



St. Mary's County Farm Bureau
26737 Radio Station Way, Suite G
Leonardtown, MD 20650



THE BUSHWACKER

St. Mary's County Farm Bureau News
Website: www.mdfarmbureau.com/st-marys/

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John Adams
46233 Drayden Rd
Drayden, MD 20630

Annual Meeting – The annual meeting will be held in-person on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the St. Mary's County Agricultural Services Center meeting room. The Ag Services building is located at 26737 Radio Station Way, Leonardtown, MD.

Annual Meeting Agenda

Maryland Farm Bureau (MDFB) is a grassroots organization, deriving its policy from its members. Policies supporting or opposing various issues are solicited from county farm bureaus. Members of the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau are invited at the annual county meeting to submit policy resolutions for consideration and vote. Resolutions that are passed at the county meeting are forwarded to MDFB for consideration and vote at the annual state convention in December.

Participants at the county meeting will be asked to select three priority issues of concern for 2022. We will also review several MDFB policies for updates. We will hold the election of St. Mary's County Farm Bureau officers and directors for 2023 and also select our county MDFB delegates to represent us at the annual state convention. Other appropriate business may also be addressed.

The President's Message

Dear Farm Bureau Members,

The purpose of 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 farm bureau?

The purpose of the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau, and the reason for its continued existence, is service to its 312 members and their families. The mission of 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. Please read below about the bureau's successes and challenges as the organization continues to work on your behalf. Thank you for being a farm bureau member!

Sincerely,
Jamie Raley
President
St. Mary's County Farm Bureau

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.

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

Some bills supported by the bureau, which became law, are:

1. Adding camping and incidental stays to the definition of agritourism. This change will aid the Hipcamp program, which is promoted by MDFB.
2. Authorize farmers holding Deer Management Permits to harvest deer on cropland they lease from the state.
3. A change to the Natural Resources law that relieves landowners from liability for individuals whom they allow to hunt on their land.

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. The bill was amended for summer study. The bill, as passed, requires SDAT and the Dept. of Agriculture to review whether agricultural accessory use improvements should be assessed using a different methodology from improvements located on nonagricultural land and submit a joint report to the General Assembly by Dec. 1, 2022. Maryland Farm Bureau is participating in discussions on this matter.

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.

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.

Ag Education Update

The CASE Ag Education program at the Forrest Tech Center has been suspended for the 2022-2023 school year, due to low enrollment for this school year and the resignation of the course teacher approximately one month before the start of classes. The FFA Chapter has been assigned to the Natural Resources Management program at the Tech Center.

The school system will keep the CASE teaching position funded in the operating budget. Farm bureau will be working with stakeholders to try and get the course reinstated for next school year.

As part of farm bureau's outreach and agricultural education commitment, the bureau is excited to partner with the St. Mary's Board of Education to bring the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation's mobile labs to public elementary schools in the county.

The bureau will pay 75% of the cost of the lab's services for one week at a school. Private elementary schools have also been invited to participate in the grant program. The objective is to teach elementary students about the importance of agriculture in their everyday lives and to make healthy food choices.

Schools selected to participate in the program this year are: Duke Elementary School, Park Hall Elementary School, Dent Elementary School, Oakville Elementary School, and Mother Catherine Academy.

Directors complete term of office

St. Mary's Farm Bureau thanks Directors Sarah Hayden, Tommy Norris, and Joe Wood for serving as members of the board of directors for the past six years. Directors Brian Oliver and Joe "Tony" St. Clair have decided not to continue service on the board. The Board of Directors thanks Brian and Tony for their many years of service.

Farm Bureau Ambassador Program

Mr. Trent Vallandingham and Miss Jessica Graves were selected as Farm Bureau Junior Ambassadors at the bureau's March banquet. Mr. Levi Vallandingham and Miss Delia Vallandingham were selected as Little Ambassadors.

The Ambassadors will represent farm bureau at the county fair and at other farm-related events.

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 Building on Radio Station Way in Leonardtown.

Citrus and Nut Program

The Citrus and Nut program will be managed by the Young Farmer's Committee. Farm bureau members should look for a letter or email announcement and order form sometime soon.

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.

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