



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

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Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes February 9, 2022

Present:	Joseph Dymek Kelly Dudeck Frank Allnutt Matthew Levi Sellers Amy Crone Sean Hough John Murphy	Michael Levengood Michelle Protani- Chesnik Clifford Newsome Jr. Gordon Kretser Dr. Marianne Bailey
Absent:	Thomas Mullineaux Richard Pelz Shelby Green Benjamin Sowers Michael Pons Jonathan Quinn Cheryl DeBerry	Elizabeth Hill Matthew Nielsen Dr. Craig Beyrouy Matthew Corey Spies
MDA Staff:	Joe Bartenfelder Richard Colburn Cassie Shirk Jason Shellhardt Steve Connelly	

Guest:
Matt Teffeau

Approval of Minutes:

January minutes were approved 1st by Joe Dymek and 2nd by Cliff Newsome.

Commodity Reports:

Ag Education- Joe Dymek:

- **MAEF:** Maryland Ag Literacy Summit will be held on March 16, 2022, 9am to noon online. The purpose of the Summit is to bring the Maryland Ag community together to set goals, align messages, develop measurement strategies and share resources on Ag literacy efforts. A part of that effort includes a survey to benchmark current efforts and compare progress against a similar survey from ten years ago. Please encourage those in your network who conduct Ag literacy programming to complete the survey and register for the Summit! Survey link: <https://forms.gle/HmwEry4KG7tzVnro7>
- MAEF's elementary level 'Lab in a Box' is dairy themed and features "Tales of a Dairy Godmother: Chuck's Ice Cream Wish." Presales are now being accepted and boxes will ship later this month. The \$35 kit includes the book, and educator's guide with six cross-curricular lessons, lesson worksheets and experiment materials for three experiments conducted by up to 30 students.
- MAEF's "Infusing Ag" courses provide professional development credits for teachers. There are two courses: elementary and secondary. The spring 2022 courses begin March 28 and end May 20; \$135 for 3 credits; hybrid virtual/in-person formats. For information email Tonya Wible at twible@maefonline.com for Elementary or Peggy Eppic at peppig@maefonline.com for Secondary.
- MAEF is also working with the National Ag in the Classroom program to host a professional development workshop for high school science teachers and advisors (non-ag-science focus). "The World Under Your Feet: Turf in Maryland" will be held July 11-13 at the University of Maryland and surrounding locations, giving participants a glimpse into soil science, water quality, turf management, careers and more. Registration will open later this spring.
- **Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) – Agricultural Education.**
- MSDE provides funding to help:
 - MAEF support FFA
 - Support instructor professional learning
 - Address "special populations" issues
 - Develop CTE programs
- MSDE representative sit on multiple ag-related committees, counsels and boards.
- The only way to ensure that agricultural education/literacy is included in statewide classroom content is to pass legislation.

- Include agricultural education/literacy as a graduation requirement (similar to Environmental Literacy)
 - Amend the Environmental Literacy law to include more agriculture content
- Options to get ag-related curricular content into the local classrooms:
 - Educate teachers
 - Secondary and postsecondary teacher preparatory programs at the colleges
 - Elementary, middle and high school teacher professional development
 - Educate local leaders to advocate for local ag content
- Agricultural Literacy vs. Agricultural Education
 - Literacy: Promoting an understanding of the importance of agriculture in our daily lives to individuals not involved in agricultural careers. Helps to form a more generally informed person. Can be forgotten
 - Education: Teaching the technical and business aspects of agriculture to individuals who are preparing for, or are contemplating, careers in agriculture. Provides a person with tools to understand and enter the business/occupation. Not forgotten if entering the occupation.
- **4-H:** Career AGsperience opportunities to increase participants' knowledge base about agriculture careers are available to 4-H members. Career AGsperience is an agriculture literacy program designed to increase participants' knowledge base about careers in Animal Science, Agri-Business and Leadership, and Agriculture Science and Technology. In 2021, over 10,000 youth learned about career planning, resume development, internships, interviewing skills, and business etiquette. Youth reported increased interest and knowledge in Agri-science careers. Contact your local 4-H office for more information.
- Nearly \$3 million raised during the county livestock sales to support youth, fairs and 4-H programs.
- **MDFB:** Congratulations are in order for two members of the MDFB Ag Education & Extension committee who recently received recognition.
 - Kayla Griffith won third place in **Excellence in Agriculture** at the Annual Convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation.
 - Southern Maryland High School's FFA Chapter, advised by Dr. Stacey Eckels, agriscience instructor and FFA advisor, and was recently recognized for their volunteer work to raise cash and supplies, and then go to Kentucky to assist farmers impacted by the devastating tornadoes that hit in early December.
- Ag Entrepreneurs Event, "Managing Your Ag Business after COVID-19", was hosted by the MDFB and The Howard County Economic Development Authority, on January 13, 2022 where attendees heard about Ag Enterprise Management, Understanding Carbon

Credit Marketing, as well as testimonials from farmers on how their businesses successfully are navigating as we heal from the pandemic.

- TODAY! (February 9, 2022) is Maryland Farm Bureau's Day in Annapolis, which focuses on influence, action, and impact. Farmer advocates will stand that up for policies that affect agriculture in our state and will visit with legislators and share their stories – by far the most effective means for farmers to convey their messages.

Agritourism-Kelly Dudeck:

- Bill extend sunset date for farm grower winery and distiller to continue to ship and deliver products.
- Bill for wine promotion fund and beer and distiller fund and commission.
- Assessing agriculture properties as commercial there is a bill to adjust that.
- Also find link for hemp on grow and fortify site.

Aquaculture- Richard Pelz:

- Following an agreement between the FDA and the EU, Trade in raw shellfish, specifically mussels, clams, oysters and scallops has resumed in a minor way between The United States and the EU after a 10 year hiatus. Washington State and Massachusetts will be allowed to export to the EU while Spain and the Netherlands will be allowed to export to the US. This is the first time that FDA has issued an equivalence determination granting EU producers access to the U.S. market.
- So although Maryland shellfish may not be exported to the EU nation's product from Spain and the Netherlands will start showing up in Maryland.
- Spain produces 200,000 metric tons of mussels a year mostly from aquaculture. They are the largest producer of mussels in Europe.
- The Netherlands also produces mussels as well as 28 million oysters a year. 80% are Pacific oysters and 20% the European flat oyster.
- Here is a link to an article with further information on the subject.
- <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-04/eu-u-s-trade-of-some-shellfish-to-resume-after-10-year-dispute>
- This is a link to the FDA determination in the Federal Register.
- <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/24/2020-20755/food-and-drug-administration-equivalence-determination-regarding-implementation-by-spain-and-the>
- FDA has introduced a new rule which many of you may be aware of. This applies to what they consider risky food which includes seafood, eggs, green leafy vegetables and other items. The rule concerns HACCP traceability requiring the tracking of Key Data Elements through Critical Tracking Events requiring a sort-able digital spreadsheet with lot codes that can be delivered to FDA within 24 hours of their request.
- I will be leaving to go to the Philippines toward the end of February and plan to be gone for 6 weeks.

- I will visit commercial fishing and aquaculture operations while I am there.

Ag Services- Levi Sellers:

- **MDA is now accepting 2022 Hemp Production Program Applications.**
- This year's application can be filed online through the MD OneStop website
- The application is a two part process and has a total fee of \$550, which is an increase from the previous year's \$250 fee
- Link was provided through MHC newsletter sent out last night. Otherwise— Visit onestop.md.gov website and enter hemp into the search bar on the website
- **USDA and Cornell University collaborate to present first national hemp webinar series.**
- The USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Cornell University announced the launch of a webinar series on hemp research that aims to broaden the scope of training, education, and connectivity within the hemp community.
- The research team believes that by broadening the scope of training, education, and connectivity within the developing hemp community, they can create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for new hemp and empower hemp research by bringing diverse voices into the larger conversation.
- More information can be found on the USDA.gov website
- **Cecil County Industrial Hemp information meeting.**
- 4 Reasons Hemp of Cecil County and South Bend Industrial Hemp of Great Bend, Kansas are hosting an informational meeting on growing industrial hemp.
- 4 Reasons Hemp is looking for farmers in the region interested in learning more about adding hemp to their crop rotations for production in food, textiles, construction, paper, bioplastics, and more.
- Information will be shared on how to grow the crop, contracting your acres, budget, *and the first hemp processing facility coming to Cecil County.*
- **Where:** Calvert Grange, 2357 Telegraph Rd. Rising Sun, MD 21911
- **When:** February 10, 2022 from 10am-2pm
- **Delta 8 Bill Introduced (SB0788).**
- Senator Brian Feldman (D-Montgomery) has introduced legislation that would prompt Delta-8 and products derived from it to be regulated under the Medical Cannabis Commission.
- Although I agree that delta 8 should be regulated to improve the safety of the products available to consumers, I'm not sure that the Medical Cannabis Commission is best to establish and enforce these regulations. I personally feel some "conflict of interest" could present itself. This might open the door for the MMCC to become more involved with regulating hemp products at the interest of the Medical Cannabis industry and not the interest of the Hemp Industry/consumers.
- This is not the first time that the Medical Cannabis Commission has been considered for the potential to regulate hemp. In the past they were asked to give input on buffer zones

where hemp could not be grown in relation to medical cannabis facilities and this could have led to a substantial negative impact on MDs hemp farmers.

Direct Farm Market-Amy Crone:

- Get certifications up to date and go to conferences.
- Hope to get things open outside.
- Large list of meetings happening will include in report.
- Some virtual options still occurring.
- 8 winter farmers markets open and others are getting ready to open.
- Maryland Market Money program open.
- Higher Montgomery Coordinator program pilot to shift incentives to electronic format.
- Some bills that will affect industry funding are being watched.
- Bills related to Maryland farms and family fund to increase funding from 100 to 300 thousand and for food assistance from 25 thousand to 100 thousand.

Livestock- Sean Hough:

- General market increase prices on cattle, pigs, etc. Demand and exporting still high.
- Supply is decreasing slightly.
- Grain prices increase.
- Locally purchase farm to table.
- Biggest issue is processing and butchering side, difficult to get things proceeded.
- Butchers already booked up for the year.
- Local 4H and FFA kids purchase livestock for fairs in summer time, going well.
- African swine flu is concern biosecurity.
- Confiscated a lot of food items that were trying to get smuggled into the country.
- Issue on pork industry, new California pork law require the size of pens for breeding pens.
- Also veal and eggs, new space law; California is big consumer of pork and can cause pork prices to double in California.
- No longer sell to California and not sure how it will affect other states and how it will affect the cost of pork see where this law goes.

Nursery II- John Murphy:

- Supply chain in nursery is still problematic throughout the season.
- Chesapeake Green Symposium is coming up on the 17th and 18th.
- MAGIC Council, associations are following legislative tracks supporting and opposing bills such as house bill 387 we opposed, house bill 0015 invasive native plants are opposed.
- Already have Invasive Species Council in place.
- House bill 371 opposing, more regulation that industry feels is not needed.

- Labor is slowly getting better senate bill 001 workers compensation.
- Feel this bill is much bigger and believe that we should weigh in labor issue bills.
- House bill 991 discuss elements of this bill and have a follow up meeting to discuss how to make this bill work if its passed.
- House bill 131 have no position synthetic turf bill, feels supplier issue.
- Concern with 2022 hemp application, waiting to hear from Jim Drews.

Poultry I- Michael Levengood:

- **AI is number one concern for the poultry Industry. Highly pathogenic avian influenza confirmed in Maryland's Eastern Shore wildfowl**
The Maryland Department of Agriculture advised chicken companies and other stakeholders Thursday that wild waterfowl hunted near Rock Hall, Md. had been tested for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and found to be positive.
- Combined with recent HPAI detections in wild birds in South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia, this makes it clear that HPAI poses a real, not merely theoretical, risk to commercial poultry flocks in the mid-Atlantic this winter.
- **Delmarva chicken growers should assume that some wild birds carrying HPAI viruses are regularly flying over their farms.**
- "This is not an unexpected finding," Md. Chief State Veterinarian Dr. Michael Odian said. "The positive findings here in Maryland bring home the fact that keeping biosecurity at the highest levels is very important.
- If you or someone in your family is taking part in the wildfowl hunting season, you should be especially mindful of proper biosecurity practices to protect your chicken flock from disease.
- Specific wildlife management practices on the farm that reduce the risk of wildfowl-borne HPAI or LPAI infecting your chicken flock include:
 - Avoid walking or moving equipment in or near standing water, which can attract wildlife.
 - Don't feed wildlife, and promptly clean any spilled feed. Keep a broom and lidded garbage container nearby.
 - Cover mortality to avoid attracting wildlife.
 - Repair any holes or tears that would allow birds or rodents to enter chicken houses. Exclusionary netting can also keep birds away from gaps.
 - Be certain not to use off-the-farm footwear when entering chicken houses, and keep unnecessary visitors off the farm.
 - Always ask visitors who do arrive if they've been in contact with wild birds (like hunting for wildfowl) or pet birds or if they have their own poultry. If so, they should not go near your flock. Some avian disease agents can survive in a person's nose, without actually infecting the person, for 2 days.
 - Clean and disinfect equipment to remove feces, feathers, and litter. Disease agents can survive for months inside these organic materials, so make sure nothing is tracked into or

out of poultry house You can find more tips and best biosecurity practices at [Defend the Flock](#).

- It's also important to note that Delmarva states are [advising owners of backyard poultry flocks](#) to step up biosecurity and be more cautious because of these HPAI detections in nearby states.
- **Maryland Extension plans winter meetings for farmers, specialist:** The University of Maryland Extension will be holding several in-person and virtual meetings for those who need the Maryland Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification & Nutrient Applicator voucher, or who simply want to come hear about new research and agricultural policy updates. Meetings of interest for chicken growers include:
 - A virtual agronomy meeting on Feb. 3 from 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. [register here](#).
 - An in-person agronomy meeting on Feb. 16 in Denton, Md., from 4:30-9 p.m. Register by calling 410 479-4030.
 - An in-person agronomy meeting on March 4 in Centreville, Md., from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. [register here](#).
- An in-person agronomy meeting on March 30 in a Lower Eastern Shore location to be determined. For more information, call 410-651-1350
- **Chicken isn't the villain in the inflation story:** What do peanut butter, bacon, beef, eggs, pork, furniture, cars and propane have in common? All of them have seen more drastic price increases recently than chicken has. In a [Delmarva now column](#), the National Chicken Council's Mike Brown explained why it [doesn't make sense](#) to paint chicken as an inflation boogeyman: A 10 percent year-over-year price increase for chicken is barely outpacing inflation — even despite major inputs like corn, soybeans, gasoline, packaging and transportation increasing by double digit costs. Yet, chicken producers are somehow the villain? When input costs go up, finished product prices go up. This is not even factoring in truck driver shortages, backlogs at our ports, shipping delays and a government spending spree that's causing an inflationary spiral.
- "The greatest cost in raising a chicken is the feed, which consists primarily of corn and soybean meal... feed costs for chickens have increased 56.1 percent year-over-year, according to USDA." Read the whole column [here](#), and feel free to share it on social so friends and neighbors who are noticing chicken prices nudging up can know the whole story.
- **USDA expands opportunities to improve natural resources and address climate change impact:** The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced a new and expanded opportunity for climate-smart agriculture in 2022. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC) offers producers financial assistance to make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency and contribute to the nation's broader effort to combat the impacts of climate change.
- "Climate change is happening, and America's agricultural communities are on the frontlines," NRCS State Conservationist Kasey Taylor said. "We have to continue to

support and expand the adoption of conservation approaches to support producers in their work to address the climate crisis and build more resilient operations. We are continuously working to improve our programs to ensure we're giving Delaware farmers the best tools to conserve natural resources.”

- NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs year-round, however producers and landowners should apply by state-specific signup dates to be considered for each year's funding. Learn more about EQIP and other Farm Bill programs at www.de.nrcs.usda.gov.

Poultry II- Michelle Protani- Chesnik:

- MDA has worked hard and keeping things running smoothly.
- Feed deliveries are behind schedule.
- Processing is slow.
- Birds usually go 57 days; this time went 65 days.
- An extra week with birds on the farm with little help leads to serious problems.
- Labor problems the same.
- Hospitals have agreed to have one visitor in hospitals.
- No elective procedures at this time.
- Supply is a big problem with all industries.
- Hard to come by chemicals that you need.
- Long time for companies to get back to where we were prior to COVID.

State Grange- Clifford Newsome Jr.:

- All Granges have been meeting in person with masks and social distancing based upon the individuals attending. Being able to socialize has lifted everyone's spirits.
- Many have attended county legislative and extension service meetings where they have been offered. Frederick County has a legislative meeting set for this Saturday Feb. 12 @ New Midway Fire Hall.
- The Md. Grange will hold a Cabin Fever Meeting on Feb. 19 @ 7 p.m.
- This is a nice social event which has been cancelled the last two years due to Covid.
- Everyone is looking forward to this event.

Turf- Gordon Kretser:

- Biggest issues in turf is labor shortages, finding good help is hard.
- Greatest thing is customer base is still there and hasn't really been affected by the price increases.
- Just finding the raw materials and the labor.
- Customers are receiving the increases in prices very well.
- Supply chain issues that have come up is glyphosate, contact ag supplier and find how to get some, talking with individuals saying none left, trading and selling back and forth and

driving price higher.

- Turf grass seed disaster with harvest last year, those that have their supply.
- Transfer from new harvest, get seeds from east coast tested and run through seed lab.
- Need to have process to not run out of seed, a lot on the seed lab to take test and turn over in timely fashion.

Veterinary- Dr. Marianne Bailey:

- A duck was found and diagnosed with high path avian influenza recently. This is a concern in that this could affect our poultry industry. This is being closely monitored by the state veterinarian.
- There have been a few strangles cases in the equine population recently. This will be monitored and barns quarantined as needed.
- In small animal medicine there is a bill regarding declawing in cats. From the MDVMA:
- **House Bill 22** (Declawing Cats)
- **History and Position:** The bill to ban feline declaw (HB0445) was introduced in 2020. MDVMA supported that bill with amendments, however this year we plan to oppose the bill. For the past two years, we offered concessions to the sponsor of the bill, but she has not shown any interest in working with us.
- Therefore, MDVMA is participating in the hearing to oppose the bill based on:
- Legal precedent. What is next? When in the past has the legislature had the authority to limit what procedures a licensed medical professional can or cannot perform?
- State regulating body supports the VCPR for any surgical or medical procedure.
- Declaw procedure is no longer being taught in veterinary school;
- We surveyed our membership and found:
 - the majority do not perform the procedure at all
 - those that do, less than 2% advertise the service
 - over 78% counsel clients on the anatomic details, surgical risks, and recommend alternatives to declawing
- Advances in technology, along with pain management allow for any surgical procedure to be performed and managed well above the minimum standard of care set forth by the state.

Staff Updates:

Joe:

- We had one bill hearing with some concern and that is sponsored in the house and senate with a bill that would transfer plant and pesticide regulation from MDA to MDE.
- Not sure what sponsors are trying to accomplish by this bill.
- We always work with the regulations that EPA comes to the states with, that is what we follow.
- Everyone in these positions are highly educated and meet all requirements including

those in the state chemist.

- Mosquito control program and lawn care companies, this bill is very broad and can impact all sectors of agriculture.
- Test for toxicity in product shows some concerns.
- Senate hearing and house hearing is today and we will be in close touch with what is going on with this bill going through.
- Other bills that have come in we will keep an eye out.
- Steve Connelly is now the Deputy Secretary and we have everything covered and staying on top of things.

Rich:

- Saturday banquet for 56th Annual Watermelon Convention.
- People from Delaware, Pennsylvania and Maryland attended.

Cassie:

- Put in a letter of opposition at senate hearing and house hearing.
- Late for testimony on bill to be submitted.
- We are opposing this bill for transfer of pesticide regulation from MDA to MDE.
- Individuals can not testify on bills as a member of the Ag commission but can as a member of public.
- Anti-pesticide conversation nothing with MDA being less qualified than MDE.
- Shared with everyone via email a legislative tractor that has list of all bills we are tracking with hearing dates and bills that have had and don't have hearing dates yet.
- Find all bills on general assembly's website.
- A lot of bills from the last few days, if missing don't worry just haven't gotten added yet.
- Pesticide bill is the big bill going on now.
- Departmental bill senate bill 206 that extends the sunset date for spay and neuter program.
- Bill hearing last month and making way through legislative process.
- Some bills with urban agriculture that have become popular.
- Some climate related bills.
- Any specific questions please let me know.
- All bills and testimony are on MDA website.
- Capital budget hearing next week and operator budget meeting the week after.
- Will continue to update list and send to commission members.
- Last week the department hosted the Ag Administer and toured operations on eastern shore followed by a dinner to discuss what industry looks like in Hungary.
- Spotted lanternfly quarantine expanded.
- Interested in putting testimony in on bills, there is a process because everything is done virtually. If you have questions please reach out and Cassie will walk through process.

Jason:

- Looking at Century Farm Ceremony in March or April this year.
- March 3rd Taste of Maryland Ag Dinner, Governor Hogan attending and induct Ag Hall of Fame family.
- Poultry growers and backyard flock owners practice enhanced biosecurity with discovery of wild birds having the avian influenza.

Steve:

- High path AI part of research project.
- Hunter surveillance was a non-negative scan in duck in Dorchester County.
- The wild fowl populations in the Atlantic flyway.
- Virginia and Maryland as things warm up the flocks are moving.
- Encourage follow and enhance biosecurity plan and keep distance from wild water fowl.
- MDA assisting dairy farmers with support Dairy Margin Coverage program.
- Announced extend deadline for sign up for the Dairy Margin Coverage program until March 25th.

Matt:

- Rural Maryland Day tomorrow virtual event, send out to everyone.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 respectfully submitted by Jessica O'Sullivan. .