



**Maryland  
Department of Agriculture**

*Office of Marketing, Animal Industries and Consumer Services*

**Wes Moore**, Governor

**Aruna Miller**, Lt. Governor

**Kevin M. Atticks**, Secretary

**Steven A. Connelly**, Deputy Secretary

*Agricultural Fair Board*

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mda.maryland.gov

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

410-841-5770 Baltimore/Washington  
410-841-5987 Fax

**Maryland Agricultural Fair Board  
Minutes  
November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

**Present:**

Linda Brown  
David Cavey  
Carl Hobbs  
Danny Mast

Rob Moxley  
Connie Palmer  
Becky Stem (Virtual)  
Dawn Stiles (Virtual)

**Absent:**

N/A

**MDA Staff:**

Sec. Kevin Atticks

**Guests:**

Shelby Diehm, National Junior Shorthorn Association  
Heidi Bowman, Maryland Junior Shorthorn Association

**Call to Order:**

The December 2023 Maryland Agricultural Fair Board meeting was called to order by Connie Palmer, Chairperson, at 10:04 am.

**Approval of Minutes:**

- Motion to approve the February 2023 meeting minutes was made by David Cavey, second by Rob Moxley.
- Motion to approve the recorded funding allocations from July 2023 meeting was made by Rob Moxley, seconded by David Cavey.

**Presentation from Shelby Diehm, National Junior Shorthorn Show and Conference**

- National Junior Shorthorn Show and Conference 2024
  - Held at Maryland State Fairgrounds, June 15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.
  - The age range is 5-22 years old, with over 700 cattle entries on average.
  - Most hotel rooms in Timonium are already booked in anticipation of this show.

- There are no premiums paid, but they do spend \$50,000-55,000 on awards and ribbons.
- Maryland Junior Shorthorn Association is currently working to raise funding to help sponsor the show.
- **Motion:** Approve up to \$50,000 to the National Junior Shorthorn Show and Conference for Awards and Ribbons made by David Cavey, seconded by Danny Mast.
  - American Shorthorn Association must apply for funding, sign a contract, and then submit an after-activity report to receive funding.

### Executive Secretary's Report:

- Budget, Revenue, Funding:
  - Budget
  - Revenue & Funding
    - Budget request for 2025 includes a supplement of \$324,489 to fulfill special fund totals – \$1.46 million.
    - Started the year with \$113,643.
    - Have not received our share of the racing commission, but we should be looking at \$1,135,511.34 that the budget was based on for FY2024 plus the \$1.075 million in general funds.
    - Depleting the general fund allocation is a priority since we cannot carry any of that over into the next fiscal year. Currently there is \$269,319 remaining in that fund.
  - We currently have not received our special fund allocation for FY24, I am awaiting a call back from Mr. Mike Hopkins, Executive Director of the Maryland Racing Commission. According to our fiscal department, this is “how it goes” and they are not showing any concern that we have not yet received that funding. Currently, we are at -\$757,106 awaiting a payment of \$1,135,511.34.
- Charles County Fair
  - Charles County Fair was overpaid by 16% due to an accounting error.
  - **Motion:** Send Charles County Fair a memo to make them aware of the error, a refund will not be requested however the surplus paid in FY2024 may be taken into consideration for their request in FY2025, made by Connie Palmer, seconded by Linda Brown.
- Organizational Funding
  - Maryland 4H Foundation and Maryland FFA were both awarded funding after the July meeting and were notified of their funding numbers but were not sent contracts. Harrison will send them contracts and proceed with funding these organizations.
- Maryland Association of Agricultural Fairs and Shows Convention:
  - October 27-29, 2023, in Ocean City, Maryland
  - 4 Board Members & Executive Secretary attended (5 total)
    - Total cost was \$2,387.90 (registration & hotel)
  - This conference brings a wealth of information to all fair/show leadership who attend and builds a network that grows the industry.

- Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation
  - CY 2024 Calendar
    - Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation will be publishing their printed calendar for 2024 and has offered, for \$2,500, to include all fairs & shows that the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board provides a grant to.
    - **Motion:** Grant \$2,500 to the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation to represent all Maryland Agricultural Fair Board fairs/shows in their 2024 calendar in conjunction with a QR code that links to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board website, made by Danny Mast, seconded by Connie Palmer.
  - New Showcase Trailer
    - **Motion:** In lieu of grant funding for Fiscal Year 2024 through 2028, grant a one-time payment of \$25,000 to the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation for their new showcase trailer, with recognition given to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board on both the inside and the outside of the trailer made by Rob Moxley and seconded by Connie Palmer.
- Partner Updates
  - Attended the Great Pocomoke Fair Board meeting, Howard County Stockholders annual dinner, Maryland Sheep Breeders Association annual dinner, Purebred Dairy Cattle Association meeting.
    - Working to attend as many events as possible to gain perspective and build relationships with fairs and shows across the state, making sure we are working to meet the needs of those who are applying for Ag Fair Board Grants and working in the industry.
- Branding
  - It is the opinion of the board that we should move forward with a potential branding scheme for the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board. Harrison will start discussions with the Agricultural Marketing department within MDA to determine the next steps.
- Judging List Updates
  - **Motion:** The Maryland Agricultural Fair Board will no longer keep a list of judges and will remove the question from the grant applications whether or not they use judges from that list, made by Danny Mast and seconded by Rob Moxley. Fairs and shows are encouraged to use industry lists and reference the Maryland Association of Agricultural Fairs and Shows data.

#### **Chairperson's Report:**

- **Connie Palmer, Chair:** Challenging year both personally and for the fair/show industry.
- **David Cavey, Vice Chair:** It is the duty of the board to begin searching for replacements well before their term is over and have someone lined up to take over their position on the board.

#### **Board Member Reports:**

- **Dawn Stiles:** Washington County expanded into establishing specific sensory-awareness days and working to be inclusive, had a great turnout and response.

- **Becky Stem:** Carroll County Fair was very successful, despite some rainy days. Entertainment events (glass blowing, axe throwing, etc.) do not bring the value that they cost and are not driving ticket sales. Cake auctions continue to prevail and rally community support for the fairs/ shows.
- **Carl Hobbs:** Central Maryland Spring Show had over 150 exhibitors and was very successful. Damascus Community Fair was light in attendance and livestock but had more in the home arts building. Maryland Spring Holstein Show had 59 entries and 41 exhibitors, the largest they have had in many years. Maryland Beekeepers Show does not have much of a draw to the public and is difficult to find at the community college. Maryland Make it With Wool had 12 exhibitors and was a great success, but their numbers were down because they had to change dates. Montgomery County Fair had its best year ever, 204,325 people in attendance, and is working to increase their dairy department.
- **Rob Moxley:** Howard County had a fantastic turnout; livestock numbers were steady. Angus groups all held relatively steady throughout the different fairs and shows, junior preview show was successful. The field days had a steady turnout compared to previous years. Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival was impressive and continued to grow year after year.
- **Danny Mast:** Southern Maryland fairs were relatively successful, despite weather challenges and lower entries. Southern Maryland Spring Show was extremely successful as a haul-in-haul-out event. 4-H is usually the only livestock left entered into Southern Maryland fairs & shows, which needs to change. One of the challenges faced in Southern Maryland is that the fair boards are typically more old school and resistant to change, whereas the more northern and central parts of the state embrace change with open arms and are often more successful. How do we get the youth to WANT to compete at county fairs and shows? Many smaller fairs and shows are very concerned with MDA Animal Health's shift away from having MDA staff checking-in animals and leaning more on the fair/show to perform check-ins.
- **Linda Brown:** All the fairs are still coming out of COVID, and that impact is still being felt. Talbot County split their fair to have a spring and fall fair, which has proven to be extremely effective.
- **David Cavey:** Harford County reinvents itself every year, and is successful, but makes dramatic changes. Baltimore County had a record-breaking cake auction, but livestock continues to dwindle. The last couple of years dairy has increased, hogs seem consistent. Hereford Junior Farm Fair, one day fair, had over 2,000 spectators, does not use 4-H standards but encourages participation in showing.
- **Connie Palmer:** Glade Valley Community Show moved from the school and onto a farm, entries were up and ended up being very successful. Great Frederick Fair had a few rain dates which impacted the fair some but was not detrimental. Had a huge impact on youth, entries were up, and attendance was increased due to dedicated youth days. Linganore-New Market show was down this year. Thurmont Emmittsburg Community Show downscaled but had consistent entries despite that.

#### **Maryland State Fair Updates - Danny Mast:**

- Small animal entry fees are going up for open class from \$8 to \$12.
  - Initial bedding will be provided but after that you will be responsible for bedding.

- American Berkshire Association is coming back for the second weekend, pig show scheduling will stay the same.
- Tunic Sheep Show is coming to Maryland State Fair in 2024, expecting several hundred additional head.
- Increase in premiums for Christmas Trees.
- Schedule will look the same as last year, no major changes.
- Rate of Gain
  - Maryland State Fair is not getting initial weight and dates from 4H, so they cannot determine accurate rate of gain until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour when they are getting information.
  - New guidance is that Maryland State Fair will need dates and initial weight from 4H by July 1<sup>st</sup> for all counties.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:10 pm by Connie Palmer, seconded by Danny Mast.

Respectfully Submitted by Harrison B. Palmer, Executive Secretary