



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maryland Farmers Attend National Farm Bureau Convention in Phoenix

Davidsonville, MD (January 12, 2017) – Over 40 Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) officers, members and staff attended the 2017 American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Annual Convention in Phoenix, AZ from January 6-10. More than 5,000 Farm Bureau leaders from all 50 states collaborated to vote on national policy, learn about new Ag trends and technologies, compete for Young Farmer & Rancher awards and celebrate agriculture in the U.S.

AFBF President Zippy Duvall reflected on his first year as president during the General Session. He pointed to policy wins in getting a GMO labelling bill passed and a Supreme Court victory over the EPA releasing farmers' private information under the Freedom of Information Act. He says the AFBF Annual Convention theme, unity, highlighted the importance of everyone in agriculture coming together.

"I think our biggest challenge is going to be being unified when we go forward with a farm bill," said Duvall. "And we have to find common ground in that to make sure everyone has that safety net that covers them."

Chuck Fry, president of Maryland Farm Bureau, was re-elected to the AFBF Board for a two-year term, representing the Northeast Region. He was also nominated to the AFBF Executive Committee and addressed convention attendees at the Closing Session on Monday.

"In a demonstration of the power of a unified effort, President Duvall challenged members to use mobile devices to contact members of Congress on the need for regulatory reform," explained Chuck Fry. "In just 5 minutes during the General Session, over 1,000 emails were sent to Capitol Hill, setting the stage for what our farmers hope is a productive year in Congress."

Jessica Flores of Wicomico County represented Maryland in the Young Farmers Discussion Meet Competition and made it to the Sweet 16 round. The discussion meet topics in the first round were about ensuring farmers are driving the management of natural resources instead of government agencies and how farmers can maintain ownership of intellectual and proprietary information. The topic in the Sweet 16 round was about the purpose of food labels and how Farm Bureau can work to ensure that consumers understand the labels.

We are happy to have recommended the University of Maryland Agriculture Law Education Initiative as a resource for workshops at the convention. Extension Legal Specialist Sarah Everhart and Research Assistant Mayhah Suri lead a workshop titled, *Utilizing a Farm Business Organization to Limit Liability*

and Plan for the Future. Extension Legal Specialists Ashley Ellixson and Paul Goeringer lead a workshop titled, *Preparing to Manage the Crisis Before the Crisis.*

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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.