



THE BUSHWACKER

St. Mary's County Farm Bureau News

Website: www.mdfarmbureau.com/st-marys/

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2023 Banquet

Our Banquet will be held on Saturday March 11th, 2023, at Belmont Farm. Doors open at 5:00 pm with dinner starting at 6:00 pm. Please see the form within this newsletter to order tickets. The deadline to order tickets is February 27th. We hope to see you there!

The President's Message

Dear Farm Bureau Members,

The purpose of the farm bureau is not farming. This may sound like an odd statement about an organization that has the word "farm" in its name. So what is the purpose of the farm bureau?

The purpose of the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau, and the reason for its continued existence, is service to its 315 members and their families. The mission of the farm bureau is, "To protect and grow Maryland agriculture and preserve rural life." Farm Bureau is the leading voice of Maryland agriculture and the predominant force in agriculture policy development. It is a strong advocate of safe, environmentally responsible, and economically sound food and fiber production. The St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Board of Directors work on your behalf so you can accomplish the goals of feeding a growing population, earning your livelihood, and protecting the environment.

Last year, through the Bureau's partnership with the St. Mary's Board of Education, the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation's mobile lab visited Duke Elementary School, Park Hall Elementary School, Dent Elementary School, Oakville Elementary School, and Mother Catherine Academy. The staff and students were highly engaged and participated in science experiments and mini-lessons. The MAEF lab will visit the remaining elementary schools in the county over the next four years. The Bureau pays for 75% of the cost of the lab's services for one week at each school. The objective is to teach elementary students about the importance of agriculture in their everyday lives. In addition, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau was actively involved in two Farm to School events this year – one at Green Holly and the other at Town Creek Elementary.

This year we will continue making agricultural education a priority. In addition to continuing to support the mobile labs, we plan to collaborate with several schools across the state to understand best practices for a successful Ag Education curriculum. The goal is to re-establish a high school ag education program to replace the ag education course at the Forrest Tech Center, which was suspended this year.

Internally, the Bureau will be focusing on our economic sustainability as an organization. We have to course correct our current operating income deficit. We need your continued membership support and your help with recruiting new members. Invite someone to enroll by having them visit the MDFB website and complete the membership application.

There is a Board of Directors seat open. Please contact me or anyone on the Board of Directors if you are interested in filling the vacancy.

As always, the bureau will continue to be an advocate for you, our members. Our goal is to increase net farm income and improve the quality of life for everyone in the agriculture community.

Thank you for being a Farm Bureau member,
Jay Raley, President, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau
(240) 731-9254

Change in Directors

St. Mary's Farm Bureau thanks Jamie Raley for his years of service as our county President. We already miss Jamie's leadership and commitment to the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau. Fortunately, we can look forward to continuing to benefit from Jamie now that he has moved to 1st VP on the MDFB Board. Congratulations Jamie!

2023 Officers

Jay Raley, President
Joan Bearden, Vice President
Lisa Bowen, Secretary-Treasurer
Abigail Sivak, Chair, Women's Committee
Charlie Sasscer III, Chair, Young Farmers

2023 Board of Directors

1 st District	Jos. "Sonny" Trossbach	Tommy Trossbach
2 nd District	Stanley J. Boothe	Merl Evans Jr.
3 rd District	Gabrielle Graham	Matthew Norris
4 th District	Donnie Braun	Margaret Beavan
5 th District	Mackenzie Jones	Vacant
6 th District	Benjamin Lyons	Richard Hayden
7 th District	Susan Vallandingham	Michael Van Ryswick
8 th District	Rita Weaver	Christopher Cullins

Legislative Review

Since 1947, the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau has represented you in Leonardtown, Annapolis, and Washington D.C.

During the 2022 legislative session, the bureau submitted 14 letters to legislative committees either supporting or opposing bills. Below is a summary of the outcome for select bills.

1. The bureau opposed a bill that would have transferred the Pesticide Regulation Section from the Dept. of Agriculture to the Dept. of Environment.

Outcome: The bill was defeated.

2. Adding camping and incidental stays to the definition of agritourism. This change will aid the Hipcamp program, which is promoted by MDFB.

Outcome: Senate Bill 296, Land Use—Agritourism—Definition. The bill passed.

3. Authorize farmers holding Deer Management Permits to harvest deer on cropland they lease from the state.

Outcome: House Bill 592, Deer Management Permit - Hunting on State Land Leased by Permit Holder - Authorization. The bill passed.

4. A change to the Natural Resources law that relieves landowners from liability for individuals whom they allow to hunt on their land.

Outcome: Senate Bill 582, Natural Resources - Recreation on Private Land - Hunting. The bill passed.

5. The bureau also supported legislation that would have required the Dept. of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) to assess on-farm agritourism and value-added operations at agricultural rates, versus commercial rates.

Update: The bill will be reintroduced in the current 2023 legislative session.

6. Farm bureau was successful in significantly amending a St. Mary's County Zoning Ordinance text amendment concerning commercial solar, to protect prime and productive farmland and environmentally sensitive areas. Commercial solar siting is permitted in the Rural Preservation District, but on a limited basis. An additional bureau amendment to the ordinance defines prime agricultural soils. The bureau was also successful including language, which will authorize minor solar arrays as an accessory use to support agricultural operations.

Update: The bureau's efforts regarding text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance concerning commercial solar siting in the county were successfully passed by the Board of Commissioners in March, 2022.

On October 4, 2022 the Commissioners again amended the solar text amendment that was passed in March. The approved text amendment now restricts major solar facilities in the Rural Preservation District (RPD) to brownfields and landfills and it creates the definition of brownfields.

While this amendment could be considered a win for the ag. community, the language does not comport with the regulations of the Public Service Commission or with court decisions regarding siting of commercial solar generating facilities in counties. It is Farm Bureau's concern that the PSC can set-aside the county's restrictions and permit commercial solar anywhere in the RPD. If this is the case, then farmland could become attractive for commercial solar consuming land for food and fiber production.

Farm bureau enjoys a good working relationship with our state legislative delegation and county commissioners and we appreciate the efforts of our elected officials in support of agriculture.

Women's Leadership Committee

The St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Chairperson is Ms. Abigail Sivak. For information on how you can become a member of your local Women's Leadership Committee, contact Ms. Sivak at (240) 538-3072.

Young Farmers Committee

Mr. Charles A. Sasscer III is chair of the Young Farmer's Committee (YFC). If you would like more information about the YFC, please call Charlie at (240) 587-9780.

The YFC continues to collect aluminum flip tabs to support the work of the Ronald McDonald Foundation. Flip tabs can be dropped off at the Farm Bureau Office in the Ag Services Center on Radio Station Way in Leonardtown.

Maryland Money Market

Maryland Market Money (MMM) is a statewide food access program of SMADC that feeds Marylanders and supports farmers. MMM removes economic barriers for Marylanders experiencing food insecurity, providing a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits at participating Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs. While MMM reaches statewide, you can find it right here in St. Mary's County at the Home Grown Farm Market. Stop by the Home Grown Farm Market on Saturdays (and Wednesdays during the summer) to receive a dollar-for-dollar match when you shop with your SNAP benefits. Farmers markets and direct marketing farms interested in participating in Maryland Market Money, are [welcome to apply](#). SMADC also provides technical assistance when navigating federal nutrition benefit acceptance and is offering a Federal Nutrition Benefits (SNAP/EBT + eWIC) [Best Practices Training](#) on February 23rd. For more information about Maryland Market Money and participating access points, like the Home Grown Farm Market, please visit our website <https://www.marylandmarketmoney.org/>

NATIONWIDE INSURANCE

Contact Nationwide Agent J. Patrick Haley II at OakPoint Insurance to check on the discounts still offered to regular, voting members on car, homeowners, and farm insurance. Patrick's phone number is: (301) 475-2866.

Farm Bureau Ambassador Program

In 2022 St. Mary's County Farm Bureau was represented by, Mr. Trent Vallandingham and

Miss Jessica Graves (Farm Bureau Junior Ambassadors) and Mr. Levi Vallandingham and Miss Delia Vallandingham (Little Ambassadors). We are currently seeking our 2023 Ambassadors! The Ambassador Program provides an opportunity for young leaders to represent agriculture and Farm Bureau for one year.

One male and one female applicant (in each age category Little: 8-12, Junior: 13-16, Ambassador: 17-21) will have an opportunity to compete for the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Ambassadors at the 2023 banquet. The Ambassadors will make appearances at County Farm Bureau events, with the Ambassador (age 17-21) representing our county at the state contest in the fall of 2023. The contest will be held at the Annual Banquet on March 11, 2023. Interested applicants must be in attendance. Applications are due by March 1. Please contact Susan Vallandingham for a copy of the application at farmchic82@aol.com.



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Saturday: 7:30am - 4:00pm
SOUTHERNSTATES.COM

**2023 ST. MARY'S COUNTY FARM BUREAU BANQUET
ORDER FORM FOR TICKETS TO BANQUET**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2023
THE BELMONT FARM
5:00 P.M. SOCIAL
6:00 P.M. DINNER**

MENU

Baked Ham
Fried Chicken
Fried Oysters
Parsley Potatoes
Shrimp Macaroni Salad
Green Beans

Cole Slaw
Pickles and Olives
Applesauce
Pickled Beets
Rolls
Coffee/Tea
Dessert by Rita B

\$35.00 PER TICKET

The Women's Committee will hold a non-perishable food drive at the annual banquet. American agriculture continues to provide the cheapest, safest food supply in the world. Please help us support our local food pantry systems by bringing a non-perishable item to the banquet. Containers will be provided at the door. Thank you for your help.

A live baked good auction will be held this year at the banquet to support Ag Education. If you are interested in providing an item please contact Abigail Sivak at (240) 538-3072 or by email at gailsivak@gmail.com.

Also this year we will again have an 'Alcohol Draw' during the banquet. Items will be provided by the Farm Bureau Board of Directors. If you are interested in participating tickets will be on sale at door for \$20.

Seating is limited. Tickets are first-come, first-served.

This is a BYOB event. Please, NO glass containers. Setups will be available.

_____ Number of Tickets _____ Amount Paid

Name _____

Address _____

Request and payment for ticket(s) must be PAID IN ADVANCE and received by MONDAY, February 27. Please return form with payment for ticket(s) payable to St. Mary's County Farm Bureau. 26737 Radio Station Way Ste. G, Leonardtown, MD 20650 ATTN: BANQUET.