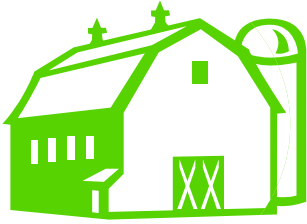


The Maryland Farm Bureau Hotline

Legislative proposals that impact Maryland's farm community



Contact: Val Connelly or Kurt Fuchs
(410) 922-3426

Government Relations Bulletin #4 – June 18, 2009

National Update

CLIMATE CHANGE: Full House expected to Vote Before the Fourth of July Holiday

[Take Action!](#)

The Bill Will Hurt Farmers and Ranchers. Your messages needed NOW!

Climate Change legislation is moving quickly through Congress. Costs for producers will rise and farm income is expected to fall. **The outcome will unquestionably have an enormous impact on U.S. agriculture.** Analysis from EPA shows that energy prices would rise. Fertilizer costs and electricity rates would jump as well. And while U.S. farmers and ranchers are trying to absorb these huge costs and regulations, foreign competitors will not face the same restrictions.

Rushing to make a decision of this magnitude without having all the facts and information for an informed decision is bad policy! **Legislators are being asked to vote before USDA has even had a chance to figure the costs to farmers and ranchers.** The agriculture sector is being asked to accept higher costs from the Climate Change bill; while all farmers and ranchers will face potentially higher costs, only a few stand to benefit.

We need you to speak out *today* to your members of Congress. Let them know that voting for a Climate Change bill is bad for agriculture, bad for farmers and ranchers and will threaten any chances at a meaningful economic recovery!

Go to TAKE ACTION! above to send your message now.

While some claim the legislation is good for agriculture, the fact is most fruit and vegetable producers will not qualify for offset benefits. Not all farmers will have the capacity to site wind turbines. Western ranchers whose operations are dependent on the use of federal lands for livestock forage have very limited offset opportunities. Not all areas of the country are able to productively adopt conservation tillage practices, thus restricting their offset possibilities. Yet ALL producers will incur the same increased fuel, fertilizer and energy costs as all Americans.

Your messages are critical in making sure that agriculture is not harmed. **Congress needs to reject the cap-and-trade bill because of the devastating impact it will have on American agricultural production!** Tell your Representative the production of food and fiber is important and do not put U.S. agriculture at a competitive disadvantage by higher input costs! **Go to "Take Action" to send messages to your Representative now.**

Wildlife Management Update

Be Sure to Report Wildlife Nuisance Complaints

If you are experiencing crop loss, damage to equipment, or predation of livestock as a result of wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources and USDA Wildlife Services want to hear about it. By calling their jointly-operated toll free hotline at **1-877-463-6497**, you are able to log your wildlife nuisance complaint, receive technical assistance, and begin the process to receive any necessary permits to resolve the nuisance issue. Producers can call at anytime when they are experiencing “threats or damage” from wildlife.

When you call a biologist will work with you to collect the relevant information he/she needs to assist you properly, but all locations and names are protected as Personal Identifiable Information and not put into their system or reported out to the public. During the phone conversation you will be asked questions in order to establish:

- Location (county)
- Damage or threat
- Type of livestock
- Description of the incident
- Value of loss or cost of the damage (damage can be to structures or fences as well)
- Animal responsible if known: damage can be from any species, coyote, dog, fox, raccoon, bear, vulture, bobcat, etc.

In utilizing this service, not only will you receive assistance in addressing your nuisance problem, but the aggregate data compiled at the county and state level helps provide the accurate information necessary for sound management of nuisance wildlife populations.

Maryland Farm Bureau Activities and Update

Certified Crop Advisor Award Nominations Accepted from County Farm Bureaus

The Mid-Atlantic Certified Crop Advisor Program is seeking nominations for the “Excellence in Crop Advising Award,” which recognizes one crop advisor in each state annually who strives to provide the best service in nutrient management, soil and water conservation, integrated pest management and crop production. Nominations for this award are made by local farmers and submitted by the County Farm Bureau to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The MFB Board of Directors will consider all nominations and will vote to send one nomination forward. The nominee who is forwarded by the Maryland Farm Bureau will be recognized at our annual meeting in Ocean City as the Maryland Certified Crop Advisor Award Recipient.

Nominations from your county Farm Bureau are due into the Maryland Farm Bureau office by Monday, July 6, 2009. The nomination forms and list of eligible nominees have been emailed to county Presidents and Secretaries. The Board will select a state nominee at the July 14th Board meeting.

“How to Win an Election” – Registration Forms for Candidate School Available

A two-day strategy seminar open only to candidates, their spouses and campaign managers has been scheduled for October 7-8, 2009 in Annapolis. Farm Bureau’s policy success at the federal, state and local levels are dependent on the election of farm friendly officials in the 2010 election cycle. The campaign school is designed to prepare any candidate for success. The nationwide success rate for those who attend the class and then seek election is over **75%**. While the program is not limited to Farm Bureau members only, county Farm Bureau members should consider running for office. Each county Farm Bureau should also help surface potential candidates who appreciate the value of farm businesses and urge them to run. They should begin by attending the Farm Bureau candidate school.

The American Farm Bureau Federation, an organization noted for its understanding of the political process, has developed this seminar with the help of professional political consultants, and staff members of Democratic and Republican parties. The instructor, a member of the American Farm Bureau Government Relations staff, will lead participants through exercises using DVDs, case studies and computer exercises to test a candidate’s campaign techniques, tools and methods. The registration material can be found at the Maryland Farm Bureau website: www.mdfarmbureau.com.

Make Plans to Meet With Your Congressmen in the District during the August Recess

Congress will be in recess during most of the month of August. This is a perfect opportunity to schedule a meeting between your Congressman and local farmers. Members of Congress will spend the month of August attending town hall meetings and visiting with constituents. During these meetings they will want to hear your views on national issues like health care reform, the clean water restoration act, climate control legislation, taxes and any other issue that impacts you or your business.

A meeting with a county Farm Bureau Board of Directors is a perfect constituent subgroup for most Members of Congress. Cecil County Farm Bureau has already begun to schedule their meeting with Congressman Frank Kratovil. County President Wayne Stafford reports that local farmer Chuck Hooper has offered to host the meeting. Participants will include the county Board of Directors and the County’s Ag Advisory Committee, which advises the economic development office.

If you would like to schedule a similar meeting with your Congressman, we urge you to put together basic information including potential location, time frame (day or evening), available dates (include as many as possible) and target participant list. Contact your Congressman’s district office and request the meeting. Here are the district office phone numbers for Maryland’s Delegation:

Rep. Frank Kratovil, 1st District: Centreville office (443) 262-9136

Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger, 2nd District: Timonium office (410) 628-2701

Rep. John Sarbanes, 3rd District: Towson office (410) 832-8890 or Annapolis office (410) 295-1679

Rep. Donna Edwards, 4th District: Silver Spring office (301) 562-7960 or Suitland office (301)516-7601

Rep. Steny Hoyer, 5th District: Greenbelt office (301)474-0119 or Waldorf office (301)843-1577

Rep. Roscoe Bartlett, 6th District: Frederick office (301)694-3030, Westminster office (410)857-1115,

Cumberland office (301)724-3105 or Hagerstown office (301)797-6043

Rep. Elijah Cummings, 7th District: Baltimore office (410)685-9199, Catonsville office (410)719-8777 or

Ellicott City office (410) 465-8259

Rep. Chris Van Hollen, 8th District: Rockville office (301)424-3501 or Hyattsville office (301)891-6982

If you need help coordinating the meetings the Farm Bureau staff will be happy to assist. We will also put together updates on critical issues as we get closer to the August recess.