



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Maryland Farmers Share Ag and Food-Related Businesses in Hopes to Win Startup Funds**

Davidsonville, MD (August 18, 2016) – Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) is proud to announce seven members submitted agriculture or food-related businesses to the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) 2017 Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge.

The Farm Bureau® Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge, now in its third year, is the first national business competition focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs working on food and agriculture businesses. Rural entrepreneurs pitch innovative business ideas to a team of judges with expertise in business development and agribusiness. These entrepreneurs are competing for a total of \$145,000 of startup funds.

“We are excited to see our members determined to grow their businesses and support the food and agriculture industry,” said Chuck Fry, President of MFB. “These new entrepreneurship ideas are what keep farming fun, innovative and successful in Maryland and the U.S.”

To be eligible, applicants needed to be current Farm Bureau members and have a for-profit business related to agriculture or food. The seven Maryland submissions were:

- Chesapeake Malting Company, led by Aaron Hopkins in Havre de Grace. Chesapeake Malting Company is “a farm malting operation looking to supply Maryland breweries with locally grown, high quality malted barley and other grains. We aim to open a new outlet for local farmers and bridge the gap from 'grain to glass.”
- Free State Cooperage, led by Alice Blayne-Allard in Crownsville. Free State Cooperage “produces high quality, custom-crafted American white oak barrels for the craft spirits and wine industries. Liberating artisans one barrel at a time.”
- Hometown Harvest, led by Tony Brusco in Frederick. Hometown Harvest is “the Farmers Market... Delivered. Farmer Owned and operated and working with over 150 local farmers to provide all of the produce, meats, breads, seafood directly to the over 2000 customers. We are creating new innovative ways get more local food into the hands of consumers.”
- Morning Song Vineyard, led by Susan Savage in Stockton. Morning Song Vineyard is “committed to creating the highest quality wine at a reasonable price, while considering the needs of the people in the local area. Our focus will be on providing a relaxing, encouraging, beautiful atmosphere for people to purchase and enjoy high quality wine.”
- South Mountain MicroFARM, led by Levi Sellers in Boonsboro. South Mountain MicroFARM is “a 30 year old Christmas Tree Farm now adding the year round production of environmentally

friendly, sustainably grown, healthy fish and produce. We provide not only products but family experiences and educational opportunities to help to grow a better future.”

- The Federal Brewing Company, led by Gayle Galbraith in Federalsburg. The Federal Brewing Company is “a nano-batch microbrewery, producing craft beer and kombucha, a refreshing and slightly tangy, fermented probiotic tea. Fed Brew offers on-site fermentation and wellness education workshops incorporating traditional food preparation methods that make functional foods affordable.”
- T’s Divine Sweets & More, LLC, led by Tamara Jackson in Cambridge. T’s Divine Sweets & More, LLC has “created a line of over 40 soups and desserts that give restaurants, institutions, and churches a 'garden fresh' option. Our products are always fresh, never frozen. We believe that 'fresh is best!' We welcome the community to 'taste the difference!'”

The top 10 submissions will be announced in October. Four finalists will compete in a live competition in front of judges and audience at the AFBF Annual Convention in January 2017 in Phoenix, AZ.

To learn more about AFBF’s Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge, visit [www.strongruralamerica.com/challenge](http://www.strongruralamerica.com/challenge). To join Maryland Farm Bureau, visit [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com) or call 410-922-3426.

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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.