



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary
Julianne A. Oberg, Deputy Secretary

Maryland Agricultural Commission

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

410.841.5882 Baltimore/Washington
410.841.5914 Fax
800.492.5590 Toll Free

Maryland Agricultural Commission Minutes March 10, 2021

Present:

Ag Education: Martha Clark
Direct Farm Market: Amy Crone
Equine: Michael Pons
Food Processing: Cheryl DeBerry
Livestock: Sean Hough

Nursery I: James Raley
Poultry I: Michael Levensgood
Poultry II: Michelle Protani-Chesnik
State Grange: Clifford Newsome Jr.
Turf: Tom Warpinski
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks

Absent:

Agribusiness: Thomas Mullineaux
Agritourism: Kelly Dudeck
At Large Ag Service: Frank Allnutt
At Large Ag Service: Matthew Levi Sellers
Consumer: Carroll Shry Jr.
Dairy II: David Pyle
Farm Bureau: Jonathan Quinn

Field Crops: Donald Maring
Forestry: Elizabeth Hill
Nursery II: Ray Greenstreet
Organic Farming: Matthew Nielsen
University: Dr. Craig Beyroudy
Veterinary: Dr. John Brooks
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
Sarah Fielder

Approval of Minutes:

February minutes were approved 1st by Michelle Protani-Chesnik and 2nd Tom Warpinski.

Commodity Reports:

Martha Clark- Ag Education:

- With schools finally opening programs are going to be changing over and have to wait and see exactly where everything is going.
- Scholarships are available with the majority of deadlines in March and May
- March 15th - \$2,000.00 scholarship from Farm Bureau.
- Contacts with FFA kids on the eastern shore.
- Maryland 4-H board meeting discussing the fairs and what will be happening this summer and what events can occur this year.
- Trying to schedule and plan activities for 4-H and FFA for the year.
- Hiring a business specialist down at the university to manage the financial and funding for extension which includes part of the 4-H group.
- New executive director Rose Colby Green.
- On Maryland giving day raised \$1,400.00 for 4-H.

Amy Crone- Direct Farm Market:

- Everyone is getting ready to open on time this year.
- April 4th the Baltimore Farmers Market will open.
- With the lifts to regulations, this will help farm markets with agritourism activities and getting more people into the farms.
- Getting the vaccines to the Ag workers and producers has been big for operations and insuring safety for workers and customers.
- The Maryland Market Money Program is now operating on time and applications are open for farmers markets and farmers that want to take advantage of that matching program.
- Grants are extending for on farm experimental production techniques.
- Excited for people to open on time and have a full season.

Michael Pons- Equine:

- An outbreak of Equine Herpes was discovered in at least three barns at Laurel Park Racetrack this week. Currently, those barns have been placed under quarantine. The Laurel stabling area is on lockdown; all horses must stay on the grounds. The current racing schedule at Laurel is in jeopardy, pending guidance from the Maryland State Veterinarian.
- The Maryland Horse Industry Board has a zoom meeting scheduled for 10:00 am today. So, I might be leaving our meeting earlier than planned to hear any updates on the Equine Herpes outbreak.
- On March 5, 2021, Laurel began allowing 250 fans/day to attend the races for the first time since last fall. This year's Kentucky Derby is scheduled to have at least 50% attendance. We are hoping for similar protocols at the 146th running of the Preakness, scheduled for Saturday, May 15, 2021. Historically, the Preakness is Maryland's largest sporting event, in terms of attendance and economic impact.
- The Maryland Stadium Authority has selected the design firm of Ayres Saint Cross of Baltimore, as architects and engineers to design the redevelopment of Pimlico, and rebuilding of Laurel, racetracks. The \$375 Million project will likely begin this fall with procurement of the construction bonds, and the project is likely to begin in 2022.
- Sports wagering was approved by Maryland voters on Election Day last November and its' implementation is being decided upon in the current legislative session. House Bill 940 authorizes sports wagering license holders: casinos, racetracks, and off-track betting

facilities, to accept wagers on sports events. Online wagering is also being discussed. The Racing and Gaming subcommittees are deciding upon the rules and regulations for rollout of sports betting, perhaps later this year.

- I will forward, to this commission, any significant updates regarding the Equine Herpes outbreak.

Cheryl DeBerry- Food Processing:

- Things are continuing until harvest starts and more product is available and ready to process.
- Grain is also not processing too much right now.
- MARBIDCO has some good money out there for meat processors if anyone needs equipment.

James Raley- Nursery I:

- Plant production is underway as the sector prepares for Spring sales. The pandemic that has kept people at home has also provided time for people to garden and landscape their properties. Some nursery producers have reported supply problems.
- According to a Scotts Miracle-Gro survey published in June 2020 in Garden Center Magazine, the primary reasons for gardening or landscaping during the pandemic were to stay busy (54%), to feel a sense of accomplishment (49%), to reduce stress (48%) and to access fresh food (33%). Increased demand for garden and landscape products has caused shortages at some production facilities for plant varieties, planting soil and plastic pots. Nursery sector members hope that consumer demand will continue and that 2021 sales will do well.
- Cuban tree frogs, a species that has proven quite invasive further south, are being imported into the National Capital Region through various online outlets that sell houseplants. Once inside, they become a nuisance to humans by exuding skin irritants, defecating on walls and windows, clogging drains, and poisoning pets.
- The Humane Rescue Alliance is an organization that takes in unwanted animals in Washington, D.C. In January 2021, they began receiving Cuban tree frogs, most of whom were found in potted plants purchased from nurseries in Florida. Cuban tree frogs are hazardous to people, dogs, and cats. I am not aware of any reports of Cuban tree frog findings in Maryland.

Michael Levensgood- Poultry I:

- **Time to apply for DCA College scholarships**
we have opened the application period for our 2021 College Scholarship Program. Applications are being accepted for undergraduate scholarships of \$2,000 and graduate-degree scholarships of \$3,000. Complete applications must be received by DCA no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 9, 2021
- **Booster BBQ:** In place of our annual Booster Banquet that is generally held in Salisbury in April, DCA is planning an indoor/outdoor BBQ event at the Delaware State Fairgrounds in Harrington, Delaware on Friday, June 18. This event will be take into account all COVID protocols. More details to come.
- **USDA extends deadline for CFAP applications during review**
In a Feb. 25 update on farmers.gov, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) said farmers, including contract chicken growers, will have more time to complete applications for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), removing a previously announced Feb. 26 deadline for applications.
"The review of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) is ongoing and we anticipate a decision in the weeks ahead," USDA said. "Payments under the CFAP 2

signup that ended December have not been impacted in any way. The deadline of February 26 has been eliminated and USDA's Farm Service Agency will continue to accept applications during the evaluation period. Interested applicants will have at least an additional 30 days to sign up after any decision is announced."

- **Legislation continues to be the focus: HB455/SB585** – Processing of Poultry Litter for Alternative Use – After a number of discussions with Delegate Jacobs' constituent from both DCA and MDA, the Delegate withdrew the bill and we will work directly with the constituent on his local permitting issues after session.
- **HB472** – Agriculture – Use of Glyphosate – Prohibition – DCA was pleased to join a large coalition of stakeholders in opposition of this bill. The bill did receive an unfavorable report and was withdrawn.
- **HB581/SB486** – MD Essential Workers' Protection Act - DCA is still very concerned about the impacts of this bill on all of our members – from growers to allied businesses to processing companies. There is a special workgroup that has been meeting to try and work through some of the many concerns from businesses. DCA is still very much in opposition of the bill, but has offered some suggestive language both directly as well as through a coalition of Ag stakeholders. We would like to see exemptions and/or the bill more mirror CDC guidance for a public health pandemic and it must absolutely remove the \$2 hazard pay – whether retroactive or moving forward.
- **Grain and Poultry prices have been on the rise:** The winter storm in the Texas area had an impact on poultry production, the opening of the economy is increasing demand. This is impacting prices. These increased prices are easing the impact of the higher grain prices currently, but long term this will have an impact.
- **Litter. App:** The litter connection app that was created and rolled out at the beginning of the year has already shown great success. There are currently nearly 300 registered users, 24 listings and nearly 100 connections that have occurred. It appears there was certainly a need for connection, as many of the farmers looking for litter are from other areas of Maryland, not on the Eastern Shore.

Michelle Protani-Chesnik- Poultry II:

- Allen Harim has cut their capacity to half for the whole year if not longer since they have signed a two year contract with an organic company in Pennsylvania to ship bird.
- Some of the growers are finding homes which is wonderful news.
- Layouts are down on average about 25 to 30 days which is a big help because when layouts come down farmers have money to spend and meet their obligations.
- Encourage and go after the CVAP money.
- Bird health most companies are vaccinating in ova which is the egg for the LT virus.

Clifford Newsome Jr- State Grange:

- Stage grange has been active this past month with the president and legislative representative able to give his comments on bills and hearings via zoom.
- The State Grange president has given comments on the glyphosate bill along with the medical marijuana bill.

Tom Warpinski- Turf:

- As temperatures are warming and things drying out outdoor farm activities begin to increase on growers farms.
- Outside harvesting is getting back into full swing after a brief weather change in February.
- Fields are still very soft and wet.
- March 1st spring fertility programs are allowed again.

- Turf in general throughout the region fertilizer applications have begun.
- Growers expect 2021 to be a strong year for sales as new homes are up.
- Sports fields and golf courses are currently lagging.
- House bill 857 may be of some interest. Requiring a certain producer of synthetic turf and turf infill to establish a system to track the chain of custody of the synthetic turf and turf infill from their manufacture to their reuse, recycling, and final disposal on or before January 1, 2022, subject to a certain exception; requiring a certain owner of synthetic turf and turf infill to establish a system to track the chain of custody of the synthetic turf and turf infill from their use to their reuse, recycling, and final disposal under certain circumstances; etc.

Dr. John Brooks- Veterinary:

- 4 types of herpes viruses that effect equine.
- 1st effects fouds and is upper respiratory.
- 2nd effects the mares with abortions.
- Training stables are effected the most by ehv4.
- There are 2 excellent vaccines for ehv1 and ehv4 which we use aggressively in pregnant mares and training facilities.
- Have to use a time frame to keep things locked down because there are transmit ability possibilities through asymptomatic or non-clinical disease
- State handling it appropriately the best thing to do is to lock it down until you can do all the trace backs and trace forwards in the area.
- This can effect economics in the equine industry.
- From legal work, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island there is now initiatives to create court room advocates to represent the interest of an animal living or dead in a prosecution regarding the welfare, care and cost of the animal.
- The human animal bond has led to something called COVID stress syndrome.
- COVID stress syndrome has caused stress and overweight in individuals and pets.
- Pets that are on Prozac and weight management programs due to COVID stress.
- Illegal drug Xylazine which is large animal tranquilizer called rompun is being combined with fentanyl.
- Raw food diets, salmonella and listeria are a big problem, bravo packing had a recall, and this can be transmitted by contact to people.
- San Diego zoo has a COVID-19 vaccine for animals and was used in their great apes.
- Seeing a higher back yard poultry operators, higher and higher interfacing of wild birds with these flocks.
- In the south west an egg producing company lost 2 of their 70 buildings due to mechanical equipment error.

Staff/Guest Updates:

Cassie Shirk:

- House Bill 455 was Delegate Jacobs bill for poultry litter for alternative use.
- House Bill 455 has been withdrawn by the sponsor.
- Between MDA as well as Delegate Jacobs and folks that were pushing this bill we have had a lot of different conversations and we were able to get the delegate to withdraw this bill and we are going to work to try and help the constituents achieve what they are looking for without the need of a bill.
- House bill 472 would have banned the use of glyphosate in the state of Maryland. This bill has also been withdrawn.

- A summer study would basically be the committee and a work group and all relevant stake holders would be involved to discuss glyphosate and what the sponsor is looking to accomplish with the study.
- Cross over is Monday March 22nd, this is basically a currency deadline where each chamber will send to the opposite chamber over those bills it tends to pass favorably.
- April 5th is when the budget bill should be passed.
- April 12th is sign and die which is the last day legislative session.
- Any testimony on bill is on our website under the legislation 2021 page.
- House Bill 92 prohibits the use of state funds to purchase or plant invasive and non-native species, almost all turf in Maryland is considered non-native, it is currently written that a waiver must be obtained whenever state wants to purchase sod or seed in the form of grass.
- Bill hearing in January on House Bill 92 and the committee the bill was heard in has not yet voted on bill, but between farm bureau and grain producers they are working on amendments, bill not moving forward in its original form, and there will be follow up.
- Have seen a lot of bills move this session but still a few that are waiting to be reviewed and voted on.

Kevin Conroy:

- Pesticide disposal program, registration period of 6 months so from now to the middle of September.
- Pesticide inspection team will go out verify what has been submitted to us to take inventory and in the fall will do contract with a third party certified disposal company so team will come out to the farms collect on site and taken off for destruction.
- Pesticide registration program will be sending notices out and work with farm bureau to get word out.
- Give pesticide regulation a call, not sure what we will get in but have good amount of product and participants in previous years.
- Will have contractor come to site and pick it up. Don't want individuals putting it in their truck and driving it places.
- No cost for the services MDA is using their funds.

Julie Oberg:

- Governor did a press conference yesterday lifting a lot of the different requirements so effective Friday masking and distancing protocols are still maintained but outdoor and indoor venues can operate at 50%.
- Medical adult daycare centers are reopening
- Quarantine requirements are lifted although travel advisory remains in place.
- Masking orders remain in effect.
- State employees continue to telework.
- Governor's order authorizing the suspension of license and permitting expiration will sunset on June 30th this year. This doesn't apply too much MDA as we have been issuing licenses and permits.

Steve Connelly:

- Sales closing date for crop insurance for spring seeding crops is March 15th.
- Encourage contract poultry growers to contact local FFA to sign up for CVFAP. 2 payments are on temporary hold for new administration review.
- Deadline extended 30 days.
- Had two separate cases of equine herpes virus.

- Horse at Laurel Park displayed symptoms. The horse was taken to Marion DuPont Scott Equine Medical Center in Leesburg Virginia and was given treatments and was confirmed that the horse had a wild strain of herpes virus 1.
- Work with track vet and horse race commission and state vet. We put a hold order on 4 barns at Laurel Park for 14 days. The hold is removed after 14 days if no other horses show symptoms of the disease.
- One of our strongest encouragements is to use really strong and careful biosecurity so we don't transfer this virus to any other horses at Laurel Park
- Great cooperation from horse men at Laurel Park including the racing commission.
- Separate situation in Cecil county, horse showed signs of symptoms, private vet began treatment and horse was not responding to the treatment. Unfortunately, the horse was euthanized and samples taken, hold order on farm for 14 days to observe other horses.

Joe Bartenfelder:

- Poultry growers that had no land plans and farmers that want to receive poultry manure - Hans is moving along at a fast pass to get everything worked out and completed for the manure storage structures on receiving farms that can take poultry manure and spread it and use it could be in place within a month.
- Pesticide recycle program is up as of March 8th online for those unneeded, unused, unwanted and outdated pesticides which is good news for the farm community and welcome news for the environmental friends.
- Working with MDE on state wide tire pick up program as well as plastic.
- The tire program will start this year and we are working with DBM on resources we need for the plastic pickups work.
- Hans will discuss manure storage structures for receiving farms.
- Have little less than a month on the legislative session.
- The pesticide regulation program is on the MDA website.

Hans Schmidt:

- Out of results and suggestions from PMT advisory committee we are moving forward with cost shares through the max program and before we could get to this stage we had to change some regulation to make that allowance.
- We got the regulations changed through AELR and we have been working steady with NRCS to come up with the standards that can fit within the max program.
- One thing to keep in mind is when we are using bond funds they must meet an NRCS standard and under the NRCS language there needs to be a resource concern.
- Working with NRCS and have sent over recommendations and suggestions we hope and are close to having something finalized.
- This is a priority for the administration.
- This is for manure storage buildings that could be for receiving farms that take poultry litter and they could be in a position to take poultry litter year round.
- This makes an allowance so they can ship the litter and makes things more manageable for the sending and receiving farm.
- Had a farmer meeting about 6 weeks ago to discuss the benefits of poultry litter and had talks from farmers including a discussion from Dr. Nicole Peralexa.
- Not going to be like Delaware where you can only have poultry manure on fields for 90 days. The ability to stock pile in fields is not going to change.
- Farmers are still able to stock pile manure in the fields.

- We are moving progressively with staffing recruitments. We did our 2nd recruitment and our goal is to get positions filled by May 1st. We have filled about 18 positions through the 1st recruitment and there will possibly be a 3rd recruitment.
- Have to take hat off to HR department.
- Staffing for soil conservation districts, addressing the need for farmers putting conservation practices on their ground, conservation planning, engineering and designing best management practices that farmers can use. This is for additional staffing to be used out in the soil conservation districts.
- Also fill positions in WIP verifiers and these positions are important for Maryland agriculture to verify practices that are on farms and practices that have been cost share but those agreements have expired and make sure that those practices are still functioning so we get credit within the WIP model, and also verify practices that farmers have paid out of pocket.
- Everything we can to stay on course and meet our WIP goals
- Approved three new filter practices within the max program, finalized standards and a press release will be going out soon.
- Also working on a fourth practice which is an expansion of fencing standards to make allowance for rotational grazing.
- Electronic EAIR introduced this year we had a few hiccups but things have been working well. We actually more than doubled our expectation for farmers to use the electronic version for recording air.
- We are working closely with contractor to fix any problems in the system.

Jason Schellhardt:

- Next week is Ag literacy week so we have been working with MAEF to have some virtual reading events at schools.
- March 23rd National Ag Day, Secretary Bartenfelder will be part of a virtual panel with Hereford High School to talk about agriculture and legislation.
- Production on season 9 of farm and harvest is under way.

Steve McHenry:

- 2 million from governor for relief act.
- Launched 6 new programs with this funding and one other with other funding.
- Making grants expand the capacity from local meat processors in the state 100,000 with 75% match for livestock processors to expand capacity.
- Hope this helps with the back log from slaughter facilities around state.
- Very helpful grant program 225,000 30% cost share for grain product processing companies.
- Some grants for struggling oyster and urban farmers.
- Money for farmers markets.
- Need for cold storage facilities. Putting in a 50/50 cost share program up to 15,000 to add cold storage equipment to their operation.
- Applications due April 1st.
- Matching grant program with USDA value added producer grant.
- USDA will make grants of up to 250,000 for working capital and MARBIDCO has a 15% matching grant program.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 am respectfully submitted by: Jessica O'Sullivan

