



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maryland Farm Bureau Hosted 101st Annual Convention

Davidsonville, MD (December 7, 2016) – The Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) held its 101st Annual Convention from December 4-6 at The Clarion Resort Hotel in Ocean City with over 500 voting delegates, members and guests in attendance.

“Our members reflected on our accomplishments and planned for the next year of promoting and protecting Maryland agriculture and rural life,” said Chuck Fry, President of MFB. “We welcomed new county Farm Bureau Presidents and state Board members and gave thanks to outgoing county Presidents and state Board members.”

The three-day convention featured presentations, awards, elections and discussions to educate members on Farm Bureau activities and the agricultural industry. MFB President Chuck Fry, Nationwide Insurance Board member Ken Davis, the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Joe Bartenfelder, Dean of the University of Maryland’s College of AGNR Dr. Beyrouthy, and Miss Maryland Agriculture Megan Millison addressed the members. Comedian and magician Lyndy Phillips gave the keynote address about why we need to laugh more and stress less to live a better life. Johnna Miller of AFBF spoke to the MFB Young Farmers Committee about social media advocacy and Chris Fresko of Fresko Enterprises spoke to the MFB Women’s Leadership Committee about giving children in school effective messages about agriculture.

Breakout sessions were held Monday on topics from solar energy and nutrient trading to wildlife management and family firearms trusts. During the business sessions on Monday and Tuesday, Farm Bureau voting delegates from all 23 counties reviewed the organization’s policy on issues pending before government. The 2017 policy positions that were adopted by the delegate body will provide direction for the Farm Bureau lobbying team in Annapolis and Washington.

MFB held a live auction on Monday night to benefit Farm Bureau’s Scholarship Fund. There were 23 items, one donated from each member county. The live auction raised a total of \$7,900 for the Scholarship Fund. Bidding also included being the “Featured Farm” in the lobby of the new Davidsonville office. Chuck and Paula Fry of Rocky Point Farm and Creamery won the bidding for Featured Farm at \$2,000, which will go towards retiring the building’s mortgage debt. The Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee raised over \$150 for the Maryland Food Bank through the “Freezin’ for a Reason” fundraiser on Monday night. Zach Evans of MidAtlantic Farm Credit raised the most money and took a swim in the ocean on Monday night to show his appreciation to the donors.

Awards were presented to the following members and Nationwide agents at the annual convention:

- 2016 Young Farmer Discussion Meet: Jessica Flores of Wicomico County
- 2016 Young Farmer Collegiate Discussion Meet: Gabrielle Cory of St. Mary's County
- 2016 Silver Bowl Awards: Calvert County and Anne Arundel County
- 2016 Distinguished Service to Farm Bureau Award: Earl Griffith of Anne Arundel County
- 2016 Nationwide Agent: Robert Stastny of Baltimore County
- 2016 Nationwide Farm Agencies: William Staples Insurance Agency Inc. in Wicomico County and Nelson Insurance in Somerset County

Jessica Flores will travel to the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) annual convention in Phoenix, AZ from January 6-11, 2017 to represent Maryland in the national Young Farmer Discussion Meet. Gabrielle Cory will travel to the AFBF Young Farmers conference in Pittsburgh, PA from February 10-13, 2017 to represent Maryland in the national Collegiate Young Farmers Discussion Meet. Both Young Farmers received a YETI cooler from Maryland Farm Bureau and have the opportunity to win a GMC truck or a Case IH tractor at the AFBF competitions.

The Silver Bowl Awards were presented to the counties with the best overall programs for 2016 based on the judge's scores for the County Awards of Excellence in all 7 program areas. We recognized two counties this year; a winner in the smaller county Farm Bureaus with less than 900 members and a winner in the larger county Farm Bureaus with 900+ members. Calvert won in the smaller county category and Anne Arundel won in the larger county category.

The Distinguished Service to Farm Bureau Award is presented to a dedicated member of MFB who helps on both the county and state Farm Bureau levels with events, membership, legislative issues, and more. Earl Griffith was nominated for this award by members of the Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau.

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Maryland Farm Bureau is a private, non-profit membership organization. It is controlled by its members through the democratic process and is financed by voluntary membership dues. Its strength comes from the active participation of over 36,000 member families that belong to the state's 23 county Farm Bureaus. For more than 100 years, Maryland Farm Bureau has served to promote and protect Maryland agriculture and rural life.