



#2: January 31, 2020

Dates to Remember:

Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis | Wednesday, February 12

- 8:30 AM - Legislative briefing at the Calvert House, 58 State Circle
- 10:00 AM - Sit in on Senate or House sessions or make office visits
- 11:45 AM - Lunch with legislators
- 1:00 PM - Sit in on committee hearings or make office visits

[Register here](#)



Welcome to the second Hotline of the 2020 Maryland General Assembly session. This week in Annapolis we joined the Maryland Department of Agriculture in supporting **SB 189**, a bill to ensure farmer's animals are being cared for in a safe and secure manner. We also joined Maryland State Fair in support of **SB 4** to ensure that current horse race tracks and off track betting (OTB) facilities will be eligible sites for sports betting. MFB finished the day supporting bipartisan legislation in the House to ban the mass release of balloons which in many cases litter farm fields and water ways.

The following bills will be heard next week:

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

HB225 - Gaming - Sports Wagering - Implementation
Delegate Ebersole, W&M at 1:00 PM in 130 HOB

The bill establishes that the General Assembly may authorize, by law, that the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission may issue a license to offer sports wagering in the State to a video lottery operation licensee or a licensee for thoroughbred racing or harness racing. The bill also provides the General Assembly's intent that, if the voter referendum is approved, State revenues generated by sports wagering be used for dedicated purposes, including public education. If this bill passes it will be sent to a referendum to be voted on during the 2020 general election.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: Any expansion into other forms of gambling such as table games and sports book similar to Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) should benefit the equine industry and agricultural education programs.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 225

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

SB286 - Crimes Against Animals - Interference With Livestock
Senator Hester, JPR at 2:00 PM in 2 East Miller

This bill expands the scope of current law that prohibits the interfering with, injuring, tampering with, or destroying a horse used for racing or breeding or for a competitive exhibition of skill, breed, or stamina by including all livestock instead of just horses. A person who violates this section of current law is guilty of a felony and on conviction is subject to imprisonment of not less than 1 year and not exceeding 3 years.

There have been several instances over the last few years where farmers and horse owners have had people interfere with their animals and cause undue harm and potential injury. Many cases have been around horse carriage rides and at county fairs. This bill would add these livestock to current state law that prohibits someone from doing these acts of violence.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We oppose animal rights activism that disrupts farming operations, agricultural activities on and off the farm, fairs, racetracks, livestock sales or research facilities. '18

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 286

Thursday, February 6, 2020

SB188 - Public Health - Misbranded Food - Meat Products
Senator Gallion, FIN at 1:00 PM in 3 East Miller

This bill adds language to existing law as it pertains to misbranded food products. This bill would make it illegal to label a food product as meat if the product is cell-based or derived from plants or insects.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We strongly support truth in labeling of food and food products. '14 We oppose production of synthetically produced 'meats' being labeled as meat. '19

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 188

Maryland Farm Bureau members are urged to contact their legislators and members of the relevant committees in support of Farm Bureau's positions on the bills listed above. To contact legislators, log on to the Maryland General Assembly [website](#) and select the "Legislators" Tab at the top.

Committees & Room Numbers:

Senate: Budget & Taxation (B&T), 3 West Miller; Education, Health & Environmental Affairs (EHEA), 2 West Miller; Finance (FIN), 3 East Miller; Judicial Proceedings (JPR), 2 East Miller

House: Appropriations (APP), 120 HOB; Economic Matters (ECM), 230 HOB; Environment & Transportation (E&T), 250 HOB; Health & Government Operations (HGO), 240 HOB; Judiciary (JUD), 100 HOB; Ways & Means (W&M) 130 HOB

In Other Ag News

Trucking Forums

Maryland Farm Bureau has trucking forums scheduled for Frederick and Wye Mills. All Maryland Farm Bureau members, farmers, and truck drivers are invited to this forum to discuss the issues facing farmers on rural roads and state highways. [Register here.](#)



MFB Scholarships



The Maryland Farm Bureau is awarding five \$2,000 scholarships for the 2020-2021 academic year. Applicants must be current high school seniors with plans to start college autumn semester 2020 or may be current full-time college students at any accredited community college or four-year institution. Applicants or their parents/guardians must be members, in good standing, of the Maryland Farm Bureau to be eligible to apply. Applications are due February 10, 2020. [Apply today!](#)

Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference 2020

Mark your calendars now for the AFBF 2020 YF&R Leadership Conference. There will be great speakers, breakout sessions and evening events to bring together Young Farmers & Ranchers volunteer leaders from across the United States. You'll leave the conference with new friends, new ideas and new energy for your farm and for your Farm Bureau. [Register today.](#)



USMCA Signing Increases Optimism



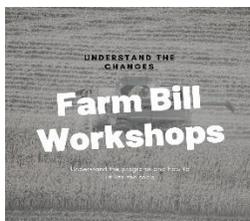
The signing of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) by President Trump increases hopes that 2020 will begin a stronger decade for America's farmers and ranchers. The USMCA is expected to increase agricultural exports from the U.S. by \$2 billion and result in an overall increase of \$65 billion in gross domestic product. [Read more here.](#)

Department Accepting Applications for 2020 Industrial Hemp Pilot Program

The Maryland Department of Agriculture's Industrial Hemp Research Pilot Program is now accepting applications for the 2020 growing season. In its second year, the program allows eligible farmers to partner with institutions of higher education or the department to grow industrial hemp for research purposes. [Apply today.](#)



Farm Bill Workshops



This winter, the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics is partnering with the University of Maryland Extension and USDA Farm Service Agency to host a series of one-day workshops geared towards educating Maryland producers on changes associated with the 2018 Farm Bill. [Register here.](#)

Improvements to Hemp Regulation Needed to Support Farmers

Improved testing rules, an expanded testing timeline, and clarity around hemp transportation would help farmers grow and market this new crop, the American Farm Bureau Federation said in comments submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. [Read more here.](#)