



Maryland  
Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Kevin M. Atticks, Secretary  
Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

Maryland Agricultural Commission

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry  
mda.maryland.gov

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

410-841-5882 Baltimore/Washington  
410-841-5914 Fax

Maryland Agricultural Commission  
Minutes  
March 8, 2023

Present:	Joseph Dymek Thomas Mullineaux Kelly Dudeck Frank Allnut Stefanie Reiser Amy Crone Michael Pons Paula Linthicum Sean Hough	John Lewis John Murphy Michael Levengood Far Nasir Clifford Newsome Jr. Gordon Kretser Rebecca Stoecker
Absent:	Richard Pelz Rajneesh Kathuria Benjamin Sowers Matthew Levi Sellers	Matthew Nielsen Dr. Craig Beyroudy Dr. Marianne Bailey
Staff/Guest:	Kevin Atticks Rachel Jones Steve Connelly Richard Colburn Jessica Hackett Kevin Conroy	Hans Schmidt Steve McHenry Jonathan Cribbs Allison Roe

Approval of Minutes:

February Minutes were 1<sup>st</sup> approved by Joe Dymek and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Mullineaux.

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

Presentation: Dr. Odian gave a presentation on high path avian influenza.

**Gordon Kretser- Turf:**

- House Bill 586 by Delegate Stein.
- Requiring each unit of state government to give preference to certain products produced from organic materials when purchasing compost, mulch, or other soil amendments.
- Up to 15% higher in price may be considered than an equivalent product.
- This could violate the MD nutrient management law because of the phosphorus component.
- There could be contaminates of pharmaceuticals that make it into our ground water
- Might be a conflict of interest?

**Michael Pons- Equine:**

- The 2023 Maryland Horse Industry Day, in Annapolis, was well-attended, with about 125 participants, including a wide crossing-section of farm owners, horse owners, breeders, riders and horse enthusiasts meeting with a dozen or so legislators. This was the first in-person reception since 2019, and judging by the success of the reception, it should be re-established onto the legislative calendar.

- During the Horse Industry Day reception, the Maryland Horse Council presented its Touch of Class awards to the Prince Georges County Delegation, its County Executive, among others, for their work bringing the Washington D.C. Horse to the P.G. Equestrian Center. Maryland had to outbid Virginia to host this prestigious event. Nearly \$5,000,000 was spent in upgrades to the equestrian facility, by the state of Maryland and Princes Georges County. The Washington D.C. Horse Show is the largest, and most prestigious, of all the regional horse shows.
- Discussions between Maryland horsemen and the Stronach Group concerning the future of Laurel Park, the Preakness, and Pimlico have been ongoing over the past few months. A possible sale of Laurel to the horsemen has been discussed. The Maryland Stadium Authority may play a role in the negotiations.
- By March 27, 2023, the new rules regarding uniform horse racing medication, under HISA, Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Act, signed into law in 2022, will take effect. All current Thoroughbred racehorses must be registered into the HISA system prior to this deadline. On January 1, 2023, HISA became legal by Federal Law. It has been challenged by the courts in Texas and Louisiana, but recently was approved by the U.S. Circuit court.
- The 148th Preakness is scheduled for Saturday, May 20, 2023. The middle jewel of the racing's Triple Crown is annually Maryland's largest sporting day, attracting visitors from around the globe to see the races in Maryland. Preakness generates more than \$50M annually in economic activity.
- The 2023 Fair Hill Races, scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend, have been cancelled because of concerns for the turf course and facilities prior to the annual Five-Star Equestrian Event. The Fair Hill races have not been held in five years. Fans and proponents of the races are disappointed, and wonder if they ever will be run again.
- Despite fears of an economic slowdown and competition from sports betting, the funding for Maryland's Purse and Breeder Fund accounts continues to be strong. The parimutuel handle and VLT-subsidy provides funding to the owners, trainers, jockeys and breeders, who compete at the Maryland racetracks, race MD-breeds and foal their mares here. Maryland was the first state to implement a breeding fund, which began in 1961.

#### **John Kelly Lewis- Nursery:**

- We are seeing a very early spring this year. Karen Rane from UMD reported in mid-February the Chesapeake Bay area is 3-4 weeks ahead of a "normal spring". For those harvesting fields grown trees and shrubs, it will be a very early and condensed harvest season which will present challenges.
- The warm weather is also creating conditions for early cases of insects and disease as well as early tick activity.
- Chesapeake Green was held on February 16&17. This is the largest educational seminar hosted by Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association. Back in person with good attendance. \$2,100 was raised in a silent auction that will help fund the MNLGA Scholarship Fund.
- Recertifications were issued in Nursery growing, Landscape Contractor, Green house Grower, Turf Management, Nutrient Management topics. MNLGA also announced the creation of two data base directories allowing the public to find members for nursery, landscaping, design, public gardens, and arborist services as well as companies who employ CPHers (Certified Professional Horticulturist)

#### **Rebecca Stoecker- Vegetable:**

- Annual Farmer's Market conference at MDA, Wednesday, March 15th.
- FMNP farmer training is starting, which is a great way to bring more income to your business and help consumers with food accessibility.
- Western Maryland Regional Fruit meeting on March 2
- Several Farmers markets will begin next month.
- Soil Amendment Workshop, March 9th. Which would cover topics that relate to FSMA
- Planting will be starting across the state.

**Michael Levensgood- Poultry I:**

- **AI continues to be a major concern for the poultry industry.**
- We have seen multiple HPAI infections in PA over the last few weeks. One of those was a commercial broiler flock.
- **APHIS is releasing new Defend the Flock resources: see defend the flock**
- New Flock Defender Youth Program resources, including an interactive game and educator handbook.
- New translations of Defend the Flock Biosecurity Checklists based on the NPIP principles in Arabic and Hmong. The 15 biosecurity planning checklists are also available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.
- “Biosecurity Workbook,” a biosecurity planning workbook designed especially for new and experienced backyard poultry owners to help them protect and care for their birds throughout the year.
- As of February 24, 2023, there have been 770 confirmed HPAI detections in commercial turkeys, layers, broilers, pullets, ducks, game birds, and backyard flocks. The last commercial detection was on February 21, 2023, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in commercial broilers. These detections represent a total of 58,488,021 birds. In addition, there have been 6,218 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 | 2022-2023 Confirmations of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Commercial and Backyard Flocks](#). A breakdown of detections to date are as follows:

Species	# of Premises	# of States	Total # Birds	% of Total
Broiler (including breeders/pullets)	28	15	3,120,400	5.34%
Turkey (including breeding stock)	221	15	9,805,360	16.76%
Layer (including breeders/pullets)	37	12	44,429,700	75.96%
Ducks (including breeding stock)	16	4	365,700	0.63%
Backyard	453	47	304,461	0.52%
Commercial Game Birds	15	9	462,400	0.79%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>770</b>		<b>58,488,021</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- **DCA is hiring: Agricultural Conservation Specialist**
- This position will work closely with chicken growers and other members in implementing beneficial conservation practices, including but not limited to vegetative environmental buffers (VEBs), pollinators and other whole-farm comprehensive nutrient management protections. The position will offer technical assistance, grant management and developing resources to help members and build upon our mission to be an innovator in conservation practices. A minimum bachelor’s degree in agriculture, natural resources, environmental science, plant sciences or a related field and a minimum of five years’ work experience is required. DCA offers salary commensurate with experience, plus health, vision, dental, life and disability insurance, retirement plan contributions, paid holidays, paid vacation and sick leave. For more details on the job description, visit [www.dcachicken.com/job](http://www.dcachicken.com/job). To apply, please send a resume and cover letter to Holly Porter at [porter@dcachicken.com](mailto:porter@dcachicken.com) or mail to 16686 County Seat Highway, Georgetown, DE 19947 postmarked by March 17, 2023.
- **2023 DCA College Scholarship Program is open to college, grad students**
- Since 1985, DCA has awarded more than \$178,000 to undergraduate and graduate students in our College Scholarship Program. In 2023, we will again offer undergraduate scholarships of \$2,000 and graduate scholarships of \$3,000. (Students - take some time during winter break to work on your scholarship applications! Netflix will still be there when you're done!) Complete [applications](#) for these scholarships must be received at our office no later than 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, April 7, 2023**. Late applications, incomplete applications, and handwritten applications will not be considered.
- **ILT is still a concern.**

- In recent weeks, three cases of infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) were reported in poultry flocks in Delaware -- the most recent one in Georgetown. These cases serve as a reminder that HPAI is not the only avian disease we need to protect our birds from. The same biosecurity practices that prevent the spread of HPAI can ward off ILT, which is also viral and can be easily transmitted by sick birds and fomites.
- **Growing For 100 Years' kicks off with Dover event**
- Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) has launched a year-long educational campaign, "Growing For 100 Years," to celebrate the innovation and growth of the meat chicken industry, which began a century ago in Ocean View, Delaware. Cecile Steele of Sussex County, Delaware pioneered the industry in 1923 when she accidentally received a shipment of 500 chickens. This prompted her and her husband, Wilmer, to build the first broiler chicken farm on Delmarva. Within three years, this Delaware family had built coops for 10,000 chickens and jumpstarted an American innovation – a farm dedicated to raising chickens not for eggs, but to eat.
- Since that first broiler chicken flock in 1923, the industry has made remarkable advances, giving generations of family farmers a way to make a living from the land, serving as the backbone of Delmarva's economy, and protecting the environment by utilizing fewer resources to produce more chicken. Today, there are more than 1,300 family farmers on Delmarva, more than 18,000 chicken company employees, and hundreds of allied businesses in the chicken community, working together to produce \$4.5 billion worth of chicken a year. "Chicken producers' positive economic impact stretches from coast to coast, hits every sector of the U.S. economy and is felt in every congressional district," said National Chicken Council President Mike Brown. "We're also committed to environmentally responsible chicken production practices to ensure a healthier planet, and chicken production in the U.S. is more sustainable than ever before."

#### **Paula Linthicum- Farm Bureau:**

- Tire Recycling
- MD Dept of Environment in conjunction with MD Farm Bureau and MD Environmental Service is hosting a Tire Recycling Program in counties across the state. Many programs take place in April. Participating counties thus far are Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester.
- Legislative:
- SB 640 Sales & Use Tax - Electricity Exemption for Agricultural Purposes Hearing 3/9/23 @ 1p. Paula Linthicum will testify on behalf of the MD Farm Bureau.
- MDA Value Added Ag Specialist position has passed and will go before the Governor for signature by the end of this Legislative Session.
- SB418 Property Tax - Ag Assessment bill is anticipated to be completed in the Senate Committee Friday, March 10, 2023.
- Concerns:
- Nutrient Management vacancies are problematic for farmers completing their Nutrient Management plans.
- Availability of livestock processing dates/capacity continues to be problematic for livestock producers.

#### **Joe Dymek: Ag Education:**

- MAEF:
- "LET'S GROW A Nation," a professional development opportunity for elementary and middle school teachers, will be held in Cecil County, April 22-23. Online registration is now open. Tuition is only \$60.
- Applications are now being accepted through April 1 for the MAEF and Seibel Scholarships.
- MAEF's calendar art contest is still accepting entries. Students K – 12 are eligible to enter.
- MAEF has been active in the legislature this year, defending the Ag Tag. Testimony was offered March 7 for SB866, which provides a stopgap/benchmark for Ag Tag and Bay Plate revenues.
- MAEF's "LET'S GRO Together" garden grant program is accepting applications through March 24, online.
- FFA:

- Regional FFA Events are currently being held throughout the month of March.
- Region 4 Ag Mechanics skill events were held on February 25 at FSK High School with 18 students from 3 chapters participating.
- On March 3, the Region 5 (Eastern Shore Chapters) Public Speaking events were held at the Eastern Shore Higher Education Center. There were 31 FFA members who participated in six different leadership events representing 4 chapters.
- The Region 2 (Frederick County) Public Speaking events will be held on March 8 at Walkersville High School.
- Region 1 (Western MD) FFA Chapters will hold their Speaking and Ag Mechanics events on March 10.
- The Region 4 Public Speaking events will be held on March 11 at Hereford High School
- Maryland FFA Spring Career Development Events will be held on Saturday, April 1, at Westminster High School. The opening program will start at 9am with the presentation of 99 new FFA jackets to members through the Maryland FFA Foundation Gift of Blue program. Over 600 FFA members are registered to participate in event opportunities.
- On March 22, the MD FFA State Office team will be chartering a new FFA Chapter at Allegany High School in Allegany County.
- The 95th Maryland FFA State Convention will be held June 27-29 on the campus of UMCP.
- UMCP:
- Congratulations to Dr. Melissa Welsh who was recognized by the National Association of Agriculture Educators with the Region IV Outstanding Post Secondary Agriculture Program. She also participated as a panel member for the International Association for Agricultural Sustainability's discussion on Deepening Agricultural Literacy to Enhance the Value of Agriculture.
- Two new courses were offered this semester
- AGST 605 Extension Research Methods with Applied Data Analysis
- AGNR (AGST) 606 Program Planning and Evaluation in Agricultural Education
- The Agricultural and Extension Education Program, which started in 2019, now has 10 course offerings.

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

- Markets and farmers are getting ready for the season with hoophouse production in full effect and waiting to see what the weather decides for field planting.
- Now is the time for farmers to finish up any GAP / PSR requirements.
- Most farmers markets will open in April for the season; working on ensuring that their SNAP authorizations are current and that their systems are all ready for 2023 season.
- Online Course for MD Cottage Food Processors & On-Farm Home Processors (registration)
- Ongoing challenges for this sector: processing dates, HPAI, seed shortages, labor
- Upcoming events:
- Virtual Fruit Grower's Meeting March 8 (registration)
- Soil Amendment Workshop in Derwood March 9 (registration)
- USDA Listening Session on Equipment Grant March 13 (registration)
- MDA Farmers Market Conference March 15 (registration)
- Million Acre Challenge events list
- List of all through UMD here
- Urban Agriculture Education Grower Meetings list here
- Grants available:
- ARPA eWIC Modernization funds available for states to implementing electronic FMNP solutions (due April 2023 or January 2024)
- Specialty Crop Grants from MDA: due March 29, 2023
- Urban Ag grants through the USDA (due 3/27)
- USDA Grants:
- Farmers Market Promotion Program & Local Food Promotion Program (due May 2).

- GUSNIP (due May 4)
- Job Opportunities:
- Farmers Market Coalition seeking Executive Director (opening)
- PASA openings (here)

### **John Murphy- Nursery II:**

- The MANTS trade show at the Baltimore Convention Center was attended by pre-COVID numbers of attendees. 930 Exhibitors occupied all halls. The show gathered 11,300 total registrants.
- This show for the green industry not only gained a substantial increase in attendance but also a great deal of positive excitement from our members. Next year the show will be held January 10-12,2024. The Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association held their annual meeting at the Baltimore Convention Center before the show with 96 persons attending including industry partners from the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of Agriculture, AmericanHort, American Landscape Institute, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust.
- Eastern Shore Pest Management Conference was held on February 15, 2023, at the Wicomico Civic Center. This conference offered educational speakers on tree and shrub disease control, equipment calibration, weed control, aquatic pest control and MDA pesticide updates.
- Attendees acquired MDA-NM certification credits and MDA pesticide credits.
- Maryland Farm Bureau held their “Day in Annapolis” on February 8 2023. This event prepared the attendees to greet Maryland’s legislators with their concerns on the upcoming bills for the 2023 session.
- I observed a full house at the Governor Calvert House on State Circle, Annapolis. The MDA expanded the Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine to include all counties in exception of 6 counties, Garrett, Charles, St. Mary’s, Dorchester, Somerset, and Worcester.
- This quarantine is effective immediately and restricts the movement of regulated articles that might contain the spotted lanternfly in any of its life stages, including egg masses, nymphs, and adults. A permit is required for any Person conducting business requiring the movement of any Regulated Articles within or from the quarantine area.
- HC Companies reduced their pricing on select plastic products for the 2024 season by about 15-20%. This is good news for the nursery industry moving forward.
- MNLGA field days 2023: Greenhouse July 11, 2023, at Tidal Creek Growers Earleville MD
- Nursery Date to be determined Abby Farms Accokeek, MD
- On the Legislative topic:
- The Maryland Green Industry Council has been following several bills introduced at the General Assembly. The following are bills with the highest impact on our industry.
- HB095(SB0836) Maryland Native Plants Program
- HB0319(SB0158) Pesticide Registration- PFAS Testing Requirements
- HB0230(SB0224) Zero-Emission Vehicles (Clean Trucks Act of 2023)
- HB0090 Control of Running Bamboo

### **Clifford Newsome- Stage Grange:**

- The Maryland Grange conducted the first four degrees conferral March 4<sup>th</sup> upon eleven new members at Wacohu Grange hall on March 4<sup>th</sup>.
- A lot of events seem to be happening on March 20<sup>th</sup> so add one more event to the calendar. The Maryland Grange and Medford Grange will host a Town Hall meeting at Burns Hall, Carroll County Agriculture Center, Westminster, Md. at 7 p.m. Mr. Jeff Winton will discuss “Rural Minds” Rural mental health issues will be brought to the forefront of this widely neglected issue. All are welcome.
- The Maryland State Grange will assist with many judging contests to be held April 1<sup>st</sup> at Westminster High School. Maryland FFA members will be competing in their state judging contests.
- Normally about 400 students participate in about 15 events. It’s a beautiful site to see the sea of Blue & Gold as they conduct themselves with pride.
- APRIL is NATIONAL GRANGE MONTH!

**Tom Mullineaux- Agribusiness:**

- Lots of adjustments and spring start up activities in the last month.
- Fertilizer prices have mostly settled a little lower than last year. Although they remain volatile, supply is generally good.
- Herbicide and fungicide prices are established. Glyphosate supply still not settled. We can expect some spot shortages.
- Everyone is concerned about Nutrient Management plans not getting written in view of new MDA Regulations. This is a major issue in Frederick County.
- Commodity Prices remain volatile with each world news event causing fluctuations.
- Retail locations with Garden Centers are gearing up with inventory. Early veggie plants are out on display in some places. Seed potatoes are moving well. Packaged seed selling vigorously. Prices are up substantially.
- Mostly it's going to be a great year for retail. One manager related to me that last year was the best year we've seen. Because of Covid, folks stayed home and planted a garden.
- I am very pleased that the April Meeting will be in person. I suggest we start at 10:00 am to give the folks coming from a distance a little more time.

**Staff****Kevin Atticks:**

- Thank you for allowing me to speak at the start of this meeting.
- Would like to introduce Rachel Jones who is our new legislative and governmental affairs personnel.
- She has been a real asset for her first week in.
- Only 7 weeks into the position and love the agency and the folks working there.
- Love meeting industry personnel and have a lot of informal tours coming up just to get out and hear more about what everyone is doing and what are the concerns.
- Open to feedback and excited to have those conversations.
- Looking forward to starting in person meeting again.
- Look at the commission as advisory committee, advising the secretary and the agency.
- Would like this committee to get back to submitting recommendations and papers.
- Whatever we are feeling are our top priorities and concerns for the industry.
- We are going to start having guest speakers come in again.
- Today, high path avian influenza from Dr. Odian.
- Want to make sure everyone is up to date with what the department is doing.
- We were told by the secretary of appointments that the time to submit names for vacant positions is coming up in April.

**Rachel Jones:**

- Wanted to say hello and take a moment. It is week one and enjoying it.
- Native plants and nutrient management issues are being addressed.
- The agency and secretary Atticks want to do our best to advocate for the industry.
- Feel free to send any issues that want to be highlighted and things you want the agency to be aware of.
- Please email [Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov](mailto:Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov)

**Steve Connelly:**

- High path avian influenza is ravaging southeastern Pennsylvania.
- In the past 30 days four commercial flocks and fifteen backyard flocks have tested positive.
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture asked for assistance to help depopulate birds.
- We want to keep it controlled above mason Dixon line
- Has an impact on international trade.

- High path is definitely out there especially in the wild population with 90% from wild bird with the migrating birds.
- Encourage to use good common sense and good biosecurity.
- If you do not need to go to a poultry farm currently, do not.
- We have vacancies in the department here with a lot of individuals retiring.
- We are actively hiring, and positions are posted on the department of budget management website.
- Seed analysis vacancy, lab scientist for Frederick animal health lab, resource conservation, some forest pest program, always need ag grading and vegetable grading, mosquito control program is hiring contractual across the state.

**Dr Odian:**

- Out in the field helping depopulate birds in Pennsylvania.
- High path response we had a lot in the spring time that was all depopulated.
- Had most recent in Washington county with a breeder layer flock.
- Was a large effort between Delaware Department of Ag and Maryland Department of Ag with USDA.
- Our efforts are getting ready for when the next situation occurs.
- We are trying to prevent it from coming into Maryland.
- Trying to get the disease under control.

**Hans Schmidt:**

- Third year introduce conservation buffer initiative this initiative gives additional incentive and payments for landowners to put in buffers.
- Offer 1,000-acre bonus for forest buffer.
- Deadline is on Friday.
- Tree solutions now act is the state's goal to plant additional five million trees.
- February 15<sup>th</sup> opened to farmers to start top dressing small grain.
- Farmers can start applying manure and other fertilizers to their fields.
- March 1 was the paper deadline to submit nutrient management AIR.
- Take advantage of the electronic AIR.
- Encourage to go to MDA website under resource conservation have a conservation buzz that keeps everyone up to date with programs that we are offering.
- Great publication to check out programs and grants going on. Try to get on the mailing list.
- New nutrient managements regulations went into effect this year.
- The application of food processing residuals.
- Issues specifically with the concern around odor.
- Nutrient management situation and where we are with that.
- Notified in middle of January that there are a number of vacancies around the state.
- Work with the university for a short time solution.
- The extension plan writers would contact farmers that need a plan and they would sign an agreement or waiver that if they want MDA to write a plan for them the extension writers could get the information to MDA.
- Talking with the dean and the university for long term plan.
- Want to make sure that farmers have plans available.
- Nutrient management is regulatory and requires compliance.
- Trying to help farmers that are in need and get them those services to get them through the spring and in preparation for 2024.
- The acres for cover crop for the past year was 397,000 acres which was slightly less than the past.

**Kevin Conroy:**

- Getting \$600,000 for our spotted lanternfly program.
- USDA is not getting any additional funds and the lanternfly program is 100% federally funded.
- Other states are now applying for the same pot of money that we are.
- Use the money for treatments and work in high traffic areas.
- Seen as far west as Michigan and Ohio.



- Trying to push for an additional 25 million dollars for spotted lanternfly.
- Had a great update on research on biological controls to manage the populations of spotted lanternflies.
- The issue is rearing them in the lab.
- There is no timelines on any field trials on the biological controls.
- Pennsylvania asked for five million and got one million.
- Talking about introducing another invasive bug to help with lanternflies but also how the additional bug would affect the environment.
- Working on additional bills such as hemp bills, bamboo bills, native plant bills.
- Looking forward to the end and will see what happens on the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Looking to hire more people with vacancies in seed lab and mosquito control.

**Jessica Hackett:**

- Ag literacy week is coming up and the secretary will be heading to some schools to do readings.
- Working with HR department to make sure all job openings are posted on our Facebook page.
- Our logo has been updated and now has the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary around it.
- If you would like a copy of the logo please let me know.
- Echo with welcoming Rachel to the department.
- HR department had two university sponsored job fairs.