to testify at these hearings. It’s hard to get out of the office when you have appointments.
- I’ve done more international health certificates since COVID than all of my years pre-COVID. People are traveling more with their pets internationally. More and more small animal veterinarians are not doing international health certificates. We need a big push to get new grads to get their accreditation in the state and their USDA accreditation so they can also help do this.

- Concerns about the number of small animal veterinarians that are being bought by corporations.

Agritourism- Kelly Dudeck:

- Reaching out to a lot of folks who have the U-Picks and other agritourism operations. I think Spring has been rainy on the weekends so a lot of folks were disrupted by that. Fortunately it seems that school trips were up a little bit this year so that has saved some of our operators.
- Now it's not raining at all and everything that is growing is not doing that great.
- Some folks are not visiting agriculture operations due to the overall state of the economy.
- We're not seeing a decline in the supply chain yet. The costs of supplies coupled with the increase in pay is a big problem for farmers across the state. We have farmers who are interested in farm-stays.
- There seems to be a changing landscape in the craft alcohol industry. For beer, wine and spirits, we seem to be more steady. It seems that the younger generation and Marylanders aren't as interested in craft beer. We have lost a couple larger breweries lately. That may seem worrying but we still have a lot of healthy breweries in Maryland and an extremely healthy amount of folks who are trying to get in the game.
- Crossvines is a new custom-crush facility in Montgomery County. It's like a large winery that can also be used as an incubator for a lot of wineries who don't have the money to build their own. This is over 10 years in the making and a huge investment for Montgomery County. They may eventually bring in over \$60 million a year through this. They built this facility over a golf course. It's a really important investment for education, agriculture and the job force.
- Consumer, Dairy, Field Crops, Food Processing, Forestry, Horticulture, Viticulture, and Tobacco positions are vacant.

COMMITTEE INPUT:

Kevin Atticks:

- Our agency is benefiting from salary review. When you look at our salaries compared to other departments and agencies, we are underpaid.
- The delegates and county executive in Montgomery County are looking at Crossvines as the spark to redevelop Poolesville.
- In the absence of an Executive Secretary, send names of suggestions for the Commission vacancies to me and I will forward them to the Governor's Appointments Office.
- My goal is to have the Commission be as my advisor group to help guide our programs. I also want to give our updates to you so you can give us feedback.
- I am interested to know if the Commission is interested in taking positions on legislation or policy or if we should leave it as an advisory group.

- One of the top priorities of the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture is to focus on food processing, agricultural processing, and the regulations that are keeping those from occurring.

STAFF UPDATES:

Kevin Atticks:

- I have been making my way around the state. Thank you to everyone who has hosted me on their farms. I'm learning so much. I have one county left to tour, then I'm going to go around the counties again.
- I have a great interest in doing everything we can to make everything we do more efficient.
- I have been spending a lot of time working with our University Board of Regents. It's been really helpful to the industry to have a voice on the Board of Regents.
- I had a productive meeting with the superintendent of the Maryland State Department of Education. I reiterated that ag education should be instilled in the curriculum from kindergarten forward.
- The Governor and members of the Cabinet met with members of the federal delegation on Monday afternoon. We had a good conversation about a lot of things, mostly the Farm Bill. They are very interested in what our priorities have been.
- We would like your participation at the Buy Local Cookout if you'd like to attend or volunteer.

Hans Schmidt:

- Process of interviewing for 17 positions for soil conservation offices across the state. One position we're working on is an engineer technician that will help expedite the approval of designs.
- Cover crop announcement went live this morning. Closed out on a small cover crop program a couple weeks ago. The traditional Cover Crop program maxes out at \$105/acre. The base for the Cover Crop Plus program is \$125 and can go up to \$160.
- We just announced that a dairy farm in Cecil County was an awardee for our Animal Waste Technology.

Cassie Shirk:

- We launched the Ice Cream Trail on Monday.
- We're holding the Governor's Buy Local Cookout here at MDA on July 20th from 5:30-7:30pm. Everyone in the Ag Commission will receive invitations.

Michael Calkins:

- Today is my first day. Call me if you have any questions.

Jessica Hackett:

- Keep track of our social media pages because we always post a lot of good information there.
- Our FAQs for the nutrient management plan updates are on the main page of our website.

Respectfully Submitted by Denise Burrell