



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

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

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building  
50 Harry S Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Internet: [www.mda.maryland.gov](http://www.mda.maryland.gov)

410.841.5700 Baltimore/Washington  
301.261.8106 Washington, D.C.  
410.841.5914 Fax

## Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes December 14, 2022

Present: Joseph Dymek  
Michael Levensgood  
Gordon Kretser  
Rebecca Stoecker  
Paula Linthicum

Sean Hough  
John Murphy  
Cliff Newsome  
Mike Pons

Absent: Thomas Mullineaux  
Rajneesh Kathuria  
Far Nasir  
Amy Crone  
Dr. Marianne Bailey  
Matthew Levi Sellers  
Kelly Dudeck  
Matthew Nielsen  
Richard Pelz  
Frank Allnutt  
Dr. Craig Beyrouthy  
Benjamin Sowers

MDA Staff: Joe Bartenfelder  
Steve Connelly  
Rich Colburn  
Cassie Shirk  
Jessica Hackett  
Karen Kirkley

### Approval of Minutes:

November minutes were approved 1st by Joe Dymek and 2nd by Sean Hough.

Commodity Reports: Committee reports were submitted from the follow members and are included below:

**State Grange**  
**Cliff Newsome**

The National Grange Convention was held in Sparks, Nevada in November. State President Allen Stiles attended with his wife Kay. She is also a National Officer. Many resolutions were passed that dealt with Agriculture, Education, Transportation and Environmental Issues. Our Granges received a full report on December 3, 2022. Many Granges have reported participation in local food drives, Toys for Tots and Wreaths Across America.

Congratulations to Jessica and family on the birth of Oliver !!! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all members of the Maryland Ag. Commission !!!

## **Poultry 1**

### **Mike Levensgood**

1 - DLLC

DLLC Releases "Ammonia Emissions from Poultry Production on Delmarva"

Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative members spent two years reviewing and synthesizing information related to the management of ammonia in the chicken houses, modeling of ammonia emissions and identifying where information gaps still exist. The culmination of this work is a publicly available document which summarizes what DLLC learned. It's information that is scientifically backed and thoroughly vetted by DLLC members, including DCA.

Join DLLC for an overview of this paper, presented by the lead author, Dr. Richard Snyder, Director of the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, Eastern Shore Laboratory. Register here for this webinar, which takes place on Dec. 13 at 1 p.m.

### 2 - HPAI Detections

As of December 12, 2022, there have been 683 confirmed HPAI detections in commercial turkeys, layers, broilers, pullets, ducks, game birds, and backyard flocks. The last commercial detections were on December 9, 2022, in Prowers County, Colorado in commercial upland game birds and in Osage County, Missouri in commercial turkeys. These detections represent a total of 53,124,921 birds. In addition, there have been 4,362 HPAI detections in wild birds across the U.S. Commercial and backyard flock detections can be found here: [USDA APHIS | 2022 Confirmations of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Commercial and Backyard Flocks](#). Wild bird detections can be found here: [USDA APHIS | 2022 Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Wild Birds](#). A breakdown of detections to date are as follows:

### 3 – USPoultry Board

“The Board of USPOULTRY has supported this research for a decade, and it points to the continued focus on the judicious use of antibiotics in the poultry industry. We are grateful for the long-term participation of so many members in this study,” remarked John Starkey, president of the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association.

Under the research direction of Dr. Randall Singer, DVM, PhD, of Mindwalk Consulting Group, LLC, this report represents a nine-year set of data collected from 2013 to 2021 for U.S. broiler chickens and turkeys and represents a six-year set of data collected from 2016 to 2021 for layers. A prior report, covering 2013-2017, was released in August 2019.

Given several key differences among broiler chickens, turkeys and layers – namely differences in weight, life span, susceptibility to lifetime illness, the number of effective medical treatments available, etc. – these data should neither be combined nor compared between types of poultry. Key Changes Among Broiler Chickens Over the 2013-2021 Period: Broiler chickens receiving antibiotics in the hatchery decreased from 90% (2013) to 0% (2021)

Medically important in-feed antibiotic use in broiler chickens decreased substantially: there was no reported in-feed tetracycline use in 2020 or 2021, and virginiamycin use decreased more than 97% over the nine-year period.

Medically important water-soluble antibiotic use in broiler chickens decreased substantially from 2013-2017 and then stabilized or decreased slightly from 2017-2021:

- penicillin use decreased by more than 75% from peak in 2015
- lincomycin use decreased by more than 82% from peak in 2015
- tetracycline use decreased by more than 92% since 2013
- sulfonamide use decreased by 98% since 2013

There was a documented shift to the use of antibiotics that are not considered medically important to humans (e.g., avilamycin and bacitracin).

Key Changes Among Turkeys Over the 2013-2021 Period:

Turkeys receiving antibiotics in the hatchery decreased from 97% (2013) to 40% (2021)  
Hatchery gentamicin use decreased almost 50% from 2013 to 2021

Medically important in-feed antibiotic use in turkeys decreased substantially: in-feed tetracycline use decreased more than 80% over the nine-year period

Medically important water-soluble antibiotic use in turkeys decreased substantially from 2013-2017 and then stabilized or increased slightly from 2017-2021. Increases were typically due to increased disease incidence, as seen in other countries as well, during the 2019-2021 period:

- penicillin use decreased by more than 41% since 2013
- lincomycin use decreased by more than 54% from 2013 to 2020 but then increased in 2021
- tetracycline use remained fairly stable and then increased in 2020-2021
- neomycin use decreased by more than 50% since 2013

Key Findings Among Layer Chickens Over the 2016-2021 Period:

Layer chickens (hens) typically begin laying eggs around 20 weeks of age and end when the layer hen is around 80 to 100 weeks of age.

Table egg production is similar to milk production, where the product for human consumption is produced on a daily basis. Most antibiotics that could be administered to layer hens have withdrawal periods that would prevent all eggs produced during this period from entering the food supply. This is one reason why little antibiotic is used in table egg production in the U.S.

All chicks in the dataset received gentamicin in the hatchery (day 1 of age).

In the U.S., the majority of chicks purchased by egg companies are sourced from hatcheries that are owned and operated by genetics companies.

The only medically important antibiotic used in layer hens for treatment and control of disease in this dataset was chlortetracycline (CTC), used in part because it has a zero-day withdrawal, meaning that there is no loss of eggs during the treatment period.

CTC was only administered via the feed in pullets (day 2 through 16 to 18 weeks of age) and layer hens.

The majority (>95%) of CTC was used in the layer hens for treatment of disease.

Less than 0.2% of total hen-days were exposed to CTC.

Moving forward, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association will continue to support Dr. Singer in the annual collection of data from the broiler chicken, turkey and layer industries. These efforts will continue to assist the poultry industry as it aims to improve antibiotic stewardship and will also document the burden of flock illness and reasons for on-farm, medically important antibiotic usage.

#### 4 - Farm Credit opens signups for AgBiz Masters

Farm Credit has announced that registration for the AgBiz Masters, the nationally recognized learning series for young and beginning farmers, is open now until December 23, 2022.

“Farmers and agriculturalists are, by nature, lifelong learners,” says Tom Truitt, CEO of Horizon Farm Credit. “We’re proud of the additional educational opportunities our AgBiz Masters program offers those looking to either break into the industry or expand their business knowledge.”

The two-year educational program is available to young, beginning, and small producers who are interested in refining their business management, financial, and marketing skills to help them as they launch or grow their businesses.

This year, Year 1 is being offered virtually. It will focus on trends in agriculture, strategic business planning, financial management, and constructing both a balance sheet and income statement. Year 2 is being offered both virtually and in-person. This class features learning modules centered on understanding lending decisions, growth and transition management, personal financial management, and leadership skills.

#### 5 - Eastern Shore Air Monitoring

Eastern Shore air monitoring effort shows little variation between poultry areas, urban regions. An innovative, partnership-led ambient air quality monitoring project in Maryland has recorded more than two years of data about ammonia and particulate matter air emissions on the Eastern Shore, and has shown little variation in average air pollution levels between areas with no chicken farms, areas with a low density of poultry farms, and areas with many poultry farms.

The Lower Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project, overseen by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), began collecting continuous data about ammonia, fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), and coarse particulate matter (PM 10) in April 2020 at locations in Princess Anne (designated a low poultry operation density site), Pocomoke City (designated a high poultry operation density site), and an urban Maryland location not on the Eastern Shore with no nearby poultry operations. Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) and the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment jointly supported the effort with more than \$500,000 in funds. MDE, along with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore is responsible for collecting and publishing the data gathered by the project, which is ongoing.

The data for the life of the project to date shows average ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) levels for the urban site to be at 1.6 percent of a MDE-designated 350 parts per billion concern threshold; 1.3 percent of the threshold level in Princess Anne (lower than in the urban area); and 2.9 percent of the threshold in Pocomoke City. The Pocomoke City site, with a high density of poultry operations, saw lower maximum hourly values for each pollutant than the Princess Anne site, with a comparatively lower density of nearby poultry farms. Days when relatively maximum hourly values were recorded in Princess Anne, the low poultry operation density site, coincide with days when commercial fertilizer (which contains nitrogen, the solid form of ammonia) was applied to cropland in the area around the monitoring site. None of the recorded ammonia hourly value spikes at any site have exceeded the 350 parts per billion concern threshold, and the values recorded by MDE during the Lower Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project are consistent with values recorded throughout the state.

DCA tuned in Thursday to witness oral arguments in *MDE v. ACT*, a pending case before the court to determine whether Maryland law requires new controls for ammonia emissions to be in general discharge permits obtained by the state's chicken growers. The Maryland Department of the Environment appealed a lower court's ruling after that Montgomery County court ruled in favor of Assateague Coastal Trust, which is pressing for the new ammonia controls to be

mandatory in animal feeding operation (AFO) permits. DCA previously joined an amicus brief filed with the state's highest appeals court, arguing, as MDE does, that the state already protects water resources from ammonia discharges in the existing permit.

The Daily Record said several judges on the court were "seemingly skeptical" of the ACT point of view during the oral arguments.

## **MAEF**

### **Joe Dymek**

- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved MAEF's affiliate grant. MAEF appreciates the support from the agriculture community who advocated for the awarding of the grant.
- MAEF has appreciated the support from the Horizon Farm Credit in providing office space for its satellite office in Frederick for the Secondary Education Team. A discussion is underway in locating a new office.
- MAEF sponsored the first-ever Next Generation Summit at the Farm Bureau Convention brought together youth and young leaders for leadership development, networking and an introduction to Farm Bureau. Dr. Barb Glenn was a guiding force behind this event. MAEF also presented a "Toolkit for Farm Bureaus" at the convention to assist them in working to support ag education in the Counties. MAEF, together with Maryland FFA, also hosted an information booth.
- Susanne Richards, MAEF's Executive Director, is responsible for outreach to the Maryland Ag Commission, Rural Maryland Council, MAEF and the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association to continue discussions on the development of an Office of Agriculture Education in Maryland.
- MSDE released its draft Environmental Literacy Framework. MAEF has submitted detailed comments regarding opportunities which were missed to connect people and environment through agriculture.
- Rural Maryland will experience a tremendous and unprecedented transfer of wealth over the next decade, with \$64.1 billion changing hands between 2017-2026. Capturing just five percent for philanthropic endeavors offers the potential for \$3.2 billion in new community endowments, with a five percent sustained annual payout offering \$160 million a year in perpetual grant making. MAEF is working with the Rural Maryland Council/Foundation's Transfer of Wealth (TOW) committee to form a plan to help MAEF, the Rural Maryland Foundation and others to capture some of this wealth to benefit rural communities.
- MAEF's Secondary Team attended the National Association of Agriculture Educators Convention and the Association for Career Technical Education Convention. Several Maryland teachers received awards: Dr. Stacy Eckels - NAAE Teacher Turn the Key program State participant; Dr. Mellissa Welsh - UMCP College of Ag Outstanding Post-Secondary Partner Ward for Region VI; Aaron Geiman - Elected to serve as the NAAE Region VI Vice-President for a three-year term; Sarah Shriner - MATA President, received a State Professional Excellence Award.

## FFA

- FFA continues to offer regional leadership conferences. In November, 634 FFA participants, from 33 local FFA Chapters, attended 4 leadership conferences.
- Maryland FFA State Vice-President Hannah Haines and State FFA Secretary Teagan Flaherty attended the annual pardoning of the turkey ceremony by President Biden at the White House.
- Maryland State Officer team will be traveling to Costa Rica with the National FFA through the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers from January 2-16, 2023. During their visit, the students will learn more about the agriculture, education history and the government of Costa Rica.

## MATA (Maryland Agricultural Teacher's Association)

- MATA appointed a committee charged with creating a proposal for leading agricultural education in Maryland, under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (aka the Kirwan Commission Laws). The committee is sharing their idea/proposal with numerous agricultural education related organization in Maryland, to gain support. Would members of this Commission like to participate in an informational session with MATA?

## **Turf December 2022**

### **Gordon Kretser**

Sod Check Off – final draft of order has been submitted to the USDA for review. This draft has a significant change which would make a percentage of all check off dollars produced by a state to stay with the state. 35% is the percentage currently proposed. Each states sod grower association will submit a proposal to the Sod Check Off board of directors on where/what they want the funds to go toward. It is my opinion that this new development will move the needle towards a YES vote. Once this final draft is approved by the USDA there will be a public comment period and then a vote by the sod industry on its passage.

## **Farm Bureau Report**

### **Paula Linthicum**

Thank you to Secretary Bartenfelder and MDA Staff for supporting agriculture in 2022. You are appreciated.

Maryland Farm Bureau held its Annual Convention and Young Farmer's Conference December 3-6, 2022 in Cambridge, MD. During the YF Conference, two Agricultural Ambassadors were selected to represent Maryland Agriculture in 2023.

During the Annual Business meeting, Farm Bureau members approved policy that will guide MDFB staff during the 2023 Legislative Session. MDFB also celebrated an MOU signing with Maryland 4H. This is an exciting partnership as youth and young farmers are the future of agriculture.

Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis is February 8, 2023. Registration is available online at <https://www.mdfarmbureau.com/day-in-annapolis/>

## **Aquaculture Report**

Richard Pelz

Two pieces of news: One is very significant to the oyster aquaculture industry in Maryland and the other may impact our bio-security.

The first is research being done by George Mason University. Specifically Invasive parasite research at Mason's Potomac Science Center. The full article can be found here <https://www.gmu.edu/news/2021-10/zombie-crab-research-and-their-effects-chesapeake-bay>

When Maryland decided to allow the importation of Gulf Coast oysters to shucking houses to offset the economic damage to the oyster industry due to Hurricane Agnes in 1972 More than just a new devastating variant of Dermo came with them.

The significant piece in this article is not that we have zombie crabs which would normally serve as cleaners within an oyster community either aquaculture or in reef system. We have 4 other species of mud crabs that provide much of the same service to the oysters. Also, it was reported that it is already prevalent throughout the population of white-fingered mud crabs in the bay. The part that caught my attention was they mentioned that they are concurrently studying a second parasite that is not found in the bay. What it is or what it is capable of doing are not mentioned. As we all know, even the best of bio-security measures are not infallible and this lab is located on the Potomac. It is concerning and I will leave it at that.

The second involves MDE. The Chesapeake Bay Journal and the Chesapeake Bay Magazine both came out with articles about the following Acting on behalf of the Maryland Department of the Environment, Attorney General Brian Frosh filed the lawsuit Dec. 1 against the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission.

[https://www.bayjournal.com/news/fisheries/southern-maryland-utility-sued-over-repeated-sewage-overflows/article\\_99117524-74b7-11ed-9093-836aeda275f2.html](https://www.bayjournal.com/news/fisheries/southern-maryland-utility-sued-over-repeated-sewage-overflows/article_99117524-74b7-11ed-9093-836aeda275f2.html)

<https://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/md-sues-over-repeated-st-marys-overflows-that-tainted-oysters/>

As Paul Harvey used to say, here is the rest of the story: Over a year ago there was a sewage spill that was dutifully and timely reported to MDE. MDE did not pass that information on to the affected aquaculture operator. Subsequently they unknowingly harvested and distributed contaminated oysters.



As would be expected, people they shipped them to in Virginia consumed those oysters and some got ill. The impact on their business was close to catastrophic. Subsequently, as I understand it, they have filed suit against MDE.

Now, over a year later at the peak of Maryland oyster harvest, a lawsuit is filed for MDE against METCOM who had the spill and it has hit the news. The end results is oysters are not selling in restaurants.

## **Equine Michael Pons**

1. On December 6, 2022, the Fasig-Tipton December Mixed Sales was held at the Timonium Sales Pavilion. Approximately 300 horses were catalogued, including: broodmares, broodmare prospects, weanlings, yearlings and horses of racing age. The sale posted an increase in average over last year's sale. The sales topper was the 3-year-old racehorse, Radical Right, who sold for \$260,000, the second-highest price for a racehorse since 2018, when the racing age supplement was added to this sale. The next Fasig-Tipton Sale in Maryland will be the Midlantic 2-Year-Old Sales on May 22 and 23, 2022, the Monday and Tuesday following the Preakness. F-T will also be having a second 2-Year-Old Sale on June 28, 2023.

2. The Maryland Horse Breeders Association are having the grand opening of the Maryland Horse Library and Education Center on Friday, December 16, 2022, from 12-4:00 pm. The ribbon-cutting ceremony will be followed by their annual holiday open house. The public is welcome to attend.

The new headquarters is located on 321 Main Street, Reisterstown, MD.

3. Implementation of the Horse Racing Integrity Act's new medication rules, which provided uniform regulations for all Thoroughbred racing states, was scheduled to begin on January 1, 2023. However, Federal Trade Commission ruled against HISA's medication program, citing a recent district court order claiming it violated state's rights. If the legal uncertainties are resolved, then the uniform medication plan could be resubmitted for FTC approval.

4. Northview Stallion Station, in Chesapeake City, MD, has added the new stallion, True Valor (GB), a GII stakes winner of nearly \$700,000. By five-time champion 2-year-old sire, Kodiak (GB), he's produced from the Acclamation (GB) mare, Sutton Very (IRE). True Valor was a turf racing specialist, winning the City of Hope Stakes at Santa Anita and the King T. Leatherbury Stakes at Laurel. He will stand for a \$3,000 live foal stud fee.

5. The Thoroughbred Maryland racing season will take a holiday break from December 19-25, 2023. Live racing will resume on Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, and will continue Thursday, Friday and Saturday, December 29, 30, and 31, 2023.

6. The Fair Hill Foundation thanks all sponsors, participants and fans who attended the successful Mars Five-Star Event in October. Currently, they are planning for the return of racing at Fair Hill on Memorial Day Weekend 2023. The FH Foundation is looking for sponsors and donations. One pressing concern is how to get a hundred, or so, cars over the turf course and into the infield tailgating-area, without crushing the grass. Several suggestions are being considered, including using portable bridges to keep vehicles off the track.

7. The Stronach Group is considering selling Laurel Park racetrack to group of horse-racing minded investors, while retaining the rights to the Preakness. A deadline of December 15, 2022 was established to consider what, if any, offers were available. If the sale of Laurel moves forward, then I'll keep the Ag Board apprised.

8. Happy Holidays!

**Staff Updates:**

**Joe Bartenfelder:**

- Provided an avian update
- Thanked the commission for doing a great job.
- Wished everyone a happy holiday season

**Rich Colburn:**

- Nothing to report

**Steve Connelly:**

- Provided an update on High Path Avian Influenza. Reminded everyone to continue to enhanced biosecurity on their flocks.
  - Offered guidance that those interested in advising the new incoming administration should do so in their personal capacity.

**Cassie Shirk:**

- New legislative session starting soon.
- After a 2-year hiatus bring back Maryland Best Expo Tues January 10th at the Navy Marine Corp Stadium. Reach out to Cassie or Mark for more information.

**Jessica Hackett:**

- On Tuesday, Maryland Public Television will feature MDA on its Farm and Harvest program. The new season begins on January 10, 2023
- Departmental annual reports are being finalized
- Taste of Maryland dinner registration is now open

Motion to adjourn made by Joe Dymek. The meeting adjourned at 10:01 AM.

Respectfully Submitted by Karen M. Kirksey

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The Lower Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project, overseen by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), began collecting continuous data about ammonia, fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), and coarse particulate matter (PM 10) in April 2020 at locations in Princess Anne (designated a low poultry operation density site), Pocomoke City (designated a high poultry operation density site), and an urban Maryland location not on the Eastern Shore with no nearby poultry operations. Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) and the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment jointly supported the effort with more than \$500,000 in funds. MDE, along with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore is responsible for collecting and publishing the data gathered by the project, which is ongoing.

The data for the life of the project to date shows average ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) levels for the urban site to be at 1.6 percent of a MDE-designated 350 parts per billion concern threshold; 1.3 percent of the threshold level in Princess Anne (lower than in the urban area); and 2.9 percent of the threshold in Pocomoke City. The Pocomoke City site, with a high density of poultry operations, saw lower maximum hourly values for each pollutant than the Princess Anne site, with a comparatively lower density of nearby poultry farms. Days when relatively maximum hourly values were recorded in Princess Anne, the low poultry operation density site, coincide with days when commercial fertilizer (which contains nitrogen, the solid form of ammonia) was applied to cropland in the area around the monitoring site. None of the recorded ammonia hourly value spikes at any site have exceeded the 350 parts per billion concern threshold, and the values recorded by MDE during the Lower Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project are consistent with values recorded throughout the state.

DCA tuned in Thursday to witness oral arguments in *MDE v. ACT*, a pending case before the court to determine whether Maryland law requires new controls for ammonia emissions to be in general discharge permits obtained by the state's chicken growers. The Maryland Department of the Environment appealed a lower court's ruling after that Montgomery County court ruled in favor of Assateague Coastal Trust, which is pressing for the new ammonia controls to be mandatory in animal feeding operation (AFO) permits. DCA previously joined an amicus brief



filed with the state's highest appeals court, arguing, as MDE does, that the state already protects water resources from ammonia discharges in the existing permit.

The Daily Record said several judges on the court were "seemingly skeptical" of the ACT point of view during the oral arguments.

## **MAEF**

### **Joe Dymek**

- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved MAEF's affiliate grant. MAEF appreciates the support from the agriculture community who advocated for the awarding of the grant.
- MAEF has appreciated the support from the Horizon Farm Credit in providing office space for its satellite office in Frederick for the Secondary Education Team. A discussion is underway in locating a new office.
- MAEF sponsored the first-ever Next Generation Summit at the Farm Bureau Convention brought together youth and young leaders for leadership development, networking and an introduction to Farm Bureau. Dr. Barb Glenn was a guiding force behind this event. MAEF also presented a "Toolkit for Farm Bureaus" at the convention to assist them in working to support ag education in the Counties. MAEF, together with Maryland FFA, also hosted an information booth.
- Susanne Richards, MAEF's Executive Director, is responsible for outreach to the Maryland Ag Commission, Rural Maryland Council, MAEF and the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association to continue discussions on the development of an Office of Agriculture Education in Maryland.
- MSDE released its draft Environmental Literacy Framework. MAEF has submitted detailed comments regarding opportunities which were missed to connect people and environment through agriculture.
- Rural Maryland will experience a tremendous and unprecedented transfer of wealth over the next decade, with \$64.1 billion changing hands between 2017-2026. Capturing just five percent for philanthropic endeavors offers the potential for \$3.2 billion in new community endowments, with a five percent sustained annual payout offering \$160 million a year in perpetual grant making. MAEF is working with the Rural Maryland Council/Foundation's Transfer of Wealth (TOW) committee to form a plan to help MAEF, the Rural Maryland Foundation and others to capture some of this wealth to benefit rural communities.
- MAEF's Secondary Team attended the National Association of Agriculture Educators Convention and the Association for Career Technical Education Convention. Several Maryland teachers received awards: Dr. Stacy Eckels - NAAE Teacher Turn the Key program State participant; Dr. Mellissa Welsh - UMCP College of Ag Outstanding Post-Secondary Partner Ward for Region VI; Aaron Geiman - Elected to serve as the NAAE Region VI Vice-President for a three-year term; Sarah Shriner – MATA President, received a State Professional Excellence Award.

## FFA

- FFA continues to offer regional leadership conferences. In November, 634 FFA participants, from 33 local FFA Chapters, attended 4 leadership conferences.
- Maryland FFA State Vice-President Hannah Haines and State FFA Secretary Teagan Flaherty attended the annual pardoning of the turkey ceremony by President Biden at the White House.
- Maryland State Officer team will be traveling to Costa Rica with the National FFA through the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers from January 2-16, 2023. During their visit, the students will learn more about the agriculture, education history and the government of Costa Rica.

## MATA (Maryland Agricultural Teacher's Association)

- MATA appointed a committee charged with creating a proposal for leading agricultural education in Maryland, under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (aka the Kirwan Commission Laws). The committee is sharing their idea/proposal with numerous agricultural education related organization in Maryland, to gain support. Would members of this Commission like to participate in an informational session with MATA?

## **Turf December 2022**

### **Gordon Kretser**

Sod Check Off – final draft of order has been submitted to the USDA for review. This draft has a significant change which would make a percentage of all check off dollars produced by a state to stay with the state. 35% is the percentage currently proposed. Each states sod grower association will submit a proposal to the Sod Check Off board of directors on where/what they want the funds to go toward. It is my opinion that this new development will move the needle towards a YES vote. Once this final draft is approved by the USDA there will be a public comment period and then a vote by the sod industry on its passage.

## **Farm Bureau Report**

### **Paula Linthicum**

Thank you to Secretary Bartenfelder and MDA Staff for supporting agriculture in 2022. You are appreciated.

Maryland Farm Bureau held its Annual Convention and Young Farmer's Conference December 3-6, 2022 in Cambridge, MD. During the YF Conference, two Agricultural Ambassadors were selected to represent Maryland Agriculture in 2023.

During the Annual Business meeting, Farm Bureau members approved policy that will guide MDFB staff during the 2023 Legislative Session. MDFB also celebrated an MOU signing with Maryland 4H. This is an exciting partnership as youth and young farmers are the future of agriculture.

Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis is February 8, 2023. Registration is available online at <https://www.mdfarmbureau.com/day-in-annapolis/>

## **Aquaculture Report**

Richard Pelz

Two pieces of news: One is very significant to the oyster aquaculture industry in Maryland and the other may impact our bio-security.

The first is research being done by George Mason University. Specifically Invasive parasite research at Mason's Potomac Science Center. The full article can be found here <https://www.gmu.edu/news/2021-10/zombie-crab-research-and-their-effects-chesapeake-bay>

When Maryland decided to allow the importation of Gulf Coast oysters to shucking houses to offset the economic damage to the oyster industry due to Hurricane Agnes in 1972 More than just a new devastating variant of Dermo came with them.

The significant piece in this article is not that we have zombie crabs which would normally serve as cleaners within an oyster community either aquaculture or in reef system. We have 4 other species of mud crabs that provide much of the same service to the oysters. Also, it was reported that it is already prevalent throughout the population of white-fingered mud crabs in the bay. The part that caught my attention was they mentioned that they are concurrently studying a second parasite that is not found in the bay. What it is or what it is capable of doing are not mentioned. As we all know, even the best of bio-security measures are not infallible and this lab is located on the Potomac. It is concerning and I will leave it at that.

The second involves MDE. The Chesapeake Bay Journal and the Chesapeake Bay Magazine both came out with articles about the following Acting on behalf of the Maryland Department of the Environment, Attorney General Brian Frosh filed the lawsuit Dec. 1 against the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission.

[https://www.bayjournal.com/news/fisheries/southern-maryland-utility-sued-over-repeated-sewage-overflows/article\\_99117524-74b7-11ed-9093-836aeda275f2.html](https://www.bayjournal.com/news/fisheries/southern-maryland-utility-sued-over-repeated-sewage-overflows/article_99117524-74b7-11ed-9093-836aeda275f2.html)

<https://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/md-sues-over-repeated-st-marys-overflows-that-tainted-oysters/>

As Paul Harvey used to say, here is the rest of the story: Over a year ago there was a sewage spill that was dutifully and timely reported to MDE. MDE did not pass that information on to the affected aquaculture operator. Subsequently they unknowingly harvested and distributed contaminated oysters.

As would be expected, people they shipped them to in Virginia consumed those oysters and some got ill. The impact on their business was close to catastrophic. Subsequently, as I understand it, they have filed suit against MDE.

Now, over a year later at the peak of Maryland oyster harvest, a lawsuit is filed for MDE against METCOM who had the spill and it has hit the news. The end results is oysters are not selling in restaurants.

## **Equine Michael Pons**

1. On December 6, 2022, the Fasig-Tipton December Mixed Sales was held at the Timonium Sales Pavilion. Approximately 300 horses were catalogued, including: broodmares, broodmare prospects, weanlings, yearlings and horses of racing age. The sale posted an increase in average over last year's sale. The sales topper was the 3-year-old racehorse, Radical Right, who sold for \$260,000, the second-highest price for a racehorse since 2018, when the racing age supplement was added to this sale. The next Fasig-Tipton Sale in Maryland will be the Midlantic 2-Year-Old Sales on May 22 and 23, 2022, the Monday and Tuesday following the Preakness. F-T will also be having a second 2-Year-Old Sale on June 28, 2023.

2. The Maryland Horse Breeders Association are having the grand opening of the Maryland Horse Library and Education Center on Friday, December 16, 2022, from 12-4:00 pm. The ribbon-cutting ceremony will be followed by their annual holiday open house. The public is welcome to attend.

The new headquarters is located on 321 Main Street, Reisterstown, MD.

3. Implementation of the Horse Racing Integrity Act's new medication rules, which provided uniform regulations for all Thoroughbred racing states, was scheduled to begin on January 1, 2023. However, Federal Trade Commission ruled against HISA's medication program, citing a recent district court order claiming it violated state's rights. If the legal uncertainties are resolved, then the uniform medication plan could be resubmitted for FTC approval.

4. Northview Stallion Station, in Chesapeake City, MD, has added the new stallion, True Valor (GB), a GII stakes winner of nearly \$700,000. By five-time champion 2-year-old sire, Kodiak (GB), he's produced from the Acclamation (GB) mare, Sutton Very (IRE). True Valor was a turf racing specialist, winning the City of Hope Stakes at Santa Anita and the King T. Leatherbury Stakes at Laurel. He will stand for a \$3,000 live foal stud fee.

5. The Thoroughbred Maryland racing season will take a holiday break from December 19-25, 2023. Live racing will resume on Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, and will continue Thursday, Friday and Saturday, December 29, 30, and 31, 2023.

6. The Fair Hill Foundation thanks all sponsors, participants and fans who attended the successful Mars Five-Star Event in October. Currently, they are planning for the return of racing at Fair Hill on Memorial Day Weekend 2023. The FH Foundation is looking for sponsors and donations. One pressing concern is how to get a hundred, or so, cars over the turf course and into the infield tailgating-area, without crushing the grass. Several suggestions are being considered, including using portable bridges to keep vehicles off the track.

7. The Stronach Group is considering selling Laurel Park racetrack to group of horse-racing minded investors, while retaining the rights to the Preakness. A deadline of December 15, 2022 was established to consider what, if any, offers were available. If the sale of Laurel moves forward, then I'll keep the Ag Board apprised.

8. Happy Holidays!

**Staff Updates:**

**Joe Bartenfelder:**

- Provided an avian update
- Thanked the commission for doing a great job.
- Wished everyone a happy holiday season

**Rich Colburn:**

- Nothing to report

**Steve Connelly:**

- Provided an update on High Path Avian Influenza. Reminded everyone to continue to enhanced biosecurity on their flocks.
  - Offered guidance that those interested in advising the new incoming administration should do so in their personal capacity.

**Cassie Shirk:**

- New legislative session starting soon.
- After a 2-year hiatus bring back Maryland Best Expo Tues January 10th at the Navy Marine Corp Stadium. Reach out to Cassie or Mark for more information.

**Jessica Hackett:**

- On Tuesday, Maryland Public Television will feature MDA on its Farm and Harvest program. The new season begins on January 10, 2023
- Departmental annual reports are being finalized
- Taste of Maryland dinner registration is now open

Motion to adjourn made by Joe Dymek. The meeting adjourned at 10:01 AM.

Respectfully Submitted by Karen M. Kirksey