

Maryland Farm Bureau  
3358 Davidsonville Rd.  
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# Chesapeake Bay Farm & Food

A Maryland Farm Bureau Publication

Winter 2018

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Winter 2018

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## The 2018 Maryland Legislative Session Begins

*Colby Ferguson, MFB Government Relations Director*

Last year's legislative session proved to be an interesting one. However, Maryland Farm Bureau's Government Relations team worked hard to make sure Maryland's agricultural voice was heard. We were able to prevent any legislation harmful to agriculture from passing while getting 29 Ag friendly bills passed.

This year will be no exception. The MFB team will continue to be your voice in Annapolis. The general session has started off with many pre-filed bills. With this being an election year, there seems to be an extra effort to get bill hearings scheduled quickly and keep the session rolling along. Even though legislators can't fundraise for their upcoming races, they can still get out and door-knock and meet with constituents. So keeping the session moving along works well for them being able to get home on the weekends to meet and greet.

MFB has added Parker Welch, Southern Maryland field staff, to the Government Relations Team to assist with this year's session. Even with this staff addition, we will still need your help. There will be several opportunities for you as a Farm Bureau member to be engaged in this year's session.

One way will be for you to participate in Maryland Farm Bureau's Day in Annapolis on February 7.

Please make sure to register through your county Farm Bureau. Some of our most effective member interaction is during this day.

With session in full swing, you will be able to talk to your representatives over lunch and personally tell them how some of the bills that MFB is working could affect your farm.

*Continued on page 8*

**Maryland Farm Bureau  
Day in Annapolis  
February 7, 2018**



Briefing begins at 8:30 am at the Calvert House.  
Call 410-922-3426 or email [lstorm@mdfarmbureau.com](mailto:lstorm@mdfarmbureau.com) to register.  
\$30 for Farm Bureau members.

## A Message from the President

### Maryland Farm Bureau Officers

Chuck Fry, President  
Wayne Stafford, First Vice President  
John Draper, Second Vice President  
Valerie Connelly, Executive Director

### District Directors

#### District 1

(Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, Washington)  
Billy Bishoff  
Larry Howard

#### District 2

(Carroll, Howard, Montgomery)  
Jason Myers  
Paula Linthicum

#### District 3

(Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles,  
Prince George's, St. Mary's)  
Jamie Tiralla  
James Raley, Jr.

#### District 4

(Baltimore, Cecil, Harford)  
Jonathan Quinn  
Cricket Goodall

#### District 5

(Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot)  
Thomas Jackson  
Tom Mason

#### District 6

(Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester)  
Mary Lou Brown  
Larry Thomas

### Women's Leadership Committee

Chris Catterton, Chair  
Anne Arundel County

### Young Farmers Committee

Marshall Cahall, Chair  
Kent County

### Maryland Farm Bureau

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www.mdfarmbureau.com

It's the beginning of a new year and Maryland Farm Bureau is already advocating for you; our state's farmers. You spoke and we listened. The MFB staff uses our state policy to lobby and react to bills introduced during the Maryland General Assembly session.

As a true grassroots organization, our 23 county Farm Bureaus submitted their top priorities to the state Board of Directors to consider focusing on in 2018. At our annual convention in Ocean City last December, you voted on your top five priority areas.

The three areas with the highest ranking now serve as our top three priority issues of the year. In addition, our Board of Directors will initiate a comprehensive strategy for achieving the three priority action items throughout 2018.

The top three priority issues and year-long strategies for implementation are **agriculture education, agriculture viability and state cost share.**

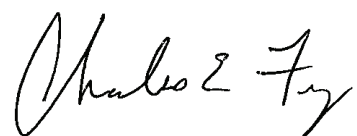
Maryland Farm Bureau will focus on providing more support to agriculture education programs and initiating these programs in high schools in all 23 counties. We will advocate for on-farm field trips at the elementary level, increased funding for Ag education teachers in the summer and making Maryland an FFA affiliate state.

For agriculture viability, we will focus on wildlife crop damage control, continue to support the Sales and Use Tax Exemption for farmers, viable urban farming, and funding of the Maryland Dairy Farmer Emergency Trust Fund. MFB will also oppose the use of eminent domain and any bills that put an economic burden on farmers.

We will focus on state cost share by supporting funding for cover crops and other conservation practices, the Farm to School Program and the MACS Program. Farm Bureau will advocate for farmer participation in cost share programs.

I know that you're working hard to grow the food, fuel and fiber for our country. Rest assured that we are working hard in Annapolis and Washington D.C. to advocate for Maryland agriculture. Together we can achieve more.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Fry  
President  
Maryland Farm Bureau



## Frostbite Dangers: Learning the Signs and Treatment

*Provided by Nationwide Insurance*

Working outside in cold temperatures is a reality for many agribusiness workers. Beyond just being uncomfortable, outdoor work in extreme cold is dangerous due to the threat of frostbite, which can cause serious damage to skin and other tissues. In severe cases, frostbite may require amputation of the affected area. That's why it's important to recognize and heed the warning signs of frostbite before the condition becomes severe.

### What does frostbite look like?

- Redness and pain are the early symptoms—more advanced signs include a white or grayish-yellow tone to the affected area
- Skin may feel unusually waxy or firm
- Frozen tissue becomes numb—victims of frostbite may be unaware of the seriousness of their condition until someone else points it out

**When symptoms of frostbite develop, the victim requires emergency medical care. If professional help isn't readily available, take these actions:**

- Get the victim to a warm place as quickly as possible
- Do not allow a victim to walk on frost-bitten feet or toes (unless it's unavoidable)
- Immerse the affected skin into warm, not hot, water
- Use body heat to help warm affected skin—for example, place frostbitten fingers under an armpit
- Never rub the affected area or use a heating pad, heat lamp, or heat from a stove, fireplace, or radiator to warm the skin, as they can cause burns

### Just how susceptible are people to cold-related health problems?

The answer depends on a number of factors, including a person's age and physical condition, outdoor temperature, wind conditions and humidity. In extreme conditions, it's best to stay inside. But if you must spend part of your workday in a cold environment, make sure you dress appropriately.

- Dress in layers—doing so not only creates additional insulation, but enables you to adjust to changing conditions
- Wear a hat—preferably one that covers the ears. Most body heat escapes through the head
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots—they'll keep feet warm and dry and help you maintain proper footing in snowy or icy conditions
- Remove wet clothing immediately—keep blankets and a change of clothing accessible
- Drink warm fluids such as soup or cider—avoid beverages that contain caffeine or alcohol

*To learn more about Nationwide, visit [nationwide.com](http://nationwide.com).*



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is on your side

## Maryland Farm Bureau Membership Benefits

Stay warm this winter with exclusive membership savings!

### Southern Maryland Oil:

Receive customized discounts on motor fuels, autogas and propane for commercial use. Call 1-800-492-3420 or visit [www.smoenergy.com](http://www.smoenergy.com)  
Discount code: **MFB14**

### Energy Plus:

Receive a \$50 enrollment bonus, 5% cash back and competitive rates on your electric bill. Call 1-877-580-3915 or visit [www.EnergyPlusRewards.com/MDFarmBureau6133](http://www.EnergyPlusRewards.com/MDFarmBureau6133) for enrollment.

### Griffith Energy:

Save 30 cents per gallon on heating oil, kerosene, gasoline and diesel fuel. Call 1-800-633-4328 or visit [www.griffithoil.com](http://www.griffithoil.com) to order. Use discount code: **FARM**



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Visit [www.mdfarmbureau.com/a-z-savings](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com/a-z-savings) to see all current discounts.

## Upcoming Events

### February

- 2/7: Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis, 8:30 am, Calvert House
- 2/8: Taste of the Eastern Shore, 5:30 pm, Loews Annapolis Hotel
- 2/10: Frederick County Legislative Day, 9 am - 2:30 pm, New Midway Fire Hall
- 2/17-19: AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Conference, Reno, NV
- 2/23: Caroline County Banquet, 6:30 pm, Preston Firehall
- 2/24: Women's Leadership Committee/Miss MD Ag Workshop, 8:30 am - 3 pm, Maryland Farm Bureau
- 2/27: Howard County Trucking Forum, 9:30 - 11 am, Howard Fairgrounds Dining Hall

### March

- 3/2: Dorchester County Banquet, East New Market Firehall
- 3/3: Charles County Annual Banquet, 7 pm
- 3/5: Harford County Trucking Forum, 9:30 - 11 am, Clear Meadow Farm
- 3/10: St. Mary's County Banquet, 5 pm, Ridge Fire Department
- 3/16: Queen Anne's County Banquet, 7 pm, Sudlersville Firehall
- 3/17: Miss MD Ag Bingo Fundraiser, 1 pm, Maryland State Fair Mosner Miller Building
- 3/17: Prince George's County Banquet, 5:30 pm, Baden Volunteer Fire Department
- 3/17: Wicomico County Banquet, 6 pm, Sharptown Memorial Building
- 3/20: Somerset County Trucking Forum, 9:30 - 11 am, UMES
- 3/22: Talbot County Banquet, 5:30 pm, Easton High School
- 3/24: Calvert County Farm to Table Breakfast
- 3/24: Cecil County Banquet, 5 pm, Rising Sun Banquet Hall
- 3/27: Frederick County Spring Meeting, Jefferson Ruritan

Visit [www.mdfarmbureau.com/event-calendar](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com/event-calendar) for more details and an updated schedule of events.

## A Message from the Executive Director

Governor Larry Hogan invited the Maryland Farm Bureau's Board of Directors to the State House in mid-January to talk priorities for the current General Assembly session. Deputy Chief of Staff Jeannie Haddaway, Secretary of Ag Joe Bartenfelder and Deputy Secretary Julie Oberg were also on hand.

MFB President Chuck Fry kicked off the conversation with a sincere "thank you" to Governor Hogan and his staff for all they have done to address farm concerns over the last year. He highlighted the cooperation of MDE on stormwater management and CAFO permitting issues. The Department of Labor has worked hard to ensure new regulations do not adversely impact farm employers. And MDA has been our go-to agency for cost-share guidance and farm product promotion.

Secretary Bartenfelder discussed the upcoming Buyer Grower Expo, which will bring the largest national buyer of fresh products, Robinson Fresh, to MD for the first time.

On wildlife management, Billy Bishoff of Western MD expressed gratitude for DNR's work to implement a bear-taking permit for farmers with sustained damage and for improvements to deer management rules. He asked Governor Hogan to appoint an Ombudsman in the Wildlife & Heritage division at DNR to specifically work with farmers and landowners.

First Vice President Wayne Stafford raised a concern coming from many farmers about SHA letters telling farmers they cannot use land originally taken by SHA for a dual lane highway. The highway has not been constructed, but farmers are being denied use and threatened with fines.

Farm Bureau's frustration with the continued attack on poultry farms was raised by new Board member Mary Lou Brown. The Board asked for the Administration's help to defeat the Community Healthy Air Act in the General Assembly.

Jamie Tiralla discussed the need for continued Ag Education funding for curriculum development, farm visits and teachers.

2nd Vice President John Draper wrapped up the meeting by emphasizing the value of cost-share projects and urged continued funding. Governor Hogan's budget, as submitted to the General Assembly, increases MACs funding, fully funds Program Open Space and levels funds cover crops.

The MFB Board appreciated the opportunity to visit with Governor Hogan. We look forward to visiting with many leaders in the House and Senate over the 90-day session to promote and protect our Farm Bureau members.

Valerie Connelly  
Executive Director  
Maryland Farm Bureau



## County Farm Bureau Membership Report

As of January 15, 2018

Based on Membership year July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

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 associate.

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](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com).

When you join your county Farm Bureau, you are also becoming a member of the Maryland Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau Federation. AFBF represents more than 6.2 million member families in over 2,800 counties.

As a member of MFB you have access to many discounts, services and programs. We invite you to take full advantage of all your Farm Bureau membership has to offer!

County	YTD Voting Members Paid	YTD All Members Paid
Allegany	52	77
Anne Arundel	368	1,781
Baltimore	144	2,064
Calvert	127	317
Caroline	231	376
Carroll	336	762
Cecil	160	400
Charles	102	489
Dorchester	116	283
Frederick	388	881
Garrett	82	125
Harford	199	725
Howard	106	595
Kent	130	165
Montgomery	136	1,638
Prince George's	109	1,103
Queen Anne's	147	294
St. Mary's	168	333
Somerset	105	182
Talbot	132	297
Washington	128	292
Wicomico	171	396
Worcester	109	256
<b>Maryland Totals</b>	<b>3,746</b>	<b>13,831</b>

## Maryland Farmers Attend the 99<sup>th</sup> AFBF Convention in Nashville

*Katie Ward, MFB Communications Specialist*

Over 75 Maryland Farm Bureau officers, members and staff attended the 2018 American Farm Bureau Federation 99<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show in Nashville, TN from January 6-10. More than 7,400 Farm Bureau leaders from all 50 states collaborated to vote on national policy, learn about new Ag trends and technologies, compete for Young Farmer & Rancher awards and celebrate agriculture in the U.S.

President Donald Trump addressed Farm Bureau members on Monday and unveiled a major initiative designated to strengthen rural economy. Trump signed two executive orders that fund and streamline the expansion of rural broadband access. In addition to economic development, Trump touched on issues of particular importance to agriculturists such as regulations, labor and trade. He praised farmers for their enduring values. Farmers, Trump said, “embody the values of hard work, grit, self-reliance and sheer determination.”

United States Sec. of Agriculture Sonny Perdue highlighted priorities and accomplishments in the new administration and USDA during his address to Farm Bureau members. Perdue spoke about the importance of trade to U.S. agriculture and the priority of successful NAFTA negotiations. He highlighted USDA’s newly released Economic Research Service report that shows 99 percent of American farms are family farms that account for 90 percent of production. “President Trump understands that family farms are small businesses that must turn a profit to provide for their families,” said Perdue.

Delegates to the American Farm Bureau Federation’s 2018 Annual Convention unanimously re-elected AFBF President Zippy Duvall on Tuesday. Resolutions approved by farmer and rancher delegates from across the nation ran the gamut of issues, from trade to regulatory reform, crop insurance, biotechnology and more.

“Today’s actions give us a clear roadmap at a time when farmers are on the verge of their fifth consecutive year of shrinking net farm income,” Duvall said. “Despite these difficulties, we remain optimistic: Official Washington feels more like a partner than it did just a short time ago. We have real opportunities to make progress in policy that we have not had in the past.”

Maryland Farm Bureau President Chuck Fry serves on the American Farm Bureau Executive Committee, representing the Northeast. Mr. Fry presented the Distinguished Service Award to Sen. James Inhofe and the Farm Bureau Founders Award to Kenneth Dierschke of Texas Farm Bureau.

Frederick County Farm Bureau and the five Southern Maryland county Farm Bureaus set up exhibit booths in the trade show to display the Creative County Farm Bureau Programs they were recognized for by American Farm Bureau. Frederick County demonstrated their Farm Safety Camp and St. Mary’s, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George’s Counties demonstrated their Wildfire Relief Auction.

The 100<sup>th</sup> Annual American Farm Bureau Convention & IDEAg Trade Show will be held in New Orleans, LA from January 11-16, 2019.



## Foreign-Born Workers in the Ag Workforce

*Emily Snyder, MFB Western MD Field Rep*

Adams County, PA, the northern neighbor to Frederick County, hosts “Ag Issue” breakfast meetings during the winter months. These meetings bring Extension, FSA, university researchers, farmers and legislators together to discuss pressing topics. The final 2017 meeting focused on foreign-born workers in the ag industry, an ongoing issue. MFB member Bob Black of Catocin Mountain Orchard, Carlos Turcios of MD Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) and myself were among the attendees from Maryland. Speaker Dr. Scott Sheely from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture spoke on H-2A visa workers in Pennsylvania, the issues PA is facing (identical to ours in MD), and current federal legislation regarding guest workers.

H-2A is the official guest worker program of the US government for agriculture, while H-2B is the program for non-ag workers. H-2A workers are employed by a specific employer for a specific amount of time, and should not be confused with the green card immigration status. Most H-2B workers are employed in the landscaping industry.



The two main issues employers who use the program face are the number of workers available and the skill set they have. Since supply is always a problem, wages are rising. A very large percentage (75-90%) of the agriculture and food workforce are foreign-born workers. These people could pick fruit, milk cows, drive a truck, or be in production in any facet of ag. These positions, while not traditionally ‘difficult,’ often take a certain skill set; however, very little training is offered to this type of employee.

In the last several years we have seen a sharp decline in the number of newcomers to the US, meaning the same workers are returning year after year, resulting in an aging workforce. Today approximately half of our crop labor force is unauthorized which is down from about 75% in the 90’s. There has also been a significant decline in migratory workers, meaning not many workers are following the crops anymore, instead maintaining a home base.

Most employers tend to pull from local workers, but the second most used pool is those with work visas. Employers of H-2A workers offer multiple benefits, including paying for housing, utilities, travel, equipment, etc. The most common reasons employers aren’t able to get H-2A workers are the initial application was denied, approved workers did not show up and late arrival of workers. These 3 reasons are largely due to administrative delays and issues.

A number of producers were in the audience and their concerns mirrored what we hear in Maryland. The program ought to be streamlined and workers must be able to get here in time. Administrative delays result in workers arriving on average 22 days after the date of need, causing an economic loss of almost \$320 million for farms that hire H-2A workers. 22 days is significant when you have a perishable crop that is ready to harvest!

Two bills came out of the House Judiciary Committee in October and are currently delayed as they aren’t top priority. The Ag Guestworker Act (HR 4092) reforms the current H-2A program, but will likely not pass. The Legal Workforce Act (HR 3711), makes E-verify mandatory and has a chance of coming to fruition. While there are some positive pieces to the bill, like moving the administration from the US Department of Labor to the USDA, there are several negative pieces. Most notably, the industry is not prepared to deal with mandatory E-verify and the bill caps the number of workers.

The morning ended with a Q&A session and discussion on whether improving the current program is better than a totally new program and if the H-2A/H-2B program can be reformed and what does that need to entail.

## 2018 Legislative Session *Continued from Cover*

Another way to get engaged is to come to Annapolis from now until April 10 and testify on bills that directly impact your farm. We will be there alongside you, but some of the most effective testimony is when someone explains how a bill could affect their personal farming operation and business. Telling your story is as good as it gets to reach your legislators in Annapolis!

Finally, a phone call and/or email directly to your representative is very effective as well. Most of you are very busy and taking a day off to spend in Annapolis is not feasible. As we saw last year with the bill that would have made Maryland the most restricted state in the country when it came to using Antibiotics to prevent sickness in livestock and poultry, your phone calls and emails to the general assembly made it clear that this was a bad bill, and it led to significant amendments that conformed the bill to federal law.

This is your call to action. Now is the time to let your voice be heard. MFB has your back and is fighting daily to make sure Maryland Agriculture is represented and the lines of communication between farmer and legislator are open. We hope that you have signed up to receive the weekly MFB Hotline so you can stay up to date with what's going on in Annapolis. If you are not and would like to sign up, email me at [cferguson@mdfarmbureau.com](mailto:cferguson@mdfarmbureau.com) and I will add you to the list. Make sure to stay involved, and we will make sure your voice is heard.

## 2018 MFB Communications Interns

Maryland Farm Bureau recently hired Emily Solis from La Plata, MD and Rebecka (Becky) Jones from Sunderland, MD as the two Communications Interns for the 2018 Spring Semester. As the Communications Interns for MFB, Solis and Jones will be managing all media inquiries, online accounts, publications and marketing materials to effectively communicate membership benefits and agricultural policy to MFB families and the community.

Solis is a senior Animal Science major at the University of Maryland and will graduate in May of 2018. She grew up in southern Maryland raising beef cattle for show through the 4-H program. In 2014, she served as Miss Charles County Farm Bureau and continued on to compete for the Miss Maryland Agriculture title. Solis is currently the President of the Block and Bridle chapter at the University of Maryland, a member of Collegiate Farm Bureau, and a sister of Sigma Alpha - Professional Agricultural Sorority. Previously, she's worked at the University of Maryland's dairy research facility, the Wye Angus research farm, and was the Communications Intern with the Animal Agriculture Alliance in spring 2017.

When asked what she was looking forward to most while working with Maryland Farm Bureau, she said, "I'm excited to work with producers in Maryland and play my part in protecting our state's number one industry - agriculture."

Jones currently studies at the University of Maryland. In May of 2018, she will graduate with a certificate in Agricultural Business Management and then plans to pursue a bachelor in Agricultural Resource Economics with an expected graduation date of May 2020. She is a fourth-generation farmer who grew up in southern Maryland on a small livestock farm. In 2015, she was Miss Calvert County Farm Bureau and later served as 2015 Miss Maryland Agriculture 4th Runner-Up. At the university, she is heavily involved in AGNR Student Council, Collegiate Farm Bureau, and Sigma Alpha - Professional Agricultural Sorority.

As UMD Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapter President, she said, "I'm looking forward to this great opportunity to get more exposure to the parent organization to further develop the chapter."

Solis and Jones started at MFB on January 17 and will work until May. They can be reached at 410-922-3426 or [esolis@mdfarmbureau.com](mailto:esolis@mdfarmbureau.com) and [bjones@mdfarmbureau.com](mailto:bjones@mdfarmbureau.com).



Emily Solis



Becky Jones

## Maryland Farm Bureau Held its 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention

*Katie Ward, MFB Communications Specialist*

Maryland Farm Bureau held its 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention from December 3-5, 2017 at The Clarion Resort Hotel in Ocean City with over 500 voting delegates, members and guests in attendance.

"Our members reflected on our accomplishments and planned for the next year of promoting and protecting Maryland agriculture and rural life," said Chuck Fry, President of MFB. "We welcomed new and gave thanks to outgoing county Farm Bureau Presidents and state Board members."

The three-day convention featured presentations, awards, elections and discussions to educate members on Farm Bureau activities and the agricultural industry. MFB President Chuck Fry, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, Nationwide Insurance Board member Dan Kelley, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Joe Bartenfelder, Associate Director of University of Maryland's College of AGNR Jim Hanson and Miss Maryland Agriculture Mackenzie Underwood addressed the members. Comedian and farmer Jerry Carroll gave the keynote address about the importance of growing up on a farm and having "Dirt in My DNA."

A panel consisting of William Layton from the United Soybean Board, Jason Scott from the U.S. Wheat Associates and Ryan Bennett of the National Milk Producers Federation talked with the MFB Young Farmers Committee about foreign trade and open world markets for agriculture. Jenny Rhodes, farmer and UMD Extension Agent in Queen Anne's County, spoke to the MFB Women's Leadership Committee about food labeling and her background and career as a farmer.

Breakout sessions were held Monday on topics from farm succession planning and farm trucking to wildlife management and agricultural law. During the business sessions on Monday and Tuesday, Farm Bureau voting delegates from all 23 counties reviewed the organization's policy on issues pending before government. The 2018 policy positions that were adopted by the delegate body will provide direction for the Farm Bureau lobbying team in Annapolis and Washington.

Awards were presented to the following members at the annual convention:

- 2017 Young Farmer Discussion Meet: Kayla Griffith, Anne Arundel County
- 2017 Young Farmer Collegiate Discussion Meet: Grace Brinsfield, St. Mary's County
- 2017 Young Farmer Excellence in Agriculture: Wade and Shelby Hampton, Prince George's County
- 2017 Silver Bowl Awards: St. Mary's and Frederick Counties
- 2017 Distinguished Service to Farm Bureau Award: James "Bubby" Norris Jr. of St. Mary's County
- 2017 DNR Farmer of the Year: Ralph and Darlene Ball of Harford County

The 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Maryland Farm Bureau Convention will be held from December 2-4, 2018 at The Clarion Resort Hotel in Ocean City, MD.



Jamie Raley, St. Mary's County



Bubby and Carolyn Norris, St. Mary's County



Robert Ramsburg, Frederick County

## Young Farmers & Women's Leadership Committees Represented at State and National Farm Bureau Conventions

Former Maryland Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Chair Jennifer Cross of Prince George's County was elected to a two-year term on the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee representing the Northeast. Jennifer is the second woman on the left in the picture to the right.



The Excellence in Agriculture Award spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agricultural enthusiasts but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years. Competitors are evaluated on their understanding of agricultural issues, leadership experiences and achievement, and their ability to communicate their agricultural story. Wade and Shelby Hapmton of Prince George's County won the Excellence in Agriculture Award at the state level. The couple represented Maryland for the Young Farmers & Ranchers national award at the AFBF convention in Nashville, TN. They placed fourth and received a toolbox and gift cards from Case IH. Wade and Shelby own and operate Robin Hill Farm & Vineyard with Shelby's aunt and uncle. Wade works as a Farm Planner and Technician with the Prince George's Soil Conservation District and Shelby works as Executive Director of SMADC.



The Discussion Meet Competition simulates a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each participant to pool knowledge and explore how groups can reach consensus on agricultural issues. We were excited to have 12 participants this year in the state Discussion Meet during our Maryland Farm Bureau annual convention in December. The four participants who made it to the final round were Kayla Griffith, Matthew Tefteau, Matt Miller and Elizabeth Galbreath. Kayla Griffith of Anne Arundel County won the Discussion Meet competition and represented Maryland in the Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet competition at the AFBF convention in Nashville, TN. The discussion meet topics covered public skepticism of foreign trade for agriculture and how Farm Bureau can assist farmers with regulatory and legal obstacles. Kayla farms full time with her family on their 1,000 acre farm in Lothian, MD.



## Engaging and Valuing our Volunteers

*Emily Snyder, MFB Western MD Field Rep*

The AFBF conference in Nashville had excellent breakout sessions, one of which was "Put a Ring on It: How to ENGAGE Volunteers and Let Them Feel Valued," by a South Dakota FB member who is vice chair of the Promotion and Education Committee. This was particularly pertinent to the role of MFB field staff as we often help counties coordinate events or call on committees to complete tasks. Behind every successful event, campaign, or organization is a team of volunteers that had to buy into the project. They must feel included and part of the team. This session gave suggestions for how to foster those relationships, what volunteers expect from their experience, and pitfalls to avoid.

People volunteer for many reasons, whether it be to help others in the community, use or learn skills and experience, be active, social, or simply do something worthwhile. Keep the volunteer's reason in mind so you can react and address them accordingly. For example, think about this when considering what the person needs in return for volunteering. Do they want a simple acknowledgement? Recognition? A token of appreciation? Perhaps a student would appreciate a letter stating that they were present the entire time, worked hard and were cheerful.

We all know the saying "time is money" and need to remember volunteers aren't paid. Therefore, efficiency is key. Everything must have a purpose, have a well-developed plan or vision, and don't simply give out busywork. The speaker offered this quote: "Volunteers are not paid—not because they are worthless, because they are priceless." It's crucial that our volunteers stick around, so their effort must be worthwhile.

We always want volunteers to remain excited and engaged. As with anything, communication is huge. If your volunteers never hear from you, they won't come back so be sure to keep in contact to keep them interested. Remember, volunteers may be diamonds in the rough. Although they may be frustrating at times, if you and your group don't polish them, another will! Much of this falls on the coordinator. Plan sensibly—don't overbook. It's also okay to take time to think about an answer. While it's never fun to always hear 'no,' not every ask gets a 'yes.'

You should expect action from your volunteers, but you should also enable it. Energy can be focused, and you shouldn't be afraid of your volunteers' enthusiasm. Lastly, we all know the value of time. Don't waste it and don't ask for ideas or opinions unless you're prepared for them. Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization. Our member volunteers need the same things grass does to grow—energy, time and a good environment. If we give our volunteers everything they need, they will make our organization flourish!

## Engaging the Next Generation: Gen Z

*Parker Welch, MFB Central/Southern MD Field Rep*

Move over millennials, the next generation to start voting and finding jobs is here! Individuals born starting in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s are being called Generation Z (Gen Zers). By 2020, this generation will make up 10% of the workforce and, of course, be ready to buy their very own Farm Bureau membership. Determining what generation category people fall into can be very important when trying to engage them with membership.

The term generation is applied to a certain group or demographic based on cultural movements, and each generation is motivated or defined by different criteria. So why is it important to start thinking about the next generation? Well, with over 74 million kids (teenagers and younger), Gen Zers make up almost one-quarter of the U.S. population!

When engaging with Gen Z, it is important to remember that technology is central to every aspect of their lives, from socializing to schoolwork, entertainment to exercise. This means teens are able to find answers to their questions in seconds, but often from places with no or few authorities. Gen Z will also be the most diverse generation and more familiar with different cultures, races, and ethnicities than previous generations. Alongside technology and diversity, Gen Zers are being called fiscally conservative. Having grown up watching Millennials accrue thousands of dollars of student loan debt, they are intent to not make the same mistakes when it comes to their finances.

While the next generation is still fairly young, they are already making huge impacts in our economy and politics. We should take them very seriously and look closely at how we can engage them to become a part of Farm Bureau.