



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
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Maryland Agricultural Commission

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Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes January 13, 2021

Present:

Agribusiness: Thomas Mullineaux
Agritourism: Kelly Dudeck
At Large Ag Service: Frank Allnutt
Direct Farm Market: Amy Crone
Equine: Michael Pons
Field Crops: Donald Maring
Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry
Forestry: Elizabeth Hill
Livestock: Sean Hough

Nursery I: James Raley
Organic Farming: Matthew Nielsen
Poultry I: Michael Levengood
Poultry II: Michelle Protani-Chesnik
State Grange: Clifford Newsome Jr.
Turf: Tom Warpinski
University: Dr. Craig Beyrouthy
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks

Absent:

Ag Education: Martha Clark
At Large Ag Service: Matthew Levi Sellers
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.
Dairy II: David Pyle
Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn

Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet
Viticulture: Matthew Corey Spies

MDA Staff:

Julie Oberg
Cassie Shirk
Kevin Conroy
Joe Bartenfelder
Rich Colburn
Steve Connelly
Hans Schmidt
Jason Shellhardt

Guest/Speakers:

Steve McHenry
Allison Roe
Stacy Kubofcik

Approval of Minutes:

December minutes were approved 1st by Thomas Warpinski and 2nd by Thomas Mullineaux.

Commodity Reports:

Martha Clark- Ag Education:

- With a new year comes new and inspired ideas, events, and stories from the Ag education community! We have been busy creating a new set of community impact sheets for legislative visits to show MAEF's outreach statistics in every legislative district. MAEF has been showcasing new and updated lessons through our social media accounts, highlighting news and events from our partners, and making sure the public is aware of all the wonderful things that will occur this upcoming spring.
- February will bring news of a number of grants and scholarships offered to the public. The "Kids in the Garden Grant" will be released next week in hopes to bring hands-on agricultural education experiences to virtual learners. This grant will provide up to \$500 in funding to schools and community organizations to build planting kits to be sent home to students learning virtually. The MAEF Academic Scholarship will also be announced in the upcoming month. Make sure to follow us on social media to receive the most recent updates on what MAEF is doing in the community @MAEFinc!
- The Elementary Education team is pleased with the progress of improving the variety and quality of resources available to teachers and the public on our website. We have completed the following updates and improvements:
 - 55 new and updated Ag-mazing News articles (fully uploaded in the next 2 weeks or so)
 - 5 brand-new Ag in 10's, a reading & science resource for grades 3-5 (as well as updates to many of the other existing topics)
 - Creation of a brand-new resource, STEM AGtivities, for use at home or in the classroom which feature hands-on, ag-based mini-projects- 18 available with more to come!
- While we have not been able to safely have our labs out and don't anticipate having them out in the near future with school and safety restrictions in place, we have been sharing these online resources widely with our network of teachers, administrators, and science coordinators in each local school system. We're continuing to update the existing Maryland commodity map and Amazing! Maryland Agriculture book. On the teacher professional development front, we are thrilled to already have 16 teachers enrolled in our spring 2021 course so far! Enthusiasm around this course seems to be growing as last fall we developed our first waitlist for the spring offering. Our Ag Literacy book, Chuck's Ice Cream Wish, will be ready to ship out to participating volunteer readers later in February. Coordination is underway to get copies of the book and accompanying resources to FFA advisors so that it may be incorporated into FFA member outreach efforts. The last, and one of the most exciting developments is that after participating in our fall 2020 course, the Baltimore County Public School elementary science resource teacher is planning to use excerpts from the Amazing! Maryland Agriculture book and a MAEF lesson plan on commodities from our course in a brand-new 5th grade BCPS agriculture unit.
- The last, and one of the most exciting developments is that after participating in our fall 2020 course, the Baltimore County Public School elementary science resource teacher is planning to use excerpts from the Amazing! Maryland Agriculture book and a MAEF lesson plan on commodities from our course in a brand-new 5th grade BCPS agriculture unit.
- MAEF's new AgWorks podcast will post the second set of three interviews (out of 12) in February. Middle School online course registration now stands at five. Two guest credentials have been issued for MAEF, with Tom Hartsock and Susanne enrolled. Pre-

formatting and revisions are underway for the March 27 release, with the course starting on March 29. Materials for teachers will be distributed at end of February. Please continue to share The Buzz and other announcements advertising this course. High school teachers will be accepted.

- The MAEOE conference begins Wednesday of next week with two sessions offered by MAEF and a total of 8 agriculture education sessions represented in the Ag strand. The Maryland farm-based education (FBE) surveys in progress to capture data on who, where, and how FBE is being offered across the state and Delaware.
- The secondary education team continues to work cooperatively with local school systems in supporting teachers, programs and students; advocating for continuing the Ag. Ed. Programs in Baltimore city, partnering with MSDE in identifying credentials for students to obtain upon completion of Agriculture Education programs and providing leadership opportunities for the MD FFA State Officer team and local student members. The staff has provided support for county and state-wide agriculture industry partners including the Maryland Envirothon, county Agriculture Marketing groups, Advisory councils and the Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association. The MD FFA Staff are working diligently to transition programs and the annual convention to virtual platforms for students to be able to interact and demonstrate their skills.
- We hit the ground running on Jan. 4, 2021! On our first day back, I had four virtual legislative visits with delegates from the House Environment and Transportation Committee, which oversees the license plates. Since then, we've met with 13 of the delegates and all have been pleased to hear about what MAEF does for Maryland agricultural education. I've also made several grant applications/presentations, participated in the review of Dean Craig Beyrouthy at UMCP College of Ag, spoke at Maryland Farm Bureau's Ag Education webinar and participated in two DEIJ trainings, while reapplying for our Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit line of credit, working on the Seibel scholarship and MAEF scholarships, and organizing the Executive Committee Meeting!
- We continue to advocate for Reginald F. Lewis high school Ag science programs and are keeping a close eye on revenues. A wonderful surprise came from Mary Ellen Waltemire, who volunteered to help MAEF through strategic planning! We appreciate all of you for lending your special skills and perspectives in support of agricultural literacy and education. Along those same lines, the state CTE advisory panel will be conducting a survey of workplace needs for student credentials related to agriculture. If that sounds like something you or your business/industry would like to weigh in on, please see the email that was sent earlier this week containing the link to the survey.
- Please continue to take care and be safe! Better days are ahead.

Thomas Mullineaux- Agribusiness:

- One VERY positive event: SNOW in central Maryland was encouraging for Ice Control Product sales. All is quiet. Some fertilizer and Lime activity on cold mornings when the ground is frozen. Bleak though, some soybeans still standing east of The Bay. Therefore, wheat was not planted. Dealer personnel maintaining equipment and Dicamba and Paraquat training.
- Spring early order corn and soybean seed sales pretty much wrapped up. Some dealers encouraged with sales and early pay activity. Consensus is more corn and soybeans. Commodity prices stronger than expected.
- Hay and straw sales very strong. Livestock feed sales flat. Horse feed sales slumping more and more with folks saving money on purchased manufactured feed and feeding more hay.

Kelly Dudeck- Agritourism:

- Many saw huge revenue increases in 2020, with high demand for socially distant outdoor activities.
- With that though, many have had to put additional resources into keeping the operations safe.
- Many believe (hope) that the interest in outdoor activities isn't going away anytime soon. The Maryland Christmas Tree Association says real tree sales were up 20 percent over last year.
- Most tree farms closed early, opening for two weekends, and quickly selling out. While spring is generally a slow time of the year for agritourism (and typically reserved for planting) many Maryland operators are already looking ahead for creative ways to draw the public to the farm once the cold temperatures break. Shift and adapt.
- Open more days a week, hire more staff, COVID -19 protocols.
- Sales in farm shops have been up, with many customers expressing appreciation for being able to purchase meat, cheese, eggs, honey, fresh fruits, vegetables and bakery products.
- It turns out that many of the changes that agritourism operators put into place for COVID-19, are ones they are considering keeping.
- Online reservations, more room on hayrides, moving "checkout" to the people, instead of having them all come inside, and being open more days than before.
- Through the pandemic, those willing to pivot or adapt have typically fared a bit better.

Amy Crone- Direct Farm Market:

- 2020 for some was a better year in which demands for local were higher.
- Will be interesting to see if this continues in 2021.
- Planning for the worse but hoping for the best.
- With so much uncertainty with things opening up and people being more comfortable going out businesses are looking at alternative ways to stay open and are being optimistic.
- Those able to pivot and shift to more COVID-19 friendly practices. There is a big difference in those able to pivot and those that have struggled to change their business model or incorporate new ideas and procedures.
- Farmers markets were deemed essential with the help from MDA and will open as scheduled in 2021. Unfortunately, numbers have gone down due to COVID-19 but markets continue to have hours and try to adapt to help customers.
- Farms are having curbside pickup and online ordering such as grab and go.
- All the assistance that has come such as MARBIDCO, MDA has been greatly appreciated with help towards more sanitation practices and hiring more staff for cleaning.
- Hoping demand for local will continue in 2021 and hope that those that are struggling to adapt will be able to use the information provided to help them.

Michael Pons- Equine:

- In 2020, funding for the Maryland Thoroughbred Purse Account and the Maryland Bred Fund, from the pari-mutuel handle at our racetracks (Laurel, Pimlico and Timonium) and Off-Track Betting Sites, as well as the subsidy from the Video Lottery Terminals, was down sharply because of Covid-19 and the ensuing Economic Recession. The revenue declines were estimated to be at least 15%-20%, because of the losing 40+ live racing days, and temporary closing of the casinos, from March 16, 2020 until June 1, 2020. The Preakness, Maryland's largest annual sporting event, was rescheduled to October 3, 2020. Attendance at both the Preakness and Maryland Million were restricted to primarily horsemen and owners. Fortunately, adjustments to the Purse Account and

Maryland-Bred Fund were made in a timely fashion, so that payments were made to winning participants. Last year, approximately, \$10,000,000 in purses, and \$1,000,000 in breeder and stallion awards were forfeited.

- Protective measures on horse farms have greatly helped to lessen the spread of Pandemic. However, the reduced foot-traffic from the public has negatively impacted sales of equine bloodstock, as well as saddles, tack, and horse supplies as well. In addition, the costs of personal protective equipment, hand-sanitizers, etc. have been borne by the farm owners and managers. While some horse farm owners did receive Federal Payroll Protection Program funding, as well as the Coronavirus Stimulus Payments, which helped supplement their income, most farm and stable revenues were down, while expenses increased.
- Currently, very few horse farm owners, employees and stable workers have received the Covid-19 vaccinations. They are most likely to receive their shots later this year. In the meantime, nearly everyone has been practicing safety measures.
- The Maryland Equine Industry is grateful to Governor Hogan for recognizing the horse industry as essential to our state's economy. Every day, more than 100,000 horses are feed, exercised, ridden, trained, shown and raced here by thousands of dedicated full and part time workers. We are supported by veterinarians, blacksmiths, van drivers, and all the vendors: feed, hay and straw suppliers, and many others. Our Billion Dollar Industry will continue as long as folks love horses.

Donald Maring- Field Crops:

- Yesterday had USDA supply and demand report.
- Grain farmers know exports are up.
- Soybean stocks are at 3% of usage.
- Bean prices should be strong for the next month until South American crops are harvested and in position to be exported.
- Corn supplies are at highest level since 2013-2014 marketing year.
- Global corn production fell 9 million metric tons and global stocks dropped 5 million metric tons.
- Chinese imports have doubled in the last 4 months.
- A lot of dry weather locally.
- A lot of dairy farms that require more corn for feed needs and that leaves less for grain.
- Not enough to meet the wheat demand.
- Prices are good but the downside is the higher prices will lower the demand so enjoy the prices while you can if you are a grain farmer.

Cheryl DeBerry- Food Processing:

- Food processors struggle to remain open with the pandemic affecting so many people. Western Maryland is a hot spot for the COVID-19 virus currently, with reports of employees coming to work sick, persons who refuse to wear masks appropriately, and multiple gatherings where social distancing guidelines were ignored. It's tough for employers to stay open at this point.

Elizabeth Hill- Forestry:

- It's wet so it's really hard getting logs to the mills.
- Lumber prices are continuing to climb.
- The demand for outdoor feeding and outdoor lumber will continue through the next months.
- Lumber prices will continue to skyrocket and will be a profitable time.
- The sawmill in Willards will open in April. As long as loggers can get in the woods.
- MFA received word at the end of December that they will get grant funding for Faces of Forestry Campaign.
- This will basically be a public perception Campaign. Will identify top public perception issues and put faces to tell stories and combat these issues.
- Will start working next week with focus groups to identify people and messaging for this and hope to share the stories broadly with groups and individuals.

Sean Hough- Livestock:

- Cattle and swine industry started to settle down.
- Getting into farrowing and calving season for the cattle and swine which is exciting throughout the state.
- Already had a few litters of pigs.
- Caught up with the Maryland Horse Producers Association and the Maryland Cattleman's Association to see what kind of issues and things they have going on that need addressing.
- The main problem is the processing of finished animals and getting the pigs and cattle butchered. The capacity to get this done is still one of the biggest concerns.
- Some of the USDA reports show that we went into this fall season with some of the lower levels of livestock that we have had in a while.
- Swine industry going into the breeding season. The breeding stock was down 5% compared to prior year. USDA stated that this is the lowest level since 2014 of breeding stock going into the breeding season.
- Exports are still strong with China exporting a lot.
- Prices seem to be steady with pork prices up a little bit.

James Raley- Nursery I:

- The Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association held a virtual annual meeting on January 6, 2021. MNLGA Executive Director, Vanessa Finney, reported on industry activities for 2020. Some highlights were:
- While many growers had to destroy product in the spring due to unavailability of markets, by late spring, the tide had turned somewhat. Since consumers were staying home, demand became higher than normal for the products and services the industry provides.
- In December, some companies have reported that holiday sales are a bit down. It is not known if that is a result of economic concern on behalf of consumers at large, as the pandemic lingers, or other factors at play.
- From polling responses by members of MNLGA, many businesses were able to take advantage of Paycheck Protection Plan loans offered by the CARES Act, as well as CFAP 2.0 funds that became available to ornamental horticulture this past fall. Between the economic recovery funds and general increase in sales that followed initial declines in sales, it has helped the industry, overall, record a positive year.

- Mr. Raley informed the commission members that he attended the December 17th virtual meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC). He reported that he shared the Ag Commission's survey and report from December 2020 concerning how COVID is continuing to impact the Ag industry in Maryland and about assistance needed by certain sectors of agriculture. There was discussion during the SSCC meeting about maintaining safety vigilance during the ongoing pandemic.
- A representative from the Farm Service Agency reported on the CFAP programs. There were approximately 7,000 applications for assistance through CFAP-1 and CFAP-2. Funds paid for both programs to Maryland farmers totaled \$65.5 million.
- Tobacco growers around the state are processing last year's harvest, preparing it for transport to and sale at market locations. There is no information yet on crop prices.

Matthew Nielsen- Organic Farming:

- Nationally the organic trade association came out with their 2020 survey.
- 5% growth for year 2019.
- Individuals are getting renewals done for their certification and getting growth assessments put in.
- Funding to help with certification was dropped from 750 dollars eligibility to 500.
- Grain markets are pretty steady and slight increase in prices.
- Future harvest has conference and there is a session on strategies to transition to organic.

Michael Levengood- Poultry I:

- **PMT** – While DCA (Delmarva Chicken Association) did not vote for a delay of the last phase of the PMT, DCA feels it is very important that MDA uphold its pledge to support farmers during the transition. They will continue to work with the department on suggestions, including:
 - Allow Maryland Agricultural Cost Share (MACS) funds to be used by farmers who do not raise chickens to build manure storage structures for storing litter during times when they will not be utilizing it on the fields
 - Allow Maryland Agricultural Cost Share (MACS) funds to be used by farmers or other entrepreneurs to purchase equipment such as trucks, trailers and spreaders in order to help with the ROI that was suggested by the BEACON study
 - Continue outreach and work closely with University of Maryland Extension to identify farmers throughout the state that have interest in taking litter as a valuable fertilizer
 - Continue to explore other regional aggregation sites for poultry litter beyond Maryland Environmental Services (MES) and if MES is used, assure that growers would not be charged tipping fees to send litter
 - Continue efforts to explore transporting litter to other areas by railroad
 - Gather the updated soil data as early as possible in 2021 in order to share the results
 - Closely review the results of the University of Maryland study when it is completed in future years to determine if additional updates need to be made to the PMT regulation
 - Continue to convene the PMT Advisory committee at least twice a year to offer updates and listen to suggestions to help with implementation.
- **Litter. APP** - The litter. App is complete and available to download through Apple App Store or Google Play. This app is one tool to help connect those who have litter with those who are looking for litter, along with others that can provide services such as brokers, haulers and custom applicators. See attached flyer or check out www.litr.io for more information.

- DCA developed the app by partnering with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Campbell Foundation for the Environment, the Delmarva Land & Litter Collaborative and Common Logic
- **Farmers, Ag workers see a boost in public opinion** - A December Gallup poll found farming and agriculture, as a business sector, enjoyed a 69 percent approval rating with the U.S. public -- and farmers are seen more favorably than any other industry's workers. "Americans' views haven't changed toward most of the 25 major business and industry sectors Gallup tracks," Feedstuffs wrote in summarizing the poll findings. "But the public is expressing greater appreciation for the work of three industries that are crucial to people's wellbeing: farming and agriculture, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals. Farming and agriculture were already among the top-rated industries before 2020, but it has now moved to No. 1 with a 69% positive rating -- an 11-percentage-point increase."
- **DCA, Grain Producers and Farm Bureau took legislators on virtual farm tour** - Thanks to modern technology, the Maryland House of Delegates Environment and Transportation Committee met with agricultural stakeholders and Maryland farmers for a virtual farm tour on Wednesday. Normally, our agricultural organizations host tours in the fall. Chairman Kumar Barve told us that while a virtual tour is not the same as being on the farms, the tour was very informative, and he hopes to get back out to rural Maryland soon. The committee saw 2020 corn harvest and cover crop planting in action, toured a poultry operation, and learned about organic grain farming and a direct-to-consumer produce market. The agriculture tour was developed by the Maryland Grain Producers in partnership with the Delmarva Chicken Association and Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, and the video legislators saw can be viewed online here.
- For the chicken-grower part of the tour, Maple Breeze Farm's Mary Lou Brown and Ashley Brown opened their farm, allowing the Ag associations to video on the property for about two hours. They discussed the solar energy panels on their farm, their conservation measures that prevent runoff from reaching waterways, and the litter amendments they use to reduce ammonia -- all topics of interest to legislators.
- **COVID- 19 vaccination roll out** – We would like to thank Governor Hogan who last week announced that agricultural workers would be included in Group 1c. This is very helpful to a group of essential workers that have worked hard to keep Maryland and the Nations feed.

Clifford Newson Jr. - State Grange:

- Many normal State and local Grange activities have been cancelled for January due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- We are hopeful we can have our Cabin Fever meeting on Feb. 20th.
- We have a single dish contest on a designated soup, salad, dessert or main meal item.
- Of course, we will follow covi-19 rules and the meeting is subject weather as well.
- We have continued to stay in contact with all of our members so help can be offered as needed. Many members are waiting for available vaccine shots.

Tom Warpinski- Turf:

- We are enjoying some wonderful weather for the last week and a half. Not a whole lot to report. Relatively quiet times this time of year as crews catch up on work set aside during the busy season. We are enjoying about the longest spell of rain free weather since October.
- Most farms however still reeling from the heavy rains experienced throughout last fall. Many fields still have ponding.

- Fall seedlings got plenty of moisture so far but the excess rain has thrown fertility programs out the window. We had a very difficult time getting equipment across some soft fields and had to resort to aerial applications.
- Prolonged moisture has increased disease pressure on most farms. We won't know the full effects until spring green up.
- Sod sales are about average for this time of year.
- Labor continues to be one of the main concerns for the industry. It's very difficult to find qualified help, especially CDL drivers.
- The effects of COVID-19 are hitting everyone hard. All businesses are struggling with absent employees due to them or family members being infected. We all try our best to be as safe as possible at our places of business but cannot control what takes place at home.
- The Turfgrass Producers International will be holding a virtual Conference and Field days February 16-19. This 2021 virtual event series has been designed to provide a positive impact in as little time as possible, to as many farms as possible.
- STMA- the Sports Turf Managers Association is currently holding their virtual conference January 12 and 13th
- The Mid-Atlantic Sports Turf Managers Association (MASTMA) is holding an irrigation Webinar series Jan 21 and 28.

Dr. Craig Beyrouthy- University:

- Found out that the provost is stepping down at the end of the month.
- A lot of new leadership roles with a new president and will have an interim provost.
- The home information garden center has been in temporary buildings for decades and those buildings are in a state of disrepair.
- The plan is to build a 12-13 thousand square foot state of the art building on the other side of the road where the dairy facility is.
- Have been working on a design and the finances for this over the last couple of years and just finalized everything in the last couple weeks. The building itself costs substantially more than what was initially estimated and laid out and that was some of the concerns and the delays.
- The master gardener program, the home garden information center and our environmental horticulture program will be moved over there. Hoping to have the building in place and occupied within a year and a half.
- Ag extension education program which is a master's level program has been approved at the university level and has to go in front of Maryland Higher Education Commission for approval and hoping to get the program instituted this next fall.
- Fermentation science program is a program that has been approved at the college level and then has to go to university level for approval followed by the Maryland Higher Education Commission for approval.

Dr. John Brooks- Veterinary:

- Nothing earth shaking in veterinary medicine to report.
- HPAI continues to be an active disease situation in Japan.
- CWD was found in a cow elk harvested near the national elk grounds close to the Grand Tetons. A serious concern on multi levels. There are 23 feeding grounds for winter elk in Wyoming.
- So far, the winter has been mild, no significant respiratory conditions in our cattle or swine operations. ILT continues to have isolated events in the Delmarva poultry.

Staff/Guest Updates:

Joe Bartenfelder:

- 2021 session is beginning, and it is one like we have never seen before.
- A lot different submitting input because everything is virtual so you will not have personal contact like in the past.
- No personal contact with senators and delegates.
- More work to put into the details with what is going on.
- Busy session could go 90 days but could go less depending on COVID-19.
- One concern among the ag community was vaccinations.
- Maintained close contact with lieutenant governor and ensured that the ag workers would be prioritized and put into the group 1c.
- Now the problem is getting the vaccinations.
- We need about 12 million vaccinations in the state of Maryland and have only received 400 thousand.
- Main issue is how they are being spaced out.
- Still have a way to go but keep working together and stay strong to see the light at the end of the tunnel.
- As a following note “Wear the damn mask” and try to avoid crowds and social distance.

Cassie Shirk:

- Legislative session starts today and is completely virtual.
- All bill hearings and subcommittee meetings will be streamed online via YouTube.
- Any legislation MDA provides comments on will be available on the MDA webpage under 2021 legislative session.
- This has all bills we have provided comments on such as letters of support, letters of information, letters of confirm.
- MDA has two departmental bills this year with hearings tomorrow in the Senate and Education, Health and Environmental Affairs committee.
- Senate bill 344 which is a cost sharing bill allowing MDA 100% state funding assistance which is currently limited at 87.5% for certain high priority conservation practices.
- Senate bill 352 is clean-up bill.
- A bill of important for the ag commission is House bill 232 this is to add a hemp industry member to the commission.
- Remind the commission that members cannot testify on bills as an ag commission member but can do so as a private citizen or as a member of your program such a poultry or grain.
- Will provide updates as we proceed with session.

Kevin Conroy:

- Thought we would have changes to the hemp finally rule by now but our friends at USDA have been slower than anticipated.
- The final rule is sitting with attorneys over at OMB.
- Do not feel the final rule will be out before new administration comes along and believes that new administrations will sit on it.
- Don't know final rule for hemp, process longer than it should be.
- Congress did put some language in the budget about trying to change a few USDA regulations. Not sure if regulations will have to come back to USDA to draft.
- Programs are moving along with no real issues.
- Have to give a hat off to the team, everyone is in the field as much as possible.

- Ensuring that congress is moving along, State Chemist is moving along, lab in turf and seed is also moving along.
- Doing everything we can to make things as normal as possible

Hans Schmidt:

- Resource conservation has a lot going on.
- Open enrollment for soil conservation district technician.
- Working on interviews and hope to start filling positions quickly.
- Hoping next recruitment will be coming out shortly and this is a huge task for the HR department.
- Have new buffer insentative program that opened Monday and is open till February 5th.
- Took feedback from WIP program and put together pilot program.
- Application available online and contact district office.
- AIR March 1st deadline, new electronic submission through Maryland's one stop portal.
- Campaign on manure and its benefits and resources for farmers to use manure.
- Move forward with PMT goes into full affect July 1st of this year.
- Work with extension in having a farmer meeting on 26th with members from university to talk benefits of manure, the manure transport program and application, farmers, and their experiences of using manure.
- More funding in the manure transport program, 1.3 million dollars additional funds for program.
- Animal waste technology had 13 proposals, the committee will review and make recommendations to the secretary.

Steve Connelly:

- Maryland department health has a break down online by county and zip code of positive COVID-19 test cases.
- <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
- Completed our two farmers support programs.
- Support to contract poultry growers had 545 total farmers paid just less than 2 million dollars.
- Paid 15% bonus on CFAP 1 payments from FFA. 817 farmers received money through this program totaling 2.8 million dollars.
- Holdup in comptroller's office in December but before that checks were going out within a week.
- Slowness with delivery from postal service.
- Everything has been approved and if you have not received a check please contact us and we will try and track it down.
- Dairy margin coverage program for calendar years 2019 and 2020 the state of Maryland paid premium for 9.50 coverage level. For 2021 we are not paying the premium, but we did increase the amount of milk covered under the program.
- Increased amount of milk under program in 2021 to 650 million pounds covered for 2021.
- Congress and the president signed an additional relief program. There are no real details from USDA on how the program will be run at this time but there will be support for contract poultry growers with a billion dollars to cover about 80% of their losses due to the pandemic. The forestry will receive 200 million dollars, crop farmer's payments for depopulations.
- More to come from USDA.

Jason Shellhardt:

- Work on final round of edits for department annual reports
- Outreach activities for manure as fertilizer.

Steve McHenry:

- Annual report is available.
- USDA rural development has announced the value-added producer program deadline March 22, Marbidco offers matching grant to USDA grant.
- Receive up to 250,000 grant funds to match with nonfederal funds.
- Application deadline is March 8th and press release was sent out this morning.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:42 am respectfully submitted by Jessica O'Sullivan