



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maryland Farmers Attend National Convention in Orlando

Davidsonville, MD (January 15, 2016) – Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) officers, members and staff attended the 2016 American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Annual Convention in Orlando, FL from January 8-12. 6,000 Farm Bureau leaders from all 50 states collaborated to vote on national policy, elect a new President and Vice President, learn about new Ag trends and technologies, compete for Young Farmer & Rancher awards and celebrate agriculture in the U.S.

Maryland was well represented in the competitions at the AFBF convention. Michael Calkins of Howard County participated in the Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet competition. Michael and representatives from three other states discussed new technologies for producers and getting the public to support right-to-farm laws. Michael is a Soil Conservation Planner and Stormwater Management Specialist for the Howard Soil Conservation District. Along with his wife, Ali, they manage a horse riding and training business.

Jamie Tiralla of Calvert County participated in the Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture competition. This honor is to recognize those Farm Bureau members who do not earn the majority of their income from farming. Jamie presented her application at the AFBF convention, focusing on her transition from suburban living to the farm and how she balances her career, family and farming. Jamie is the Creative Director for an advertising agency in Baltimore. She and her husband, Benson, live on a 115-acre farm with their two children, Caroline and Henry. They raise grass-fed beef, lamb and goat, as well as pork and sell their meats at a farmers market.

Jeremiah and Janelle Weddle of Washington County participated in the Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement competition. This honor is presented to one Farm Bureau member from each state who earns the majority of their income from farming. They attended the AFBF convention to represent Maryland in the Achievement category. The couple co-owns and operates Creek Bound Farms, LLC and produce corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and small grain forages on the 2,500 acre farm. They also raise 350 replacement heifers.

After sixteen dedicated years of service as President of the American Farm Bureau Federation, Bob Stallman of Texas retired and Zippy Duvall of Georgia was elected as the new President during the final day of convention. Scott VanderWal of South Dakota was also elected as the new AFBF Vice President, taking the place of former VP Barry Bushue of Oregon.

“I am honored to begin serving alongside you all as the new president of the American Farm Bureau Federation,” said Duvall. “For almost a century, AFBF has been the leading voice of agriculture, standing up for farmers and ranchers across our great country. But the real strength of Farm Bureau is our active grassroots membership. Like you, I learned a long time ago that I’d have to step outside my fencerows if I wanted to have a say in the matters affecting my farm. You are the backbone of the organization, and together we can address the toughest issues facing U.S. agriculture in 2016.”

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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 the last 100 years, Maryland Farm Bureau has served to promote and protect Maryland agriculture and rural life.