



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

## Office of the Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary  
Julianne A. Oberg, Deputy Secretary

## Maryland Agricultural Commission

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

410.841.5882 Baltimore/Washington  
410.841.5914 Fax  
800.492.5590 Toll Free

## Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes October 14, 2020

### Present:

Ag Education: Martha Clark  
Agribusiness: Thomas Mullineaux  
Agritourism: Kelly Dudeck  
At Large Ag Service: Matthew Levi Sellers  
At Large Ag Service: Frank Allnut  
Dairy II: David Pyle  
Direct Farm Market: Amy Crone  
Equine: Michael Pons  
Field Crops: Donald Maring  
Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry

Forestry: Elizabeth Hill  
Livestock: Sean Hough  
Nursery I: James Raley  
Organic Farming: Matthew Nielsen  
Poultry I: Michael Levengood  
Poultry II: Michelle Protani-Chesnik  
State Grange: Clifford Newsome Jr.  
Turf: Tom Warpinski  
University: Dr. Craig Beyroudy  
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks

### Absent:

Aquaculture: Talmage Petty  
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.  
Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn

Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet  
Viticulture: Matthew Corey Spies

### MDA Staff:

Julie Oberg  
Cassie Shirk  
Kevin Conroy  
Joe Bartenfelder  
Rich Colburn  
Jason Shellhardt  
Steve Connelly

### Guest/Speakers:

Steve McHenry  
Jon Cribbs

### Approval of Minutes:

September minutes were approved 1<sup>st</sup> by Michelle Protani-Chesnik and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Martha Clark.

## Commodity Reports:

### Martha Clark- Ag Education:

- Maryland Agricultural Education has had an active and unusual couple of months.
- MAEF, the Maryland 4-H Foundation, the FFA and other agricultural education organizations have been busy adjusting to the new “normal” virtual education system. Audits, Job reviews, integrating new programs and creating new fund-raising initiatives have been foremost for each group.
- New grants and funding have been experienced by all. Year-end events such as the Annual Banquet November 10-12 and Silent Auction November 7-14, Planning for the 2021 legislative session and upcoming fund raising all underway.
- The Hybrid distance learning course has 25 teachers across 9 local systems enrolled. Participants receive a box of materials and resources to help them participate in workshop sessions and lesson planning.
- Mobile science labs are being retooled and rebooked for later this fall. Online activities continue to be developed for students, educators and parents. The Ag Literacy project distributed 315 books and lesson plans have been distributed. Every FFA advisor received a copy of the book to be shared by student member with feeder schools and visiting to be a guest reader.
- Calendar contest was conducted and the winners were chosen and announced. In addition to the calendar a You Tube video of the entries was created and shared.
- The Velma Clark Excellence in Teaching about Ag Award is OPEN for APPLICATIONS through December 4<sup>th</sup>. The winner will be nominated for NAITC award. IF you know anyone that excels in using Agriculture in the classroom please contact the office for information.
- The High School Department is developing more virtual opportunities for FFA members. Also conducting and expanding on Leadership and Career Development programming. The outreach includes serving as a conduit for organizing a wide variety of meeting and joint training programs for Students and Teachers. Milestone of the current reporting time are the re-establishment of the FFA Chapter at Font Hill High School, Hosted the first virtual Chapter Officer Workshop for Prince George’s County FFA Chapters and planning 5 virtual Student Leadership Conferences to be held in the month of November.
- MARYLAND 4-H: The Maryland 4-H Foundation, while restricted from accessing the office and college campus has been continuing to move forward with the replacement of the Executive Director Position. The Foundation was fortunate to receive some outside guidance on reviewing and renewing job descriptions during this time of limited interaction. Robert Frazee was contracted to lead the Board through some internal reviews and policies and continues to work with us in the hiring of a new director. With the hiring freeze and covid-19 budget restraints we have been blessed by the University with the approval to now advertise and post the newly developed Executive Director Position and a Business specialist position. Dr. Beyrouy, Dr. James Hanson and Dr. Imani Fields have been very supportive and extremely important to move this segment of 4-H forward.
- Due to Covid-19, programing, competitions, and all of the Cooperative Extension portions of the fairs were cancelled this year, so virtual innovation has been the Primary mode of communications. Many excellent online programming and Facebook presentations have carried the day. There have been no out of state trips or competitions. It has been amazing to see the creative instincts of the Extension Educators and students as they expand their outreach in this new normal. One of the most innovative was moving livestock project auctions to an online format. They were extremely successful.

- The Scholarship Program has been continued this year and the multiple awards are being reviewed now and will be awarded in January at a virtual Gala.
- SUMMARY: Through all this turmoil and emergency changes Ag Education through both MAEF and 4- H have seemed to flourish and adapt. More people have seen, through their Social Media the many sides of Agriculture. Reaching our beyond out traditional audiences has brought interest from far and wide for all things AG. MDA through its internal Educational outreach, the Farm and Harvest TV show, and sharing information on Ag services and other resources all through the internet and social media has finally caught a captive audience, especially those teaching their children from home.
- But to keep all this information up and current requires resources and the best personnel. So fund raising and soliciting support for MAEF and The cooperative Extension 4-H programs through the Maryland 4-H Foundation is critical.

#### **Tom Mullineaux- Agribusiness:**

- Harvest is well underway. Grain yields are for the most part “HO-hum” This I’ve found to be the result of either too dry or too wet conditions. This has had the effect of less fall fertilizer being applied due to stressed crops = Stressed cash flow or wet field conditions.
- LACK OF FALL COVER CROP SEED SALES BIG ISSUE: Rye cover crop seed sales less than 50% of previous years due to changes in the Cover Crop Program or saved seed.
- Excellent crop harvested in July=more saved seed=lower seed sales.
- With wheat board prices in the \$6.00 range certified wheat sales have been brisk recently.
- A huge demand for barley seed. Seed availability limited due to late frost. Major Dog Food plant in Ohio taking all we can grow. Sorry, Brewery demand just not there.
- Retail “Farm Supplies and Hardware” very slow.....everyone saving money.
- Feed sales sluggish. Dairy continues to struggle with Milk prices just at or slightly above the cost of production.
- Horse feed sales are at a very low point. Managers tell me that Horse folks are saving wherever they can. Hay is a valuable crop.
- Our Industry continues to consolidate. We’ve experienced consolidation in the Seed business, the fertilizer and Crop Protection Business and now the Industry trend is fewer and fewer choices for growers to purchase crop inputs.
- Four Southern States Locations on the Eastern Shore were purchased by Gro-Mark recently.
- Four Seasons Crop Service (although in Franklin County Pa) had a sizeable customer base in Washington and western Frederick Counties was purchased by Nutrein.
- There are more on the Horizon.
- The unfortunate fallout of this trend is there will be folks looking for jobs and Farmers have fewer and fewer options to secure their crop needs.

#### **Kelly Dudeck- Agritourism:**

- Maryland’s agritourism industry, as a whole, seems to be doing well. Some are doing really well.
- Many have implemented innovative solutions for enticing people to visit their farms, including yurts, firepits, pods, and even creating walking tours of their vineyards and such.
- Many have established a reservation system, to allow them more control on the number of people visiting at a certain time. Many have said that the reservation system is working so well, they may in fact keep it after the pandemic has passed.

- The wine industry has had a tough year. The rains were relentless in some areas, leading to a total loss in some cases. • One winery (Great Frogs) suffered from tornado damage, while another (Port of Leonardtown) experienced a lot of flood damage.
- The Brewers Association has developed an Agricultural Resource page on their website, making it easier for growers and brewers to connect on things such as hops, grains, herbs, fruit and honey.
- Grow & Fortify is developing a website to better highlight MD's apple and honey industries and pointing to craft alcohol producers utilizing those ingredients.
- Grow & Fortify would like to start working with the MDH Ag ombudsman to get their agency to help nudge local health depts to "do the right thing" when it comes to helping out producers build/grow their businesses, especially in these times.
- A tri-industry app is being developed, to push tourism for Maryland's craft alcohol industry. Hoping to launch in early 2021.

### **Levi Sellers- Ag Services:**

- October begins the harvest season for hemp producers in Maryland. Samples are taken from the crop, dried and submitted to certified labs to ensure compliance of cannabinoid levels while gaining insight for the optimal time to harvest.
- Despite the struggles of the developing industry coupled with the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic the Maryland Hemp Industry has continued to grow. There are now 100 registered Hemp Producers, 1,243 acres and 582,996 sq. ft. of Hemp produced in Maryland currently.
- Hemp Pilot Program Extended: On September 30, Congress passed a continuing resolution (H.R. 8337) providing short term funding to prevent a government shutdown that included the House's language to extend the hemp pilot program through September of 2021. It was signed into law by President Trump on October 1, 2020. This unexpected move came after the USDA and Congress had received overwhelming pressure from state and industry associations to delay implementation of its new rules (Interim Final Rule) during the initial 30 day comment period and was extended for an additional 30 days (ending October 8, 2020). It has been expressed by state and industry associations that the IFR in its current form could stifle the developing industry, have national implications on investment and development of new agricultural business opportunities.
- This extension of the Hemp Pilot Program has come as a blessing to the Hemp Industry and just in time. The heavily disputed National Hemp Production Program regulations (IFR) were set to begin after the expiration of the Hemp Pilot Program on October 31, 2020, the same as Maryland's Hemp Production Program.
- Many involved in the Maryland Hemp Industry, along with myself and the Maryland Hemp Coalition, have expressed concerns that the MDA is planning on ending the pilot program and implementing new regulations in line with the current IFR before the federal government actually implements the IFR changes. We are concerned that the USDA could change the IFR in response to public comments which could lead to confusion between state and federal regulations. Also, if the MDA ends the pilot program before the IFR is formally implemented, it will make the regulations on the production, harvesting, and sale of hemp unnecessarily more restrictive than other states. Given how new the industry is, this could put small family producers at a significant disadvantage in terms of developing new sales channels and proprietary hemp-related products.
- The MD Hemp Industry is hopeful and is strongly urging the MDA to follow the lead of Congress and the USDA and answer our requests to extend the Hemp Pilot Program for another season. We believe that the pilot program has been successful under the MDA's supervision and as its intent, has allowed the industry to grow and learn. Another season

will allow for this to continue as we await changes to the Federal guidelines for the production of hemp.

- Baltimore County Hemp Restrictions: Baltimore County Councilman Wade Kach has proposed legislation that would create various prohibitions against hemp being grown near residences, and for the first time, prohibit an agricultural use without a special exception. The legislation (Bill #94-20) prohibits the growing of hemp in all but two zones, conflates hemp- a completely legal, commodity crop- with medical cannabis, and institutes setbacks and buffers from property lines.
- Under the bill:
  1. Hemp would be prohibited in all but RC2 and RC3 zones;
  2. A farmer who wanted to grow hemp would need to apply for a special exception, a procedural process that includes a public hearing and a decision by an administrative law judge;
  3. A hemp grower would be prohibited within 2,000 feet of a residential property, and within 500 feet of the grower's property line.
  4. A hemp grow would be prohibited within 2 miles of another grower or processor.
- On October 1st a public discussion was set up virtually for panelists of both sides (in support and opposition of the bill) to engage in a conversation about the bill. Several representatives of the MD Hemp Industry attended as panelists in opposition and included Kevin Atticks of MD Hemp Coalition, Barry Pritchard of SunX Analytical, the Norman Family from One Straw Farm, and myself.
- Main concerns were expressed over the precedence that this bill sets for all agriculture to be trumped by residential zoning and the potential to violate the "Right to Farm" Act. In this respect the proposed bill has similarities to one that was voted out last year in the MD General Assembly.
- The hearing for Bill 94-20 has been postponed until November 2nd.
- Cecil County Hemp Processing Facility: As the Hemp Industry continues to grow in Maryland, hemp processing facilities have been limited. Kevin Atticks from the Maryland Hemp Coalition has mentioned efforts that the Coalition has been taking with Cecil County to get a processing facility open. More information to come on this in the near future.

### **David Pyle- Dairy II:**

- First let me start by apologizing for lack of participation in the past few months. Around my region of the state we have seen some stressed crops from weather conditions. Most if not all corn silage harvesting has been completed. Grain harvest is underway and some of the cover crops have been reseeded. We have been extremely dry, but just got some much needed rain.
- The Pandemic obviously has caused a major disruption in the dairy markets across the country. We have seen class 3 prices go from \$17 in January to \$12 in May back to a high of \$24 in July. Along with very fast and big swing in prices The Producer Price differential has gone from a positive position to negative deduction. This has been extremely difficult for Producers to manage their cash flows and profits.
- I cannot stress enough to the Governor and the Department of Ag how grateful MD dairy is for their participation in the Dairy Margin Coverage. I have heard that PA dairy had less than 30% of their dairies participate in this risk management. Also I have heard that MD had over 80% of their dairies participate. This has without a doubt saved MD family dairy farms.
- Along with state and local support to help businesses survive. The Federal administration has stepped up with different programs to help as well. These programs from my experience have been executed very well and in a timely manner. If there are any

producers that are unaware of this assistance and want more info they should contact their local FSA offices for more information.

- Since March we have seen a major disruption in the food supply. From restaurants closed and schools not in session it has changed the way people were getting food. Knowing this system is extremely hard to change in an instant. I have been very pleased to see the participation and collaboration of our dairy co-ops and Dairy Marketing Inc. They have been working very hard to get food to the people in need in. From local milk drives to stocking food pantries and school lunch box pick up sites the public still has been getting access to nutritious food to feed their families.
- I hope everyone stays safe and we all find a new normal sometime in the near future.

#### **Amy Crone- Direct Farm Market:**

- Farmers markets have extended season to make up for slow/late start this year
- Maryland Market Money is operating now across the state through SMADC (in partnership with MARBIDCO).
- SNAP redemption at farmers markets continues to be high – average of 20% increase each month over 2019 figures.
- Farm markets fall activities affected by re-opening guidelines both at the state level & the county level; some have canceled fall offerings and others have provided online ordering, drive-through pickups, and scheduled times for shoppers.
- Some counties able to provide support.
- On-farm markets and pick-your-own operations continue to innovate and figure out ways to schedule folks to have separate times and enable social distancing as well as implementing curbside pickup.
- Most conferences that would be attended by farm/farmers markets will be online between now and the spring of 2021.
  - NAFMNP changing to series of seminars
  - NAFDMA online
  - United Fresh Produce Association online
  - Future Harvest conference online in January
- MDA / UMD / counties continue to provide certification services for these operators online as well – GAP in particular, as well as food safety trainings and other services to be able to sell direct to customers via the farm or farmers market.

#### **Michael Pons- Equine:**

- October has been named Maryland Horse Month. For the first-time ever, both the Preakness and Maryland Million were held in the same month. The Preakness is usually held on the third Saturday in May, with the Maryland Million being regularly held in October. In addition, the Five-Star Fair Hill International Equestrian Event had been slated for October 15-17, 2020, was rescheduled for Fall 2021. More than \$20M in upgrades and long-term improvements to the Fair Hill Racecourse, Grandstand and Facilities were made in preparation for this event.
- The 2020 Preakness was run with limited to just 250 spectators, in addition to owners, trainers and grooms being allowed to attend. Fortunately, this year's Preakness was one of the all-time best, with the filly, Swiss Skydiver, beating the Kentucky Derby-winner, Authentic, in a thrilling stretch run. Swiss Skydiver is just the fifth filly ever to win the Preakness, and the first since Rachel Alexandra in 2009. However, without the usual large crowd in attendance, the pari-mutuel handle was \$51M, just half of the 2019 total.
- The Fasig-Tipton Mid-Atlantic Yearling Sales, held on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, with strict health-measures taken to protect all participants, were down slightly from last

year. Overall, the demand for the top horses was strong, but the middle and bottom of the market struggled. This year, 379 yearlings sold for a gross of \$9.1M, and average of \$24,010.

- The number of Thoroughbred mares bred, in Maryland, this year dropped slightly from 2019. With a total of 806 mares bred, Maryland remains on top of the Mid-Atlantic, being ranked sixth nationwide, and one-spot ahead of Pennsylvania, with 728 mares being bred.
- Maryland Horsemen appreciated Governor Hogan including our industry among Maryland Agriculture's essential businesses. Maryland's 8.1 horses per square mile is tops in the nation, and our more than 100,000 horses domiciled here create a huge demand for feed, hay, straw, supplies, vet and blacksmith care, and of course, labor, spread across this state.
- While the pandemic and recession has impacted equine activity, the racing, breeding, and showing of horses in Maryland continues. Our horsemen, like other top farmers across the Free State, continue to improvise and adapt to the changing market conditions and daily routines.

#### **Donald Maring- Field Crops:**

- Harvest and yields are widely variable in areas depending on if you received rain in July vs being dry in Frederick County.
- Had some corn yields that were disappointing and had some that were nearly as good as last year.
- August was better weather and this is when you have bean yields and most people were pleasantly surprised and happy with their bean yields.
- Soybean prices are almost 2 dollars above what they were in early August and last Friday the November contract for soybeans hit the highest since 2016.
- Last week USDA increased China's imports to 100 million metric tons which is helping soybean prices.
- Corn and soybean harvest are ahead of last year and of the five-year average in terms of progress in harvesting.
- Most markets are advising to be aggressive in selling.

#### **Cheryl DeBerry-Food Processing:**

- In general, small fruit and vegetable processors are working to get the fall harvested produce stabilized and ready for processing later on. Sometimes that means specialized storage, other times it means minimal processing for freezing, to hold for use later.
- It's a busy time of year for meat processors as well, and in my region they are ramping up for the fall beef processing season. A few custom meat processors are popping up in the region as well, which could eventually help alleviate some of the wait times for the USDA processors for those who only need custom processing.
- Local hemp processing infrastructure needs to be encouraged to help grow this new industry. It has huge potential but we still lack processors in close enough proximity to make it viable.

#### **Elizabeth Hill- Forestry:**

- The forest products industry is continuing to see the impacts of COVID-19, some good, some bad. If anyone has tried to buy pressure-treated lumber in the past several months, you would know that the prices have skyrocketed! The increase is due to the demand from restaurants building outdoor eating areas and people staying at home doing home improvement projects. So, for the pine mills on the shore, life is good. It is a different story for hardwood mills across the state that have seen a sharp decline in markets mostly

due to large infrastructure projects being put on hold. Those Hardwood markets are slowly starting to recover.

- The Maryland Forests Association has been busy wrong on several projects-
  1. Maryland's Forests- Great for the Environment and the Economy is a booklet that we have been working on with others in the forest community, including the Hughes Center for Agroecology. It will serve to answer basic questions like "will logging deplete our forests" and "what is forest management" in simple terms that can be easily understood by policymakers and the public. The publication is in the final stages of review and will be released soon.
  2. In place of an Annual Meeting, we co-sponsored the Shady Acres Forestry Field Days in Friendsville, MD, a 2-day event where folks could come out visit displays, participate in field tours and watch and compete in timber sport competitions. The Forest Resource Association also attended to award Bruce Barnes (Clements, MD) as Appalachian Logger of the Year. MFA distributed and discussed our findings from our "Why Markets Matter" regional meetings.
  3. For the report, MFA reached out to a broad community of stakeholders and beneficiaries of Maryland's diverse forests for feedback on how to strengthen markets in the state. In partnership with the Association of Forest Industries, we have developed this proposed net fiscal zero and non-controversial policy plan believed to enhance the industry's public profile and economic competitiveness. A plan that, in short, the Administration can implement without burdening the taxpayers. Use this link to view the report in its entirety. <https://www.mdforests.org/post/why-markets-matter-preliminary-findings-recommendations>. The report includes recommendations for improving Sediment and Erosion Control Procedures for silviculture, allocating money from the 2010 Trust Fund to the Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund, directing the Maryland Economic Development Commission to promote the Forest Products Industry, and encouraging routine reports from the Sustainable Forestry Council. These steps can be taken immediately to bolster the forest products industry and the many landowners dependent upon its continued viability.
- Additional recommendations will be available from EAS in late November. I want to request that Phil Gottwals from ACDS come to speak to the Ag Commission about the findings.

#### **Sean Hough- Livestock:**

- Some meat processing plants are starting up in the state. This is still a big concern from the livestock industry trying to get animals process as there is a backlog.
- Meat production year to date: beef is down 2% but pork is up about 2% unfortunately lamb and veal production is down about 10% each.
- October is national pork month and they are trying to do a lot of pork advertising and reach out to consumers calling it Porktober.
- Exports are starting to pick up. 30% of pork production nationally is exported. It was down in the summer but has seen a 20% pork export increase.
- A lot of export increase is due to African swine flu spreading to Europe and Germany.
- For the fourth quarter of the year, the hog supply in the pipe line has been predicted to be 8% higher which is a good number. Conversely knowing the backups in the supply chain with production, pork that is held in cold storage is actually down 22%. This means there is more movement between the retail and export channels.
- On the beef side, cow herds are down about 1% across the country. The biggest difference is cattle on feed around the country is up 15% which shows a big back log in the supply chain and getting these animals through processing plants. There are about 1



million head of cattle that are backed up trying to get through the processing plants and the slaughter process.

- Hopefully, this can open up in the fourth quarter and help preserve cattle prices in the fourth quarter.
- Lack of rain here in Maryland: there are 30% of cow herds around the country that are considered in drought areas. This could cause a reduction in cow herds which can affect prices.
- The fall is a big time of year. The feeder cattle are being sold and going through the auction houses and hopefully the prices can stay there.
- Pork prices were down hard this summer but increase in exports are leading to prices picking up.

**James K. Raley, Jr. - Nursery:**

- Mr. Raley reported at the September meeting that many producers in the Nursery Crops and Cut Flower sectors did not qualify for financial assistance through the initial release of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). On September 18, 2020 the USDA announced the availability of an additional \$14 billion dollars for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. Signup for CFAP 2.0 began September 21st and runs through December 11, 2020. This update to CFAP recognized nursery crops and floriculture as specialty crops and producers of these crops are eligible to apply for relief through the program.
- Baltimore City passed a pesticide control and regulation law. The law provides that commercial and homeowner use of glyphosate, chlorpyrifos, and neonics is prohibited, beginning July 1, 2022. A similar bill has been introduced in Prince George's County.
- Tobacco Crop Status—October 2020
- Courtesy of Mr. Ben Beale Extension Agent- St. Mary's County
- There continues to be strong demand for Type 51 Connecticut Broadleaf tobacco in the region. Three companies have contracts in the area including Hail and Cotton (Tennessee); Lancaster Leaf (Pennsylvania); and Dunn and Foster (Connecticut). Prices and grading requirements vary, but are similar to last year. Prices vary by contract and are in the \$0.60 - \$6.00 per pound range with an average per pound price last year of \$3.20-\$3.80 pound. It is estimated there are 45 growers in Maryland with a total acreage between 300-400 acres.
- Mr. Raley reported on the Maryland Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) meeting held Sept. 17, 2020. Mr. Ross Peddicord, Executive Director of the MD Horse Industry Board (HIB), presented to the SSCC on conservation opportunities for the equine industry. The HIB regulates and licenses stables. As of 2019, Mr. Peddicord reported 728 licensed stables in the state covering 12,000-15,000 horses. As part of the annual stable license process, stable operators are asked (and verified) for a current nutrient management plan and encouraged to consult local Soil Conservation Districts for all conservation needs. However, many horse owners who keep horses for pleasure in their small backyards do not qualify for HIB licensing nor are they required to comply with nutrient management regulations. Following the presentation, there was a vigorous conversation on needs and opportunities to address the equine sector.
- Mr. Raley reported that following the meeting, he noted that the MDA website hosts a page for Horse Owner Tips that provides detailed information, fact sheets, and links for best management practices available to horse owners. There appears to be a challenge, however, in reaching backyard horse owners and getting them to use the available resources to address pasture and manure management issues.

- A suggestion is that MDA and the Soil Conservation Districts should consider additional outreach options for the backyard horse owners, with support for renewing MDA's Horse Outreach Workgroup.
- Mr. Raley informed commission members that local egg producers are prohibited from using polystyrene egg cartons to sell locally grown eggs, due to a new law that took effect July 1, 2020. The law states that after July 1, 2020 the use of polystyrene expanded cartons for eggs is specifically prohibited. However, eggs prepackaged in another state can be shipped to Maryland and used by a food service business. This places Maryland farmers at a competitive disadvantage.
- Cassis Shirk, MDA Director of Legislation and Government Relations, said that she will look into this issue and work with allied organizations to explain the new law to farmers.

#### **Matthew Nielsen- Organic Farming:**

- Some numbers from the organic trade association recently on 2019 sales.
- 55 billion on the organic side with 60% fruit and vegetables, dairy, eggs, bread and grain.
- During the pandemic everyone was in the super markets stocking up and there was a 50% increase in organic sales.
- The organic meat, poultry and fish category is the smallest but has seen the largest 10% growth.
- Leading is organic poultry and had national sales of 865 million dollars.
- In September, Pennsylvania base Bell & Evans broke ground on a 330 million dollar state of the art certified organic harvest facility that has set to double production for the facility. Will be open in 2022.
- On the grain side this should help growers regionally.
- Organic side most growers are planting slightly later and weather situations things are dry.
- Corn is pretty steady around \$8.50-\$9.00 this is due to a lot of acres of organic corn.
- Soybean is also steady at \$20-\$21 with potential increase because production is low domestically and people are very cautious of getting into organic beans.
- On national level, national organics standards board elected five new members recently. This group sets the standards for what can and can not be used to be classified as organic.
- One big national piece is strengthening organic enforcement rule public comment period ended on October 5<sup>th</sup>. This will be the biggest change to the national organic program and will really ramp up oversight and will require anyone that is importing grain be certified organic.
- Pushing through the Covid timeframe with certifications that have been backlogged and there is an expectation with this new rule coming that there is going to be a lot fewer organic certifiers then are needed.

#### **Michael Levensgood- Poultry I:**

- Manage farm risk more wisely with free program  
This November, a new initiative called "MyFaRM" (Mastering Farm Risk Management) will deliver free risk management education to farmers about how to develop risk management plans that address all 5 risk areas (financial, human, legal, marketing and production). The University of Maryland [Agriculture Law Education Initiative](#) is an organizer. The program will offer three free, parallel tracks of learning opportunities for farmers, some involving more in-person attendance than others. [Learn more at this link.](#)
- DPI is moving forward with building litter-matching app, online tool  
A grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Program, will help DPI

build and market an online and app-based chicken litter matching tool, connecting farmers who need litter to grow crops with chicken growers who have litter to sell. By improving crop growth and soil health, the effort will support the implementation of Maryland's Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) and Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plans across Delmarva, thereby helping to meet regional water quality and healthy watershed goals. The \$49,890 NFWF grant is part of the 2020 round of funding for Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund projects.

- CAFO permit – Growers have sent in their NOIs and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans and many have already paid the permit fee that was issued for the first time this year – it had been waived in the past. No permits have been issued yet and we hope that this will be soon, as there are at least two that are new permits and that means these businesses have been on hold from operating fully since last November – almost a year.
- Legislative season – Multiple stories hit the papers with the same rhetoric about how farming is hurting the bay leading up to the new legislative session. Here are some examples:
- Poultry Workers feel unprotected - [https://digitaledition.baltimoresun.com/infinity/article\\_share.aspx?guid=5a39aa2a-a553-4e5a-8eee-9ac0f6fdb66f](https://digitaledition.baltimoresun.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=5a39aa2a-a553-4e5a-8eee-9ac0f6fdb66f)
- Science-based recipe is key to restoration - [https://digitaledition.capitalgazette.com/infinity/article\\_share.aspx?guid=4e5f98a7-70e4-42d0-96b3-f97fa236159b](https://digitaledition.capitalgazette.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=4e5f98a7-70e4-42d0-96b3-f97fa236159b)
- Maryland has a chicken problem - [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/local-opinions/maryland-has-a-chicken-problem/2020/10/01/7712f6ac-0275-11eb-a2db-417cddf4816a\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/local-opinions/maryland-has-a-chicken-problem/2020/10/01/7712f6ac-0275-11eb-a2db-417cddf4816a_story.html)
- Covid-19 impact on operations – Covid-19 impact on operations – Overall operations in the field and in the harvest plants have stabilized. The processes and protocols that have been implemented in our facilities (Perdue) have been effective in mitigating the potential spread of the virus. We just need to stay focused as we move thru the fall and winter.
- Contract broiler growers remain ineligible for aid in CFAP 2 beginning this week, USDA is implementing Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. Unlike the first round of CFAP assistance, CFAP 2 makes "broilers and eggs" eligible for assistance, USDA says in its fact sheets. However, the USDA guidance goes on to note that "contract growers who do not share in the price risk of production are ineligible for CFAP 2 and will not receive a CFAP 2 payment." DPI continues to advocate for a specific program for chicken growers that was shared by Delaware's Senator Coons and is part of the stimulus package being negotiated in Congress currently.
- The 55<sup>th</sup> National Poultry Meeting on Poultry Health, Processing and Live Production was held on September 28 thru the 30<sup>th</sup>.
- For the first time ever, this was virtual. DPI had more than 20 outstanding, well-known speakers, including one from England, one from British Columbia and one from California. More than 350 people registered for the event, including more growers that have participated in the past. The processing session had a record number of attendees and overall the surveys have been extremely positive. DPI was pleased to be able to offer this important meeting, even if it was by computer.

#### **Michelle Protani-Chesnik- Poultry II:**

- Contract poultry growers do not receive anything from the last round of federal money.

- Legislators don't think the risk is with the poultry grower but it is with the company because they are the ones that own the birds.
- Layouts for some companies are really short but others can be longer and vary from 30 days to 40 to 50 days.
- When you have birds that have to stay a week longer than planned the electric bill can be high such as 6 to 7,000.
- There is no help from the government when layouts are delayed and it is not caused by the contracted poultry growers.
- The thoughts that there is no risk for the growers should be looked at.
- The pandemic has led to shortages in poultry supplies such as coveralls, hair nets, breakers, and gloves. Companies have agreed to sell to the poultry company but not to a grower.
- Hopefully, Covid will not spike again because it will cause the supply chain to back up again for the birds leaving the farm.

#### **Cliff Newsome- State Grange:**

- The Covid-19 virus appeared to be nearly over for a while.
- Now it is showing signs that it will continue until a cure or a vaccine is developed to stop it.
- We have, thus far, not had any reports that our members have been hospitalized or have passed away from this deadly virus.
- All of us have been affected by the loss of personal contact due to social distancing.
- The Grange is known for food, fun, fellowship and friendship.
- We all have managed to obey the law by using virtual zoom or just recently meeting where space would allow us to social distance.
- Our state session this year will be virtual this weekend on the 17<sup>th</sup>. We were recently informed that our national convention would be a 2 day zoom meeting. Pennsylvania has restrictions of no more than 25 people per meeting room.
- Welcome to the 'new norm' and we hope it goes away by next year.

#### **Tom Warpinski- Turf:**

- Fall planting is wrapping up on most sod farms. Continued wet weather has made field tillage more challenging than usual. Growers have been able to slip in some planting during brief periods of dry weather. Optimal field preparation has been compromised by the moist soil conditions.
- As the cooler fall temperatures reduce the incidence of Brown Patch and Pythium diseases in Turf, growers are keeping a close lookout for Gray leafspot disease in Tall Fescue. The Mid-Atlantic States have been hit hard in recent years by Gray leafspot disease, which, up until a few years ago, was usually not a problem in Tall fescue grasses. Pre-emptive fungicide applications are being applied by many growers at this time.
- Overall Sod sales volume has declined slightly year over year mainly due to project work being delayed because of the impact of Covid 19.
- Labor supply is even more challenging with the added necessity of covid safety procedures. A big aspect of the challenge is the time waiting for Covid test results, which can be as long as a week. Workers are not allowed to return to work during this period of waiting for results. Quick result tests would help a lot.
- Lawn care companies have been very busy with lawn renovation and Fall fertilizer applications. They also are fighting the rainy weather.
- Most golf courses are reporting very heavy play on the courses. Although Covid modifications to standard practices have limited the number of rounds that can be safely

played on a daily basis, golfers are eager to get out whenever possible. Heavy disease pressure has many courses contemplating switching to more disease tolerant warm season grasses.

- The USDA Farm Service Agency has requested information from U.S. sod farms on the impacts of Covid-19 to their sales volume and prices during the period of January 15th to July 31st 2020. On September 18th, the USDA announced additional funds that may be available to farmers who continue to face market disruptions and additional costs associated with Covid-19. These funds are administered through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP2). Turfgrass Producers International has been working with the USDA Farm Service Agency on this issue to determine if US natural grass sod farmers experienced a decrease in sales volume or sales price from January 15th to July 31st, 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.

**Dr. Craig Beyrougthy- University:**

- Our Ag Extension Education Program is a new program moving through the process of approval and should hopefully be approved this year and will be on board next year.
- This is both a graduate and undergraduate level program that would formally educate individuals on extension education. This will be a unique program and highly desirable to attract a variety of folks that have a strong desire for a career in extension education but may not have all the skills associated with it.
- Have another program going through the process of approval right now and want it formally on the books next year. This is the Fermentation Science Program.
- This program is one that we worked with a gentleman from Towson University and also the Department of Commerce to do a market analysis in MD and the general region to see if there is a true need for individuals who are formally educated in fermentation science and an opportunity for them career wise.
- This would be in the beverage industry but also in the dairy industry, meat industry and pharmaceutical industry.
- There is a strong need and desire for individuals who have a degree in the fermentation area.
- There are some programs around the states that have developed fermentation science programs such as one at Colorado State University that was offered in the college of health and human science. They had over 100 students majoring in fermentation science.
- The difficulty is finding the appropriate space for a lab that can handle the specialized equipment associated with all the fermentation components that one would need to be exposed to.
- Have a relationship with Fly Dog out of Baltimore and the newest batch of field notes pal al has come out.
- Field notes is a partnership between the University of Maryland in developing and growing the hops and Fly Dog turning those hops and barley into beer.
- With regard to our undergraduate program, enrollment in the university was predicted that numbers would be slightly less than last year but even with the university going hybrid face to face and online enrollment hung in there like the year before.
- We have far fewer out of state students and those spots have been replaced with in state students.
- Went from about 30% out of state and international students dropping to about 15%.
- This is an issue because for every 100 in state students that come to the university the university receives about 1 million in tuition. For 100 out of state students the university would receive about 300 million. Leading to an issue from a budgetary stand point.
- Around 1200 undergraduate students but want to see that number increase to at least 1500 but would hope to reach 1700.

- Amanda Clougherty and Tom Mullineaux have developed a SYMON Squad to serve as ambassadors for the College of Ag and Natural Resources to recruit more students from around the state of Maryland especially in those regions that we have not been successfully attracting students into the program. They have been sharing the quality of education and the fact that our program is one of the top 5 in the nation in terms of return in investment.
- Jim Hanson and his staff have put together a booklet on in person programming.
- Looking to reopen in the fall, there is a very extensive document that limits should be no more than 40 individuals in a given area or no less than 56 square feet per person. There are more restrictions with youth programming to ensure that individuals and volunteers are protected. Looking to reopen when opportunity is available.
- This will be on a county by county basis because most of the extension offices are county owned and operated.
- Strategic initiatives: there are five of them and one of them is ensuring the sustainability and profitability of production agriculture in Maryland. This strategic initiative has put together the ACE Center (Agricultural Careers and Entrepreneurship) and this is a way to reach out to students and anyone interested in a career in agriculture to guide them to career opportunities and make those connections around the state and around the region.
- Trying to be proactive in getting individuals to pursue careers in agriculture and show them where those careers are available and get them connected.
- Moving forward with final approval to get an agricultural design for the campus farm and moving forward with an aggressive campaign in order to fund that.
- Appropriated 3 million dollars from college fund toward the development of the campus farm and the first building would be an educational building with an animal pavilion, laboratories and office space.
- In addition, seeking private donations and a rough estimate for the total cost of the building will be 8 to 8.5 million dollars.
- This will be the central building of the larger complex for the campus farm. This will be a multi-year effort.
- Getting final approval to dig our first hole for the extension building at the Clarks Bill Research and Education Center.
- Developing a stronger relationship with USDA ARS in regards to dairy science. They are interested in conducting more dairy research on our dairy facility at Clarksville and are excited in housing some of their scientist.

**Dr. John Brooks- Veterinary:**

- Elk in Idaho are still wondering around free after a herd survey in September.
- Everything is consumed with the Covid virus both nationally and internationally.
- There has been an outbreak in Demark in the mink farms and lost about 2 and a half million mink and there is concerns of zoonotic circumstances involved with this particular outbreak.
- Talking about mushrooms in small animals specifically dogs. The mushrooms in the yard that are being consumed are causing gastro intestinal issues based on the type of mushroom can also cause death in some circumstances.
- Sunshine Mills had to recall a lot of their corn-based dog foods between April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 5<sup>th</sup> due to the presence of a toxin.

**Staff Updates:**

**Jason Shellhardt:**

- October is a busy month with it being MD apple month and MD horse month.
- Next week is home grown school lunch week.
- A lot on social media to help promote everything.

**Cassie Shirk:**

- Legislative session will take place virtually next year which will be interesting to see what that's like.
- There is new leadership in the senate minority due to senator Jennings and Hershey electing not to be reappointed.
- Senator Bryan Simonaire was elected as the new minority leader and the new minority WIP is Senator Michael Hough.
- On November 18, MDA and the Department of Planning and Natural Resources are participating in the annual meeting of the joint subcommittee on program open space and agricultural land preservation.

**Kevin Conroy:**

- Besides hemp it has been a normal course of business.
- Just finished up spraying season for mosquito control about a week ago so working on billing the counties.
- Plant protection has hired a few more people to help with the spotted lantern flies.
- Have found a few more colonies around the state and are working with USDA hand in hand for the spraying.
- The spread of spotted lantern flies has been found in the New England states. These are actually established colonies. Unfortunately, it is starting to grow outside of the mid-Atlantic.
- State chemist, pest control and turf and seed are all running fully.

**Steve Connelly:**

- Wanted to mention two federal programs that have sign up periods going on now.
- The Dairy Margin Coverage Program sign up started September 11<sup>th</sup> and continues through December 11<sup>th</sup>. Encourage dairy farmers to look into the program.
- Unfortunately, unlike the last two fiscal years where the governor was able to pay for premiums at the highest coverage level due to Covid that will not be an option this year.
- There is still benefits from the Dairy Margin Program that can be taken advantage of.
- At least 80% of MD dairy producers take advantage of this program.
- The Corona Virus Food Assistance Program Number 2 is the new federal support program.
- Sign up is ongoing right now.
- They have already paid out 16 million to farmers in MD producers.
- Please talk to your county FFA office, information is also available online and the only downside is that the program does not cover contract poultry growers.

**Joe Bartenfelder:**

- MDA signing the EPA is a great moment for MD and MD agriculture starting with a local farm in Caroline County.
- One of the things that Cosmo Servidio told me when he took over as region three administrator was that he wanted to stay more in touch with farmers and with what farmers needs are.

- This will help with the financial needs of farmers and with some of the demands of the EMPs that will be implemented to reach our 2025 WIP III goals.
- Governor is going to have a round table discussion with farmers on what are some of the problems and needs they faced this year and the challenges faced with Covid 19 and the world-wide pandemic.
- We have had some dedicated employees that have continued to get the work done even while teleworking.
- The challenges seem to be staying for awhile but our office is open and ready to help.
- In our agriculture community we talk about front line folks. They kept the food supply chain open. It shifted and went from distributors going from restaurants and institutions to redevelop their strategy to put food on the shelves and do direct marketing straight to consumers.
- There was fear among some legislators but some concerns were addressed and fear will hopefully subside.
- Poultry stepped up and did truck load sales to producers but also to consumers throughout the state.
- Could buy poultry at a discounted price buying directly from farmer.
- Were able to contribute and distribute tons of poultry to food distribution groups.
- Wish luck to all and we will make it through this together.
- There has been a change to the hemp pilot program and will be getting clarification from USDA and forward it along to members. Kevin helped ensure Levi that MDA is working on the new hemp change and the implications that are included. There were around 20 questions asked and only three were answered at this time.

**Steve McHenry:**

- Launched small acreage next generation program, about to receive first application from Calvert County.
- Looking forward to seeing next gen applications from southern MD.
- Just wrapped up value added producer grant program for capital equipment purchases. Received 26 applications that are being reviewed now and selection will be made in 3 to 4 weeks.
- Wrapped up pandemic adjustment program and awarded 92 pandemic adjustment grants just under 2 million dollars in July and made 26 pandemic adjustment loans totaling about 265 thousand dollars.
- Have been busy and like to stay even busier.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:10 am respectfully submitted by: Jessica O'Sullivan