

OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM

Carroll County

Please describe a county program in depth that you feel is unique to your county.

This past year our board spent many hours trying to reach out to local companies to help sponsor the Ag Products Mobile Science Lab trailer through MAEF. Along with the daunting task to convince the Carroll County Public School Board to adjust their budget to also help implement the trailer into the elementary school curriculum. We were successful in finding an outstanding sponsorship through Lehigh Cement, based out of Union Bridge, MD. Getting the school board on board is still in the process but the outcome is looking extremely promising because we have already met with school officials and have started scheduling elementary schools for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. The school board, the Carroll County Farm Bureau and Lehigh Cement will each give \$6000 per year for the trailer to visit 8-10 elementary schools each school year for the next few years on a rotation.

The Ag products Mobile Science Lab Trailer has the ability to reach 5 classes of elementary school children every day, Monday-Friday, all school year long. There are about 3,975 elementary school classes and the average classroom size in Carroll County is 20.54 students. The cost of the trailer to educate approximately 220 students in a week is estimated to be \$1,800. With that knowledge, our \$18,000 has the potential to be at a Carroll County elementary school for 10 weeks, educating approximately 2,200 students each year. Though a drop in a bucket to the possible 81,500 students in the county, it is still a huge step in the right direction for expanding their agricultural knowledge and creating a better understanding of the trade.

The Ag Products Mobile Science Lab Trailer is a unique hands on experience for students to learn about capillary action, the environmental impact of petroleum, corn packing, how to make glue from milk, candling eggs, beeswax lip balm and cotton and wool fabrics along with other agriculture based material. The program provides an engaging curriculum that aligns with our county's common core, STEM and other school standards. The lesson doesn't end when the students leave the trailer, materials are provided to the teachers to extend the experience into the classroom.

The Carroll County Farm Bureau Board's ultimate goal is to provide a better and more innovative opportunity for students to learn about agriculture in school. Possibly reaching our middle school students as well in the future. We believe that reaching the younger audience and engaging them in a way that is more than paper and pencils will improve their understanding of all the agriculture that surrounds their everyday life. We also want to create a more promising way to keep ag in the classroom through sponsorships and funding. We all know a well-educated community heightens the chance of a better agricultural friendly community. Our students are the future of agriculture and we want to help them grow.

OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM

Frederick County

Please describe a county program in depth that you feel is unique to your county.

Many county Farm Bureau's are involved in their county fairs. They may sponsor events, volunteer, participate in the market sale, or judge a class, but Frederick County Farm Bureau does it all! We sponsor several different display & activity booths, assist with the cost of bussing over 5,000 school children in for an educational day, provide the MAEF mobile science lab for all 10 days of the fair, serve as tour guides and help with various other events.

The Great Frederick Fair has a building dedicated to Ag Education Awareness. It houses City Streets, Country Roads- consisting of many displays and interactive booths that promote agriculture to the general public. Farm Bureau is responsible for one of the booths, where we provide educational information throughout the fair. Over the span of four days when school children are bussed in and tours are available, we have volunteers who man the booth and offer kid-friendly, ag-related activities. Bus loads of school students attended the fair from Prince George's, Montgomery, Carroll and Washington counties. We have demonstrated making butter from scratch in an old-fashioned hand churn, allowing each child an opportunity to turn the crank. Each child and parent chaperone is given the directions to make butter at home in a jar. There is a display on common GMO foods we see in our everyday life where volunteers show what it would be like without genetic engineering. For example, they show what corn looked like years ago versus the ears that are produced today, as well as wormy apples compared to a beautiful GMO apple. This presentation was developed from information from AFBF provided at the 2016 AFBF convention in Orlando. Three different MFB brochures were on display for the taking at all times.

Frederick County Farm Bureau has a huge presence in the Farm and Garden Building. FCFB always has a table where we promote Farm Bureau and membership. We use the pop-up displays from MFB, as well as county-specific promotional items. At this display, we also offer fun kid-friendly activities on certain days when school children are touring. In the past, we have offered finger painting with "dippydot" paints for ag-themed coloring pages, stickers, stamps, ag-themed bookmarks to stamp or color, My-Plate fans to decorate with fruit and veggie stickers, and "commodity bracelets". There is also a "grow a soybean" necklace, pumpkin face plates, Garden Greenies, etc. This past year we also offered a photo booth. In order to use the photo booth, fairgoers were asked to provide their email address in return for the opportunity to take fun photos among the straw bales with a straw hat, animal masks, and fun ag-themed sayings. FCFB WLC members also have pie dough, ice cream, and pizza making demonstrations. They also had a two-foot felt super cheeseburger and a poster depicting the source of all ingredients used to make a cheeseburger. A spinning wheel of agricultural questions is available, as well as tub full of soybeans that kids can search for toy veggies in.

FCFB is the “Overall Sponsor” for the Great Frederick Fair’s Ag Ed program, as shown on the fair website. This program features 6 different tracks (“Spuddy Buddy”, “ One Foot, Two Foot, Bare Foot, Shoe Foot”, “It’s Fair Game”, “Fair in a Box”, “Ag...It’s What’s for Lunch!”, and the “Virtual Ag Education Tour”) shown through an educational tour of the fairgrounds. Farm Bureau is responsible for providing the tour guides who educate parents and students at the different areas. The areas include: The Milky Way (dairy education), sheep, goats, fiber, birthing center where fairgoers can see live animals being born, swine building, My Plate Garden, City Streets/Country Roads pavilion, Machinery Row, beef barn, equine area, garden building, poultry and rabbit building, 4-H & FFA building, household building, and the Grandstand and Fair history. The tours are for schoolchildren from pre-K to grade 5. All are welcome, including private and home-schooled kids. Part of Farm Bureau’s sponsorship goes towards bussing public school students in on “Fair Day”. A Board member and owner of Catoclin Mountain Orchard donates bushels of Gala apples each year. These are free for all fair participants in the Farm and Garden building.

A Chaperone Guide is provided, which is a comprehensive book outlining how parents can help guide their children through the fair. The guide, developed with help from the Farm Bureau, provides fun facts for each area of the fair. For example, if no guide is available at the Milky Way dairy exhibit, the parent chaperone would have pictures of the 6 major dairy breeds and characteristics, as well as basic info on why farmers choose the breeds they do.

Frederick County Farm Bureau is also responsible for securing the MAEF mobile science lab for all 10 days of the fair. Our Board of Directors and Women’s Leadership Committee split the cost to provide the trailer, which has thousands of people come through it during the duration of the fair.

OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM

Queen Anne's County

Please describe a County program in depth that you feel is unique to your county.

Agriculture Awareness Day Overview

The purpose of this science based agricultural education program was to educate all 7th graders in Queen Anne's County. In a day long structured program held at the Queen Anne's County 4-H Park the following agricultural topics were taught: technology, equipment, crops, aquaculture, nursery, produce, greenhouses, forestry, farm animals, and numerous agriculture myths were dispelled. 7th graders are getting ready for high school and beginning to think about career paths. Students were educated at each station about the many agricultural related careers.

The day was made possible through collaborations with University of Maryland Extension, Queen Anne's Soil Conservation District, Queen Anne's County Farm Bureau, Queen Anne's County Board of Education, Queen Anne's County Government, Queen Anne's County High School FFA, University of Maryland Wye Research and Education Center, Maryland Grain Producers, Oyster Recovery Partnership, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, USDA Farm Service Agency, Young Farmers, Upper Shore Regional Council, QACTV and many other volunteers in our community. The two-day program included over 70 volunteers teaching 700 seventh graders, chaperones and teachers. Results from the pre and post testing showed an increase in agricultural knowledge and dispelled several myths. A press release was prepared and sent to all county media sources. The YouTube video of the event can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAVVujkCIIM>

Summary

Agriculture is an industry that is misunderstood by many residents. In 2016 a coalition of educators, researchers, agencies, and grassroots organizations was formed to educate students in Queen Anne's County. The importance of agriculture and its 235 career options will be introduced to all students.

The partners created "Agriculture Awareness Day" for all 7th graders across the county. The Board of Education and school principals have been informed and are interested for their students to be educated about the importance of agriculture and the many career opportunities.

In a day long structured program we will cover the following aspects of agriculture; technology, equipment, crops, aquaculture, nursery, produce, greenhouses, forestry, farm animals, bees, and numerous agriculture myths. There are four middle schools in Queen Anne's County with 700 students, making this a two-day event.

The partners believe that 7th graders are the perfect age to learn about Maryland's number one industry and the numerous career options. The 7th graders will be excited to be out of the classroom and complete hands-on structured lessons, while allowing the students to understand

agriculture's importance in feeding the world and the truths of our industry. Lastly, the students will be educated about the 235 careers related to agriculture, which will open their eyes to the agriculture career pathway before high school. The awareness day may open the door for the students to join 4-H and FFA, which will encourage them to join other agriculture organizations after graduation.

As our county is transforming to a more urban population, our goal is to provide a venue to develop agriculture literate citizens. Each of our partners has their own diverse expertise and by joining together we can accomplish this goal. With the accomplishment of Agriculture Awareness Day in 2017 this will be an annual event.

These diverse careers need to be shared not only with students who enroll in agriculture classes but for all students before deciding on career pathways. With an Agriculture Awareness Day, this exposure will be made possible.

Not only will this experience educate students about careers in agriculture to fulfill jobs. It will also educate our chaperones and teachers on the importance of agriculture. "Occasionally in life you will need a doctor, lawyer, and preacher but three times a day, every day you need a farmer." These students will gain an understanding of where their food comes from and so much more. They will learn about technology the farmers use on his or her farm as well as the technology used in producing their crops and animals. The students will become aware of the essential needs for farm animals and the value of bees and food production. Next, the students will understand how farmers help the bay and the importance of aquaculture. Lastly, the importance of greenhouses, nurseries, landscaping, floriculture, produce and forestry will be taught.

Each student will participate in a 25-minute station about the three main grains grown in Queen Anne's County; corn, wheat, and soybeans. They will be able to touch and feel the grains, fill a grain jar and see the products and by-products they produce. The station will introduce them to career options such as, agronomy, laboratory technician, custom harvester, soil conservationist, plant pathologist, crop consultant, soil scientist, and food scientist.

Goals and measurable objectives

The main goal is to educate our future leaders about Maryland's number one industry. We will complete this through five main stations, each having their own objectives and school standards. To make the objectives measurable we will have a pre-test and post-test completed by all students.

Procedure to achieve objectives

1. Send pre-test to teachers, collect completed tests from teachers.
2. Centreville Middle School and Sudlersville Middle School attend the 1st day.
3. Stevensville Middle School and Matapeake Middle School attend the 2nd day.
4. Agriculture Awareness Day will be held at Queen Anne's County 4-H Park, bus transportation needs to be provided.

5. Media outlets will be asked to attend throughout the day to take pictures, and record the success of the event.
6. Students will be asked to bring a bagged lunch.
7. Students will be divided into 5 groups and rotate to all structured stations throughout the day.
8. The students will depart Agriculture Awareness Day to return to school and teachers will be able to administer a post-test to the students to determine what they learned.
9. Students will receive passports (books) to complete during the day, fill grain jars and a plant a plant.
10. Educators, agriculture employees, farmers, 4-Her's, FFA members and Farm Bureau members across the county will be asked to volunteer their time and share their knowledge.
11. Water will be available for all students throughout the day at each station.
12. May 29th will be a set-up and practice day for all the educators to run through their demonstrations. This will allow us to adjust any possible conflicts accordingly.
13. A detailed lesson plan with standards and objectives will be completed by all educators.

Schedule of Proposed Project

With 600 students in 7th grade, 40 chaperones, 24 teachers and 60 volunteers, we will be able to host this event rain or shine. There are enough buildings to hold all stations under a roof if it is raining. If it is not raining, we can have stations outside so the students can move around and enjoy the spring weather. We have a detailed schedule for stations, rotations and for lunch.

Overview of other projects

These ideas include a structured curriculum, teaching all aspects of agriculture, agriculture career awareness and a focus on one specific grade. The first year was such a success effectively educates students, teachers and chaperones. We would like Agriculture Awareness Day to become an annual educational field trip, with the possibility to be adopted by numerous other counties.

Evaluation

To see the effectiveness of agriculture awareness day, a pre-test and post-test will be completed by all students. Each presenter will provide questions from their stations including the main myth they dispelled about their topic. We are also asking for chaperones and teachers to attend stations and interact by helping and asking questions to keep the students actively involved.

OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM

Wicomico County

Please describe a County program in depth that you feel is unique to your county.

Deer Management Initiative

On July 30, 2018, three different farmers contacted our County President, Charles Wright IV, concerning deer crop damage. Two of these farmers were from Wicomico and one from Somerset. Due to these calls and other conversation with several other farmers Wicomico Farm Bureau started an action plan to address the deer damage within Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester Counties.

Wicomico Farm Bureau contacted Colby Ferguson, MFB, to ask for assistance from MFB in setting up a meeting with the three lower shore counties and representatives of Maryland DNR. Charles and Colby contacted Paul Peditto, Director of Wildlife & Heritage Service DNR, about our concerns and the wishes of farmers in the three lower shore counties. After a few days of communication, an August 16th meeting was scheduled with our farmers, MFB, Colby Ferguson and Trish Hildebrand, along with two representatives from DNR Wildlife Heritage Service (a program director and a deer management specialist). Our county President requested DNR to bring maps of each county that contained state and federal woodlands. These lands are for public hunting, leased hunting rights and preserved with no hunting. This idea proved critical later.

Several discussions were held between Wicomico FB & MFB before the meeting. On August 16th at 10am, we met in the Wicomico County Extension Office. Over fifty farmers packed the room along with MFB Colby Ferguson and Trish Hildebrand, and two DNR Wildlife Representatives. Charles explained the ground rules that the meeting would be organized, respectful, and each county would get their ideas heard. We used the maps of each county to identify "hot spots" for severe deer damage. Landowners were also in attendance as their rental value is affected by deer damage. Senator Jim Mathias and Delegate Charles Otto both attended the two-hour meeting. Both provided farmers insight on their role helping use through legislative and regulatory changes.

Once everyone was heard it was apparent that the worst deer damage is occurring around these state-owned lands. Other notes of concern:

- DNR is not managing deer or state owned land.
- DNR is not providing easy access to these properties.
- State forest land used to have many acres of food plots now these are near zero.
- The promotion of public hunting land by MD DNR is not adequate.

Wicomico Farm Bureau will continue to spear head the following initiatives along with Somerset and Worcester Counties:

- Have maps remade showing damaged acres.
- Start a Doe Harvest Challenge in the January rifle season that rewards hunters for shooting does.
- Work with our elected officials to back off funding for open space forest purchases on lower shore.
- Work with elected officials and DNR Wildlife to increase food plots within forested lands.
- Work with elected officials and DNR Wildlife to provide funds to enhance access to the center of these forested tracts by vehicle.

This meeting was a perfect example of how FB's grassroots system works. It was also interesting that over 95% of the farmers in attendance are FB members.