



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

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Maryland Agricultural Commission

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Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes February 12, 2020

Present:

Ag Education: Martha Clark
Agribusiness: Thomas Mullineaux
Agritourism: Kelly Dudeck
At Large Ag Service: Frank Allnutt
Field Crops: Donald Maring
Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry

Forestry: Elizabeth Hill
Livestock: Sean Hough
Poultry I: Michael Levengood
Poultry II: Michelle Protani-Chesnik
University: Dr. Craig Beyrouthy
Viticulture: Matthew Corey Spies
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks

Absent:

Aquaculture: Talmage Petty
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.
Dairy II: David Pyle
Equine: Michael Pons
Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn

Horticulture: Keith Ohlinger
Nursery I: James Raley
Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet
Organic Farming: Matthew Nielsen
Turf: Tom Warpinski

MDA Staff:

Hans Schmidt

Guest/Speakers:

Matthew Tefteau- Choptank Electric Cooperative's rural Broadband Initiative
Hannah Thompson-Weeman- Communications/Animal Agriculture Alliance
Allison Roe MARBIDCO
Dan Sweeney MARBIDCO

Approval of Minutes:

January minutes were approved 1st by Thomas Mullineaux and 2nd by Michelle Protani-Chesnik motion to approve minutes passed.

Vote Chair/Vice Chair:

The board decided at this time to leave Michelle Protani-Chesnik as the ag commission chair and Keith Ohlinger as vice chair.

Commodity Reports:

Martha Clark - Ag Education:

- MAEF: SB986 was introduced this week, which will require "each county board of education, beginning in a certain school year, to implement a certain agriculture science curriculum; requiring each county board to implement an agricultural education program

that prepares students for certain careers and informed choices in a certain manner; establishing the Maryland Agricultural Education Grant Program; requiring the Governor to include an appropriation of \$785,000 to the Program for fiscal year 2022 and each fiscal year thereafter; etc."

- MAEF scholarship application period is open for rising junior/senior/grad students through April 1, 2020 for students pursuing majors that will lead to careers in Ag education or Extension education. Guidelines and application are on website.
- Ag Literacy books are headed out in the next couple weeks. This year's book is "PB&J Hooray," which is a farm-to-table book. People interested in reading a book to a class should contact their county Farm Bureau.
- We are setting up a poultry career tour with DPI and Mountaire for students attending the state FFA Convention in June at UMES. DPI has expressed an interest in creating a workforce development program, and this is a first step toward that.
- Maryland FFA Association is looking for volunteers and judges for its convention, June 23-26. Please contact Naomi Knight at nknight@maefonline.com or (410) 939-9030 if you are interested.
- Twenty-two teachers took the new hybrid distance learning Elementary AITC course this fall; we are now taking applications for the spring course which begins next month. We have booked the platform at Goucher College to kick off a Middle School version in the fall, and Peggy is thinking ahead to a High School version once everything is up and running.
- Our NAITC report was completed this week. MAEF reached 65,983 elementary students directly during the 2019 calendar year. Our Mobile Labs visited 92 schools in 19 counties, reaching 50,983 students.
- Maryland 4-Foundation: Recently held its annual Awards Gala: some programs provided for your information.
- Has been in a restructuring phase since the Executive Director resigned.
- Currently working with J. Robert Frazee Strategic Consulting, LLC. to analyze and update current policies and program funding.

Tom Mullineaux - Agribusiness:

- After fall harvest comes fall fertilizer sales. Fertilizer and crop protection dealers view fall sales as a barometer of things to come. Sales are up.
- Spring outlook is rosy. Dealers and industry folks I've spoken with expect fertilizer and crop protection products prices to drop 5%+/- . Doesn't sound like much but that may be the margin of profit considering commodity prices are off considerably. Corn is under \$4.00, soybeans are under \$9.00. Only bright spot is wheat is approaching \$6.00
- Prepay \$\$\$ are up primarily due to corn harvest. Although my friend at the Ford dealer says Pick-Up sales are off.
- Overall dealers are cautiously optimistic.
- The Agri-Business industry in Maryland is under siege.
- The Federal EPA renewed the label for paraquat and placed new restrictions on its use. MDA can interpret the label and enforce it to their standards. This is where we have run into some issues.
- One new change is anyone that applies paraquat must also be a commercial certified applicator. We're ok with that.
- The disconnect between the EPA and MDA comes down to what part does the nurse truck driver have in this? EPA and neighboring states do not think they are part of the application process and will only be requiring them to view the video and take the test afterwards. However, MDA is interpreting the label to say that the nurse truck drivers are part of the application process which requires them to be a certified commercial

applicator. We do not feel that they are part of the application process and by no means should be certified applicators.

- This would almost be impossible for us to achieve this requirement. We train our nurse truck drivers to do the job they are performing and that is transporting material to the applicator. They have no part in the how the product is applied. They are trained to safely transport and transfer the material from the service container (nurse truck) to the sprayer.
- The word service container is a big part of this problem. EPA says that anyone transporting paraquat in a service container will not have to be a certified applicator. From our point of view our trucks are service containers.
- The adjacent states of Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia Departments of Agriculture have ruled that nurse truck drivers are not required to become certified applicators.
- To do what the MDA wants would put a huge financial burden on dealers as well as the consideration to not use paraquat but a more costly alternative product and passing the price along to the grower.
- The other item is HB1050. Seed producers and grain handlers are opposed to this bill.
- This bill would allow growers of malting barley and other crops planted as cover crops, getting paid the cover crop stipend and harvesting and selling the crop for grain for production of malt or other distilled beverages.
- The quality that the malting houses want for these grain products typically cannot be grown here in MD due to our weather conditions.
- Dealers and seed producers feel if you are going to offer the stipend for cover crops that are going to be harvested it should be available on all the crops in the program (wheat, rye, barley).
- In past the program did offer stipends on these crops that were harvested. The MDA felt they could expand the acres in the program by eliminating this portion.

Frank Allnutt- Ag Services:

- MD Ag Experiment station has a new associate dean/director Puneet Srivastava came on board on January 1st.

Kelly Dudeck- Agritourism:

- Value-added agriculture. You're familiar with the term, but what is it exactly? Simply stated, value-added agriculture is the process of modifying, altering, marketing, producing or processing a raw agricultural commodity in a way that adds income to the farmer, producer or processor.
- SECTORS REPRESENTED:
 - Cottage Food
 - On-Farm Processing
 - Forestry
 - Craft Beverages
 - Animals and Dairy
 - Energy
 - Compost and Manure
 - Seafood and Aquaculture
 - Plants
 - Agritourism
 - Third Party Certifications (organic)
 - Special Packaging (CSA's)
 - Equine
 - Labeling (Maryland's Best)
- Just a few examples of this would be making cheese from milk, salsa from tomatoes, milling wheat into flour, making blueberries into jelly, corn and algae used as fuel, processing hogs into bacon, drying hops to be used for beer, cutting timber into firewood, shearing alpacas to make sweaters or even packaging a product in a way that increases its value to the consumer, such as bottling milk. Also included in this industry is agritourism.
- WHY IS VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE IMPORTANT?
 - It increases farm product value.
 - It builds community.

- It can be accomplished on smaller parcels.
- It increases farm value, keeping farms as farms.
- It engages and educates the public.
- Creating value added products and businesses can increase the bottom line for farmers while adding millions to the State's fiscal resources and can help diversify the economic base of rural communities.
- IMPACT:
 - Each of these manufacturing enterprises stimulates job creation and increases opportunities for suppliers of additional products, farm equipment, shipping and packaging
 - Supports close to 74,000 jobs
 - Economic impact of over \$20.6 billion annually to Maryland's economy BEACON's statistics cover the majority of agritourism activities in Maryland involving festivals, fairs, farmers markets, farm stands, and farm visits.
- According to the BEACON study, there are over 30 Agriculture related festivals and fairs in Maryland attracting over a million visitors annually. It is estimated that these agritourism events generate over \$162 million in economic impact, supporting over 1,000 jobs that can be linked to value-added agriculture.
- The 2012 U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service reported 307 agritourism farms in Maryland with revenues of \$7.3 million. In 2017, the census reported 295 farms with a \$9.9 million income.
- With 26 agritourism farms each, Frederick and St. Mary's county have the highest number of operations, followed by Prince George's (23) and Montgomery (20) counties.
- Maryland farmers who want to incorporate agritourism into their farming operations face a variety of challenges including increased liability exposure, health code permit requirements, and uncertain zoning.
- CHALLENGES:

• Access to capital	• Availability of raw materials
• Availability of processors	• Lack of data
• Labor	• Marketing and Distribution
• Regulatory restrictions	

Jonathan Quinn - Farm Bureau:

- Maryland Farm Bureau is busy with the 90 day legislature session high light of bills of concern.
- HB156/SB295 Cost Share Program sale of harvested cover crops.
Bill authorizes a person who plants rye or two row barley cover crop as a best management practice to harvest and sell it to a malt facility in the state or to a person that will process the cover crop. Crop for sale in the state to a person that holds a class 1 or 9 distillery license or a class 5, 6, 7 or 8 brewery license.
Farm Bureau Opposes
- HB229/SB300 Chlorpyrifos Ban Bill
This bill would ban the use of Chlorpyrifos in the state starting October 1st, 2020. This is the 3rd year this bill has come up. Farm Bureau opposes again this year. This is the only chemical that will control spotted lantern fly. It is used on the seed as a seed treatment on some canning vegetables which is a very important crop on the eastern shore and is used to control corn ear worms in soybeans.
- HB1176 Maryland Healthy Soils Grant Program
Bill provides funds to eligible granted to administer projects to improve soil health and the Farm Bureau Supports this bill.

- HB1312/SB841 Water Pollution Control Discharge Permits Industrial Poultry Operation Bill prohibits MDE from issuing discharge permits to a person for a new or expanding poultry operation. Farm Bureau opposes
- SB928 Concentrated animal feeding operation construction or expansion manure transport plan requirement.
- Starting October 2021 bill would prohibit MDE from approving coverage under a CAFO discharge permit for a new CAFO in counties with more than 30% of their farm land having a phosphorus FIV of 150 or greater unless applicant submits a manure transport plan as part of the application. Farm Bureau Opposes
- You can track all bills by going to mdfarmbureau.com/action_center
Click on the view key legislation link in the right hand column to see list
- The board met last week. One new member service being offered is health insurance with a new company MJM Global Brokerage check it out by going to Farmbureauhealth.com

Donald Maring - Field Crops:

- The Corona Virus is keeping grain markets tentative.
- South American weather has been good in their corn growing regions, also bearish for corn prices.
- Corn exports are still way behind but are increasing.
- Last Friday, the Brazilian Real dropped to an all-time low versus the dollar.
- Most everyone is still thinking the USDA numbers are high and hoping they will drop.
- There is talk of more corn this year, as it is more profitable than beans at current prices.
- One local seed dealer has seen no difference in seed sales: corn vs beans but several others say they have sold more corn.
- Most mills in the valley to Harrisonburg are staying full but the corn is moving after moving wheat grain that was priced earlier at better prices.
- Most farmers are now waiting for better prices on the board and basis.
- A bill to ban Chlorpyrifos is in Annapolis again. If this passes, this could be the beginning of many more to come (Glyphosate, Atrazine, etc.).
- Farming in Maryland will be near impossible if they take away all the options we have for pest and weed control.
- Importing from countries where they still use chemicals that have been banned here is looking more and more a reality.

Cheryl DeBerry - Food Processing:

- As everyone else is doing, we are trying to monitor potential legislation that may affect our sector.
- Lots to keep track of and I appreciate the help from MDA, Farm Bureau, Grow & Fortify, and others that help distill the mountain of info into something digestible.

Elizabeth Hill - Forestry:

- On January 16th MFA along with AFI held our 2nd Legislative Luncheon at Harry Browne's in Annapolis. Following the meeting we held an educational briefing with the House Environmental & Transportation Committee about the importance of sustainable forestry in Maryland. There were 3 panels:
 - **State Government:** Secretary Jeannie Haddaway- Riccio-DNR,
 - **Environmental:** Anne Swanson- Chesapeake Bay Commission, Jonathan Kays - UMD Extension Forester, Donnelle Keech - The Nature Conservancy, Gary Allen - Maryland Forestry Foundation

- **Industry:** Bill Miles - Association of Forest Industries, Beth Hill - Maryland Forests Association, Lin Spicer - Holly Lane Farms, Tommy Johnson - Eastern Shore Forest Products, Danny Sines & Rusty Leonard - Mountain Loggers Group
- Together we successfully displayed the importance of the environmental and economic benefits that working forests have in Maryland. The feedback I received following the briefing was that the legislators were surprised to learn that the industry and environmental groups shared so much common ground. They thought there were people that wanted to save all the trees and people that wanted to cut them all down, which simply isn't true. The truth is we all want forests to remain forests and having strong markets is essential for retaining woodland.
- Several loggers on the Eastern Shore have announced that they are going out of business and are liquidating equipment due to market conditions. Their operations are no longer viable.
- Eastern Shore Forest Products announced that it is planning expand operations by adding a pellet manufacturing and bagging line. It is anticipated to use 60,000 tons of pulpwood per year and is currently in the permitting process but is expected to be in operation this year.

Sean Hough - Livestock:

- US is the largest exporter of pork in the world.
- Banning of ractopamine in pig feed.
- We export 25% of our pork production.
- China is the second largest export market for us. Last year pork prices were down and China was not importing as much from us because of the trade deficit and issues. Now we have a new trade agreement. The African Swine flu has destroyed 50% of China's pork population causing pork prices to sky rocket in China resulting in the need to import from the US.
- China and many European countries have banned ractopamine in pig feed.
- China and other countries will not import pork that has been fed with ractopamine.
- All of the US packing plants are now banning ractopamine and they will not buy pigs that have been fed ractopamine.
- Also the 4H and FFA will not be allowing kids to show pigs that have eaten ractopamine. They will have to sign waivers stating that their pigs have not been fed ractopamine.
- Plant based fake meat products competing with burgers results in mislabeling and false advertising.
- The national cattle association is starting to do some marking to help with the competing plant based meat products.
- "Bacon you can't make it from plants"

Mike Levensgood - Poultry I:

- The University of Maryland Extension, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore along with Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. will be holding an on-farm field day for Delmarva commercial poultry farmers on Wednesday, March 4.
Practical workshops will be offered to help growers improve production practices and maintenance of their farms and equipment. Vendors will also be there to demonstrate equipment and supplies while other allied businesses and government agencies will be present to assist growers as well.
Lunch and nutrient management credits will be provided. [Register by Feb. 28.](#)
- Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit will hold a Poultry Growers Seminar at the Powellville Fire Department in Pittsville, Maryland on March 25 from 9am – 1pm. The theme of the seminar is "Managing your operation in the current conditions" to guide poultry growers

through the industry's challenges. Topics will include maintaining your poultry houses, new poultry equipment, antibiotic-free chicken, reading your settlement sheets, and managing your finances during longer layout periods. The seminar will conclude with roundtable discussions on various poultry topics with industry professionals. Registration is free but required to attend. Breakfast and lunch are provided and the seminar is open to anyone. Register by March 13, visit mafc.com/poultry.

- Perdue Farms is elevating its commitment to alleviate food insecurity with the launch of its new "Delivering Hope to Our Neighbors" hunger initiative and announcing a Franklin P. and Arthur W. Perdue Foundation-funded \$1 million donation to support its Feeding America-affiliated food bank partners in celebration of the company's 100th anniversary. "With one in nine Americans struggling with food insecurity, hunger knows no boundaries. As a food company, we're committed to fighting hunger in the communities we call home and beyond," said Randy Day, CEO of Perdue Farms. "We'll use this initiative to elevate awareness of hunger, continue our decades-long support through donations of nutritious protein, associate volunteerism and financial support, and work with stakeholders to make meaningful change."

As a first step, the Perdue Foundation, the charitable giving arm of Perdue Farms, is donating a total of \$1 million to 10 of its Feeding America-affiliated food bank partners in communities Perdue calls home. Each food bank will receive a \$100,000 grant to help advance their hunger relief initiatives. Perdue Farms is also doubling its annual protein donation commitment to Feeding America to four million pounds, with a goal to provide a minimum 20 million pounds by 2025.

Michelle Protani - Chesnik-Poultry II:

- Poultry health on the shore has been good.
- Layouts for times between flocks are between 16-35 days depending on what company they are growing for.
- There are some buy out activity with some integrators.
- There are still a plentiful supply of housing out there.
- House Bill 517 effect on Ag in general. This bill affects the right to clean air.

Turf - Tom Warpinski:

- Not a whole lot to report at this time of the year. The recent mild temperatures have definitely helped late to germinate new seedings from this past fall. We've actually experienced a slight greenup in our newly seeded fields.
- At a Turf grass seminar this past December, we've learned that some leafspot disease spores are able to survive over winter if temperatures are mild enough. We have struggled more and more in recent years with gray leafspot disease, in particular, attacking newly emerged seedings. In the past we always relied on hard freezing weather to kill it off and stop it in its tracks. So a good hard cold spell is somewhat beneficial to cool season grasses. We are finally starting to see more concern and research focusing on control of leafspot disease as well as research into resistant turf varieties.
- The ongoing repairs on the Bay Bridge have really disrupted delivery schedules for Eastern Shore growers. Customers, with crews on site to install sod, depend on timely deliveries to jobsites. Many 1-2 hour delays have occurred this fall. It seems to have gotten a bit better in recent weeks.
- Events:
 - January 10, 2020: The Center for Turf Grass Science at Rutgers University will host the 29th
 - Annual Rutgers Turf Grass Symposium on Friday

- January 24, 2020: Eastern Pa Turf Conference at Shady Maple Conference Center, East Earl, PA
- February 17-20, 2020: Turf Grass Producers International Conference and Field Day in Orlando FL.

Matthew Corey Spies - Viticulture:

- Intense pruning going on and waiting for bud break. It will be interesting to see how the winter ends up. Without having a cold spell yet it starts to get a little scary where grapes start to bud and then a harsh winter hits.
- Grapes have three bud stages primary, secondary, and tertiary.
- Grapes are pretty resilient and the ripening season is what is affected most by the weather.
- The plants mentality hits to protect the next generation.
- As long as there is good moisture, nutrition and sunlight the plant will be happy.
- All depends on the stress to produce sweeter fruit at the end.
- Worry about late frost and disease through the summer and too much wetness in the fall.

Dr. John Brooks - Veterinary:

- This time year looking at respiratory conditions the high levels of moisture and rain and fluctuation of temperatures always cause increase in upper respiratory issues in feeder calves specifically those that are confined.
- Thoroughbred in middle of fowling season.
- The poultry industry is doing well not hearing any complaints.
- Animals do not like fluctuation of temperatures they are more sensitive to the changes.
- The ground breaking of the animal health building is a critical point in overseeing the public health and animal health issues for animals on the shore.
- 2019 Novel Corona Virus.
- Corona virus has a very complex respiratory condition. The symptoms are across the board.
- Mortality up 30-40%.
- Will be classified as a pandemic.
- Asking where the virus came from. Some speculate that it is commonly found in cattle, camel, cats and bats.

Staff Updates:

Hans Schmidt:

- We are currently monitoring at least 4 pages of bills.
- An extra million dollars in the governor's budget has been dictated to manure transport.
- We are working on making some changes to manure transport for litter that is going to be land applied.
- Farmers be able to move the litter and apply for cost share assistance afterward within 30-40 days.
- Adjusting the rates on the lower 4 counties bumping up to 16 cents per ton per mile and 14 cents for the rest of the state.
- Working with the integrators to have a better sense of where the litter is when the clean outs are happening so we know where to send the farmers to get the litter. Integrators have given a contact person and we can coordinate with the receiver.
- Working on a pilot project with MD Delaware railroad to ship litter out of the watershed. Want to move a load of litter out in April.

- Once we have new version of Manure Transport you will start to see some banners on the program to help promote Manure Transport.
- SB 928 you must have a plan in place of where your litter is going to go.
- Bill in place that restricts new expansions and building of new operations in counties where you have 30% of fields affected by PMT.
- Bills that affect cover crop funding.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:45 respectfully submitted by: Jessica O'Sullivan