

Maryland Farm Bureau
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A Maryland Farm Bureau Publication

Summer 2016

Maryland Farm Bureau State Issues of Concern

By Colby Ferguson

Each year, Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) Government Relations staff review the legislative session and determine if there are issues that need to be addressed. This year, we summarized three issues of concern for county Farm Bureaus to discuss and determine any policy needed to address these issues. Below is a summary of the three topics.

1. Commercial Solar Energy Facilities on Agricultural Zoned Land

Maryland Farm Bureau has been very vocal on the subject of commercial solar facilities and their encroachment on prime and productive farm land. However, there is no formal policy on commercial solar facilities on private land. During the 2016 legislative session, the Maryland Legislature passed a bill that increases Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) from 20% renewables by 2022 to 25% renewables by 2020. Currently, Maryland sources about 12.5% of its energy from renewables. This means that Maryland energy suppliers will need to double the amount of renewable energy provided in just 3.5 years.

In addition to the RPS increase, the solar generation carve-out was increased from 2% to 4% of the total. This means that of the 25% renewable sources, 4% must come from solar. All of these changes means that commercial solar energy production is as viable as it has ever been in Maryland. With that increased value, solar companies are searching all over the state looking for sites to install these large facilities. The easiest and cheapest source of property for these sites is agricultural land. Here is our current policy on solar energy:

We encourage research, development and utilization of alternative energy sources from methane, biomass, wind, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, hydro and clean natural gas. '08

We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and turbines to help offset farm energy costs. '10

We encourage solar energy facilities constructed on public lands to be built in a manner to allow for continued agricultural production (i.e. raise them up to allow grazing, cropping, mowing etc.). '14

We oppose commercial solar energy facilities being considered as an agricultural activity and receiving the same exemptions as an agricultural structure or agland. '14

We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility. '14

We oppose the State of Maryland preemption of local and county land use policy for renewable energy generation projects. '15

Should Maryland Farm Bureau have policy with guidelines on how commercial solar facilities are built on private owned Ag land? Should MFB oppose or support commercial solar energy facilities on privately owned Ag land?
Continued on page 5



Chesapeake Bay Farm & Food

A Maryland Farm Bureau Publication

Summer 2016



Download the Maryland Farm Bureau mobile app for more information, updates, local produce and membership benefits!



Do you have a produce stand, winery, creamery, you-pick feild or agri-tourism event on your farm? List your information in our Farm Bureau directory! All MFB members can be included for no cost and the information is available to the public. Call us at 410-922-3426 or email Katie Ward at kward@mdfarmbureau.com to be added. We need your name, farm/business name, phone number, address, website and details about what you offer the public.



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A Message from the President

Dear Farm Bureau Member,

I just returned from a meeting of the Northeast Farm Bureau Presidents & Administrators. We sit down annually to discuss member and leadership development programs. We report on policy issues that impact our states and we share ideas to improve our Farm Bureaus.

Since most of the northeast Farm Bureaus have dairy as a major commodity, there was a lot of discussion about the low prices and high feed costs. Farm milk prices dropped by forty percent since 2014. The nation's cheese stocks are at record high levels. Current expectation is that the dairy market will continue to struggle in the months ahead.

Most farmers across the region are frustrated with the Margin Protection Program. The primary complaints have to do with the cost of buy-up premiums and the national average feed costs used in calculations, which are much lower than feed costs in the northeast.

Recently, a letter was sent by members of Congress to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack asking for help. The letter, signed by Senator Mikulski and Congressmen Harris and Delaney from Maryland, urges the Secretary to take action through the Commodity Credit Corporation to improve the market and provide financial assistance to support U.S. dairy farmers. Farm Bureau urges immediate action.

During my Maryland state report, I shared our new direct mail campaign. 15,000 direct appeals were sent at the end of July to farmers, Ag professionals, restaurant owners and consumers. We told them about Farm Bureau and asked them to join us to help protect the land, jobs and the communities through farming and education in our Keep Maryland Farms First campaign. The campaign will continue throughout the year to build our membership base.

I returned from the regional meeting with a renewed sense of purpose for our efforts to protect farmers, big and small, across all sectors of our industry. Working together, through Farm Bureau, we can make a difference. We can keep Maryland Farms First!

Sincerely,
Charles E. Fry
President, Maryland Farm Bureau



Changes to the 2018 Farm Bill

By Colby Ferguson

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) has started the process of reviewing the current 2014 Farm Bill and determining what changes need to be made for the 2018 Farm Bill. Maryland Farm Bureau would like to be more active in this process. However, we need to know what the issues are and what the solutions to those issues would be from our members. Please think about the current federal programs that are funded by the Farm Bill and determine if there are areas that need to be changed, like the dairy industry, crop insurance, FSA programs, specialty crops, etc. Here are some of the major issues the AFBF Farm Bill workgroup has already identified:

- What options should be considered to ensure dairy producers have a more robust safety net than that provided through the Margin Protection Program?
- What can be done about the expected low budget baseline to ensure a safety net for commodity program crops?
- What kinds of new programs could be surfaced for program crop producers given WTO constraints?
- Do we need to revisit base and/or yield acreage updates?
- Should we have more policy clarity regarding our position and/or options for farmers on the use of generic acres?
- Do we need to take a hard look at the baseline for peanuts and reconsider that commodity's safety net?
- Do we want to increase or decrease the 24 million acre cap in the Conservation Reserve Program?
- The vast majority of the conservation title funding is comprised of the Conservation Reserve Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Do we want to prioritize these conservation programs?

Based off of these questions and your knowledge of the current 2014 Farm Bill programs, please submit your ideas for possible changes to the 2018 Farm Bill. Maryland Farm Bureau has been asked to submit our responses to AFBF by the end of September so they have time to craft a summary to present to the AFBF Board and to the State Delegates at the AFBF Annual Convention in January 2017. To submit corrections, changes and/or programs to retain for the 2018 Farm Bill, please either email them to Colby Ferguson at cferguson@mdfarmbureau.com or mail to Maryland Farm Bureau, Attn: Colby Ferguson 3358 Davidsonville Road Davidsonville, MD 21035.

Nationwide Farm 201 Focuses on Farm Insurance Coverage

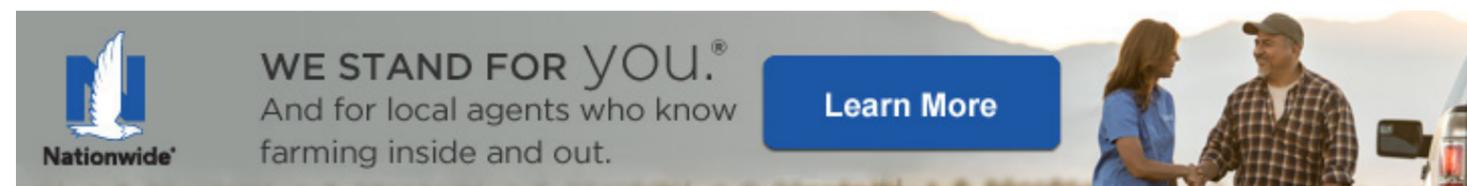
By Katie Ward

Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide Insurance have been partners in agriculture for more than 85 years, providing insurance discounts to Farm Bureau members. But this partnership is more than just saving money; it brings farmers and land owners together and educates them about farm safety, land transition planning, driving on rural roads, and much more.

We have offered a farm insurance seminar by Nationwide to our members for a few years, named Farm 101. This course explains what is covered for your home, contents, farm personal property, farm structures, liability, and how to tailor your policy to work best with your operation. Nationwide farm agents present this seminar at county Farm Bureau meetings and picnics to let our members know what they can get from their insurance policy through this partnership. After gaining feedback from Farm Bureau members, Nationwide has enhanced their insurance seminar and renamed it Farm 201, providing more specific information that you have requested. Farm 201 dives into how to avoid sacrificing coverage when the agriculture economy dips. They recommend reevaluating your values, like buildings and equipment, each year.

"It's important for us, as agents, to come out and visit your farm to see how your business operates and make sure there isn't anything left out of your policy," said Buddy Cahall, a Nationwide agent who presented at the Queen Anne's County Farm Bureau picnic this summer.

For more information about the partnership between Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide Insurance, visit mdfarmbureau.com/insurance. To join Maryland Farm Bureau, call 410-922-3426 or go to mdfarmbureau.com.



Upcoming Events

August

- 8/19: Harford County Farm Bureau Picnic, Clear Meadow Farm, 6:30 pm
- 8/21: Dorchester County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Extension Office, 7 pm
- 8/22: Farm 101 Presentation, Washington County Ag Education Center, 6:30 pm
- 8/23: Allegany County Policy Development and WLC picnic, Allegany Fair Grounds, 6:30 pm
- 8/24: Garrett County Farm Bureau Policy Development, Garrett College, 6:30 pm
- 8/26: Miss Maryland Agriculture Dinner & Contest, Maryland State Fair Cow Palace, 7 pm
- 8/26-9/5: Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmer's Dairy Bar, Maryland State Fair, 11 am-11 pm

September

- 9/6: Caroline County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Williams Building, 6:30 pm
- 9/13: Kent County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Extension Office, 7 pm
- 9/16: Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmer's Orioles Game Fundraiser, Camden Yards, 7 pm
- 9/17: Montgomery County Farm to Table Dinner, Maryland Meadows Farm, 4 pm
- 9/27: Howard County Farm to Table Dinner, Circle D Farm, 6 pm

October

- 10/1: Taste of Worcester County, Most Blessed Sacrament School, 5 pm
- 10/3: Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Maryland Farm Bureau building, 7 pm
- 10/6-7: GOAL Western Maryland event, location TBD
- 10/17: Maryland Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Meeting, Eastern Shore location TBD
- 10/17: Baltimore County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Baltimore Ag Center, 6 pm
- 10/17: Cecil County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Extension Office, 7 pm
- 10/19: Worcester County Annual Meeting
- 10/20: Garrett County Farm Bureau Fall Banquet, Bittinger Mennonite Church
- 10/25: Allegany County Farm Bureau Fall Banquet, Allegany County Fairgrounds Multipurpose Building

Maryland Farm Bureau 101st Annual Convention: December 4-6, Ocean City, MD

American Farm Bureau 98th Annual Convention: January 6-11 2017, Phoenix, AZ


**The Board of Directors of
The Maryland State Fair and Agricultural Society
and
The Miss Maryland Agriculture Committee**

invite you to attend



an unFAIRgettable evening....
Celebrating 77 Years of Young Women and Maryland Agriculture!

with special appearances by
The Peterson Farm Brothers

Friday, August 26, 2016
Maryland State Fair - Cow Palace Show Arena
 Doors Open 6:45 p.m.
 Plated Dinner 7 p.m.
 Miss MD Agriculture Contest 8 p.m.

Menu:
 Terp Farm Salad, MD Raised Beef, Crab Cake,
 Locally Grown Green Beans, Fingerling Potatoes,
 Roll & Butter, Fresh Local Peach Sundae

\$25 Per Person \$200 Table Of Eight
R.S.V.P. by August 12, 2016


**Miss Maryland Agriculture
an unFAIRgettable evening...**


Celebrating 77 Years of Young Women and Maryland Agriculture!
 7 p.m. Friday, August 26, 2016
 Maryland State Fair - Cow Palace Show Arena

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I/we need _____ Tickets at \$25 each or _____ Tables at \$200
Please list names of those attending on back of card.

Thank you for your support of the Miss Maryland Agriculture Program.
 Please return completed card and payment to Maryland State Fair Inc. By Aug. 12, 2016
 2200 York Rd. Timonium, MD 21093
 Questions call 410-252-0200 ext. 224


**Miss Maryland Agriculture
an unFAIRgettable evening...**


Celebrating 77 Years of Young Women and Maryland Agriculture!

Guest List

Name: _____

Issues of Concern continued from page 1

2. Wedding/Event Venues Allowed on Farms

As Maryland farmers either transition from one generation to the next or a new farmer purchases a farm, the need to diversify that operation has become more and more vital to the success of the farm business. In addition to diversification, finding ways to get consumer involvement in the farm has become a viable source of income on today's farm operations. Some of those consumer interactions have been through retaining ownership in the farm crop and selling it directly to the consumer. Others have found bringing the consumer/customer to the farm has been a profitable venture. However, when the farm is opened to the public, unintended issues like traffic, noise, injury and property damage can occur.

Agritourism activities are fairly well defined in both state and county zoning laws with the agritourism activities revolving directly around the Ag crops being grown on the farm. But there is a growing movement for customers wanting to use the open setting of a farm's seclusion and private nature for corporate and family events, like weddings. Some people have discussed if these event venues on farms should be considered agritourism events.

Here is our current policy on Agritourism:

We support agritainment as an acceptable use of agricultural land. '13

Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the public or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in the farm operation. '14

Should MFB amend current Agritourism policy to specifically include event/wedding venues? Should MFB create policy that specifically addresses event/wedding venues on private owned Ag land?

3. Oyster Aquaculture: Restoration/Expansion and Creation of Oyster Bars in Maryland Rivers and Streams

During the 2016 legislative session, Maryland Farm Bureau was added to the Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council. The Aquaculture Coordinating Council was created to promote the development of an aquaculture industry in the State and be responsible for supporting policy development resulting from stakeholder input. The council's duties are to develop Best Management Practices, review regulations and recommend changes, make proposals for advancing the industry, enhance area available for private lease, and provide for Aquaculture Enterprise Zones. Because of this new appointment, Maryland Farm Bureau has been asked to assist with helping make decisions on aquaculture farming. Oyster aquaculture has shown to be extremely valuable to removing excess Nitrogen from water bodies. We all know that water quality and nutrient removal are priorities of Maryland. Our farmers are doing their part to prevent nutrient runoff. However, the Bay will not clean itself without a viable and healthy shellfish population. Studies show that a properly managed and harvested oyster bar improves water quality while controlling disease that kills the oysters. MFB has very limited policy on aquaculture. With new options being offered, we need better guidance on what to support and promote. Here is our current policy on Aquaculture and Aquatic Resources - Seafood:

Aquaculture is a branch of agriculture and all applicable regulations shall be a function of MDA. DNR, as a regulatory agency, shall be removed from control of all aquaculture products and production regardless of location. All current DNR laws and regulations affecting aquaculture shall be referred to MDA for modification and implementation as agricultural laws and regulations. Restrictions and policies implemented by DNR relating to the management of wild aquatic resources shall not infringe in any manner on aquaculture activities. '15

We recommend legislation be developed to prohibit clam rigs and other equipment (which disturb or have the potential to destroy submerged aquatic vegetation, and which is used for the capture of wild aquatic life) from operating within 300 feet of the shoreline and the same distance from SAV in other areas. '05

We recognize that Blue Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are a highly valuable resource for both commercial and recreational activities. Regulations controlling this fishery should be managed through modern data collection and sound science, with input from all stakeholders as well as the Bi-State Blue Crab Technical Committee and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. '06

The movement of oyster spat and adult oysters by the Department of Natural Resources from one area in the Chesapeake Bay to another area shall not be done until such time as a site specific testing of the animals to be moved has been completed by an independent laboratory within 30 days prior to the proposed movement. In the event a determination is made that oyster spat and oysters are not disease-free, they shall not be moved as such movement of the animals creates stress, and survivability of spat moved is poor. '07

Should MFB weigh in on state policy recommendations that would allow Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for Maryland to meet its water quality goals? If so, do we support this practice? Should MFB support the Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council's recommendations that provide science-based guidance on how shellfish aquaculture should be managed?

Featured Maryland Farm Bureau Membership Benefits



Receive free next-day shipping and discounts with Staples Advantage. Register with your Farm Bureau membership.



Save up to 80% at Office Depot and Office Max online and in-store with your Farm Bureau discount.



Save \$500 on all purchased or leased GM vehicles at participating dealerships. Now including 2017 models.

Visit www.mdfarmbureau.com/benefits to see all current discounts.



County Farm Bureau Membership Report

(Based on Membership year July 1, 2015-June 1, 2016)

County Farm Bureau Membership Goals are based upon voting members, represented in the second column. The third column reports the total members paid, including both voting and associates.

If you need to renew your Farm Bureau membership, call 410-922-3426, ask your regional field representative for a form to mail in, or go online to www.mdfarmbureau.com.

We would like to congratulate the following county Farm Bureaus for making their 2016 membership goals:

Anne Arundel	Howard
Baltimore	Kent
Carroll	Prince George's
Cecil	St. Mary's
Charles	Somerset
Frederick	Talbot
Garrett	Washington
Harford	

County	YTD Voting Members Paid	YTD All Members Paid
Allegany	95	184
Anne Arundel	784	4,625
Baltimore	325	6,010
Calvert	251	840
Caroline	420	790
Carroll	786	1,921
Cecil	364	973
Charles	214	1,312
Dorchester	265	699
Frederick	975	2,340
Garrett	154	268
Harford	379	1,962
Howard	209	1,528
Kent	260	381
Montgomery	287	4,306
Prince George's	232	3,455
Queen Anne's	295	647
St. Mary's	310	817
Somerset	241	433
Talbot	261	694
Washington	273	781
Wicomico	354	941
Worcester	227	621
Maryland Totals	7,961	36,555

Farm Bureau at the 2016 Maryland State Fair: Miss Maryland Agriculture Contest & Young Farmers Dairy Bar

The Miss Maryland Agriculture Contest has been a part of the Maryland State Fair since the 1930's and its mission has remained the same: "Surfacing young women with an agricultural background to serve as leaders to promote our industry and the Farm Bureau organization throughout the year and in the future."

Eligible participants include ladies between the ages of 16 and 19 who are either Maryland Farm Bureau members or their families are members in good standing of one of our 23 county FarmBureaus. During the State Fair, contestants participate in a two-day contest consisting of professional interviews, round table discussions and our on-stage contest. They are judged by out-of-state judges on their ag and Farm Bureau knowledge, presentation and speaking ability. Contestants are provided with a variety of opportunities in agriculture education, career preparation and public relations to enhance their agricultural, professional and personal lives. The ladies are also given scholarships from the Miss Maryland Agriculture Contest to assist them as they continue to develop into leaders of our industry. Contestants give back to our community by visiting the Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore, working with the Maryland Food Bank and other organizations in the state throughout the year.

The 2016 contest will be held in the Cow Palace at the Maryland State Fair on August 26 at 8:00 pm. A plated dinner will be held before the contest at 7:00 pm and is open to the public. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased in advance by contacting Mary Amoss at MissMDAg@aol.com. See page 4 for more information about the dinner and contest.

2016 County Farm Bureau Misses

Allegany: Malakia May	Harford: Kimberly Doran
Anne Arundel: Jacqueline Bowen	Howard: TBD
Baltimore: TBD	Kent: TBD
Calvert: Lexy Stonestreet	Montgomery: Sara Lechliger
Caroline: Jamie Johansen	Prince George's: Lauren Cross
Carroll: Katelynn Shower	Queen Anne's: Hannah Story
Cecil: Nadine Sylva-Brown	St. Mary's: Madison Raley
Charles: Hayley Tanner	Somerset: TBD
Dorchester: Taylor Bradley	Talbot: Megan McCauley
Frederick: Megan Millison	Washington: Skyla Heise
Garrett: Bethany Meyers	Wicomico: Malinda Hurley
	Worcester: Tierra Watkins



Miss Maryland Agriculture 2015
Jenell Eck
Queen Anne's County

The Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmer's biggest fundraiser of the year is the Dairy Bar at Maryland State Fair. From August 25 - September 5, the "11 Best Days of Summer," the Young Farmers manage the Dairy Bar; selling ice cream, milkshakes and milk from 11 am - 11 pm. All of the money raised from Maryland State Fair helps support the activities of the Young Farmer program throughout the year. This includes trips to Leadership Conferences, AFBF Convention, educational workshops and much, much more.

Again this year we will feature 7 flavors from Hershey's Ice Cream; Vanilla, Chocolate, Butter Pecan, Mint Chocolate Chip, Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough, Cookies N' Cream, Moose Tracks and Peach. In an effort to support the local dairy industry within the state, the Dairy Bar features "Flavors of the Day," which is ice cream from Maryland creameries. We are happy to have the support of Kilby's, Rocky Point, Prigels and Keyes on board so far for 2016.



MFB President Chuck Fry at the Young Farmers Dairy Bar last year.

The success of the Dairy Bar would not be possible without all of the committed Young Farmer groups throughout the state who volunteer their time to this fundraiser. We hope to see many of you at the booth and in line to get ice cream in a few weeks!



The MARYLAND STATE FAIR