

spotlight

FEBRUARY 2011 • ISSUE 0001

A PUBLICATION FOR VOTING MEMBERS OF MARYLAND FARM BUREAU

Maryland Farm Bureau celebrates 95th gathering



Maryland Farm Bureau leaders led the 95th annual meeting and convention. From left, are, Chuck Fry, first vice president; Patricia Langenfelder, president; and Jim Steele, vice president.

Patricia Langenfelder of Kennedyville (Kent County) led the state's largest general agriculture organization during its 95th Maryland Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and Convention at the Clarion Resort Hotel in Ocean City. Re-elected in the vice president roles were First Vice President Chuck Fry of Tuscarora (Frederick County) and Vice President Jim Steele of Woodbine (Carroll County).

Over 350 attended the gathering December 5 to 7, 2010, where members celebrated record-high membership and program achievements, took time to learn and share ideas and established policy for the coming year.

Silver Bowl: The event was highlighted with the annual awards banquet where Frederick County took the coveted Silver Bowl award for its outstanding program work in the past year. President Tom Browning accepted the honor.

Frederick County was one of seven counties to receive gold ratings in all six of the program areas. The honors are given for member benefits/membership, legislative affairs, women's leadership/agriculture education, young farmers, leadership development, and outstanding county Farm Bureau program. The other six top-rated counties were Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Prince George's, Queen Anne's and Talbot.

In order to earn an award in any of the six program areas, county Farm Bureaus must submit an essay explaining how the program is communicated to members, what is the member involvement, what are the goals and planning activities and what were the results of the program and activities. The awards were judged and given a score and ranked gold,

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Maryland farmers gather with 6,000 at convention Marylander Elected to American Farm Bureau Federation Board

Maryland Farm Bureau President Patricia Langenfelder of Kennedyville was elected to the American Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors during the group's 92nd Annual AFBF Meeting in Atlanta. Fifty-one Maryland farmers attended the January convention where the organization celebrated a membership milestone of 50 consecutive years of membership growth. Farm Bureau membership at the national level stands at 6,279,813 member families.

Langenfelder is now one of four directors from the Northeast on the national board. Along with Dean Norton of New York, Rich Niewenhaus of New Jersey and Carl Shaffer of Pennsylvania, she will represent 12 states from Maine to West Virginia.

"I am honored and pleased to represent the Farm Bureau members in this region and I look forward to getting our Northeast issues and initiatives as priorities," she said. "Issues with the Chesapeake Bay have become a priority for AFBF and I hope to give the insight needed since it is right here in our state."

The Maryland leader was encouraged to run for the vacant board seat at a national session in December. "I think it's important to serve, but I could not do it without the support of my family and my Maryland Farm Bureau friends and supporters. Together, we can make a difference and keep agriculture viable."

As a member of the AFBF Board of Directors, Langenfelder will attend

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Big Challenges for Ag in 2011 Maryland General Assembly

By Valerie Connelly
MFB Government Relations Director

A new Maryland General Assembly is underway – with over 30 new members for 2011. For the fifth year, the state's budget deficit continues to plague leaders in Annapolis. This year, federal stimulus money runs out, making the gap legislators are trying to fill (\$1.6 billion) bigger than ever.

From an agricultural perspective, we expect funding for our cost-share programs to be challenged. One of our budget priorities is to secure the base level of \$1.8 million for University of Maryland Extension to continue to pro-

vide nutrient management plan writing services to farmers throughout the state. Without a basic nutrient management plan, achieving the water quality goals of the Watershed Implementation Plan will be virtually impossible.

Another priority identified by Farm Bureau members during our annual meeting is tax reform. Farm businesses simply cannot afford to pay more taxes – in the form of income tax, property tax or gasoline tax. And, estate tax levies must be reduced to keep farmland,

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USPS 012-269-ISSN1080-3556
(410) 922-3426
website: www.mdfarmbureau.com

Maryland Farm Bureau Spotlight is published monthly by Maryland Farm Bureau Inc., 8930 Liberty Road, Randallstown, MD 21133-4295.

•POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Maryland Farm Bureau Spotlight, 8930 Liberty Road, Randallstown, MD 21133.

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Farm Bureau Challenges EPA over TMDLs

On Monday, January 10, 2011, AFBF and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau filed a lawsuit against EPA in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. The lawsuit challenges the lawfulness of EPA's recently finalized Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load for Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Sediment, signed by the EPA Regions II and III Regional Administrators on December 29, 2010 ("TMDL").

The lawsuit challenges the process EPA followed in issuing the top-down regulation and the reliability of the Chesapeake Bay Model, which was used to assign load reductions to each state and each sector in the Watershed. The court has been asked to rule on the contention that EPA acted outside its authority under the Clean Water Act in dictating components for what has become each states Watershed Implementation Plan.

The *Baltimore Sun* published a scathing editorial accusing Farm Bureau of trying to push the responsibility for Bay clean-up off onto others. Printed to the right is Maryland Farm Bureau President Pat Langenfelder's response to the *Sun*:

To the Editor:

In your January 13, 2011, editorial "What kind of stewardship is this?" you took great aim at the agricultural community and the Farm Bureau for its recent lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency. We would like to set you straight on some facts so that your readers are completely educated about this recent action.

This lawsuit is not seeking to delay clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay. Farmers are committed to doing their part to achieve the goal of clean water for the Chesapeake Bay. USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service found that farmers were actively implementing erosion control practices on about 96% of the cropland acres in the watershed and found that sediment contributions to the region's rivers and streams are being reduced by 64%, nitrogen by 36%, and phosphorus by 43%.

This lawsuit challenges a specific, unlawful EPA regulatory action. It is about federal over-reaching into state authorities across seven jurisdictions. EPA claims to be working in "partnership" with the states, but its tactics throughout this TMDL process have looked more like coercion than cooperative federalism. Rather than facilitate and strengthen the cooperative Bay restoration process that has recently made such great strides, EPA elected top-down approach.

This lawsuit does not seek to benefit agriculture at the expense of others. Farmers do not want to shirk their responsibilities or shift clean-up burdens onto other sectors. No one knows the full cost and economic burden that the EPA TMDL will impose, because EPA has refused to conduct an analysis of those impacts. States within the watershed have estimated that implementation will cost billions of dollars.

It is not that the TMDL is unlawful because implementation would be costly. But the cost of EPA's action is so great, EPA is both morally and legally obligated to apply sound science and to allow for full and meaningful public participation in its decision-making process.

EPA also made an arbitrary decision to finalize the TMDL without correcting gross errors that undermine its scientific validity. Incorrect assumptions and estimates were fed into flawed models ill suited to the task for which they were being used. EPA's models were not designed for the job of allocating pollutant loads at this level of detail. They were not properly calibrated or validated. EPA admitted that its modeling was flawed, but nonetheless finalized the TMDL without correcting these deficiencies.

Maryland farmers have spent many years establishing and abiding by stringent nutrient management plans to be better stewards of the land. It is in their best interest to do so. Maybe you should visit some of those farms so you can better understand their environmentally sound farming practices.

Patricia Langenfelder
MD Farm Bureau President



Frederick County Farm Bureau captured the coveted Silver Bowl for its outstanding activities and achievements. From left, are, Jim Steele, MFB vice president; Chuck Fry, MFB first vice president; Tom Browning, FCFB president; and Patricia Langenfelder, MFB president.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU CELEBRATES 95TH GATHERING (continued from page 1)

silver or bronze.

The top-scoring counties in each of the program areas were presented President's Awards for their results and innovation. Honored counties were Baltimore for member benefits/membership and outstanding county program; Frederick for women's leadership/ag education and leadership development; Dorchester for legislative affairs; and Carroll for young farmers.

Distinguished Service: The Distinguished Service to Farm Bureau Award was presented to J. Allen Swann, a sixth generation farmer from Calvert County. Along with his wife, Pat, he began working on the family's tobacco, grain and vegetable farm. His early work in Farm Bureau included chairmanship of the Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers and president of the Calvert County Farm Bureau. He has also been a leader of numerous organizations, including Colonial Farm Credit, Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland for Agriculture and the Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission.

For more Convention information, go to www.mdfarmbureau.com and click on "Maryland Farm Bureau Celebrates 95th Gathering."

Nation's Capital visit is important for members Washington Drive-In is March 29th

Maryland Farm Bureau's annual Washington Drive-In will take place on Tuesday, March 29th, with a day-long trip to our Nation's Capital. This year's visit is important as the new Congress settles in and works on issues such as the Farm Bill, immigration reform and changes to health care legislation. The day will include a briefing at the AFBF headquarters, lunch with our Congressional delegation, Capitol Hill visits and dinner at the District ChopHouse and Brewery.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

6:45 a.m.	Shore Bus departs from Salisbury
7:30 a.m.	Western MD Bus departs Frederick
7:45 a.m.	Shore Bus stops in Easton
8:15 a.m.	Western MD Bus stops in Gaithersburg
8:45 a.m.	Shore Bus stops in Davidsonville
9:30-9:45 a.m.	Buses arrive at the American Farm Bureau Federation Offices
10 a.m.	Legislative Issue Briefings by AFBF Staff
Noon	Lunch on Capitol Hill with Maryland's Congressional Delegation
2:30-4:30 p.m.	Meetings in Congressional Offices
5 p.m.	Dinner at the District ChopHouse and Brewery
6:30 p.m.	Buses depart Washington, D.C.
7:30 p.m.	Buses drop off in Davidsonville & Gaithersburg
8:30 p.m.	Buses drop off at Easton & Frederick
9:30 p.m.	Bus drops off at Salisbury

REGISTRATION FORM Deadline – Thursday, March 17, 2011

Name(s): _____
 Address: _____
 County Farm Bureau: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email Address: _____

Check the location where you will catch the bus:

- Salisbury @ the Cooperative Extension Office Frederick @ the Fairgrounds
 Easton @ the Ag Center off Rt. 50 Gaithersburg @ the Montgomery County Fairgrounds
 Davidsonville @ the Park & Ride Rt. 50/ Rt. 424 I will be driving to Washington

The Registration Fee for each participant is \$85 and covers roundtrip bus transportation to Washington, lunch on Capitol Hill and dinner at the District ChopHouse. Maryland Farm Bureau has contributed 40% of the cost per participant to reduce the rate to \$85. If you are not taking the chartered bus to D.C. the fee will be reduced to eliminate the cost of the bus. Call Val Connelly for the cost at 443-690-2411.

Total Number of Participants: _____ Total Registration Fee Due: \$ _____
 Please enclose a check for registration or include your Visa or Mastercard account information below:
 Acct. # _____ Exp. Date: ___/___/___
 Signature if charging: _____

Mail registration form to: Maryland Farm Bureau, 8930 Liberty Rd., Randallstown, MD 21133. All participants will receive confirmation information with exact bus pickup directions approximately one week prior to the event. For more information, call Val Connelly at (443) 690-2411.

Don't miss this valuable event Day in Annapolis is February 15th

On Tuesday, February 15th the Young Farmers' and the Women's Committees will jointly sponsor the annual Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis. Briefings and lobbying will give you the opportunity to weigh-in on important issues that may impact your farm for years to come.

The event is timed to bring you to the State House at a critical time during the 90-day session – a time when committees are beginning to make decisions on pending bills. The day will begin with a legislative briefing by MFB Government Relations staff, followed by a chance to sit in on the legislative session. A luncheon at the Calvert House will bring together farmers and legislators as all legislators are invited to attend. In the past, more than half of the General Assembly has stopped by during the lunch, so let your representatives know you'd like to see them there.

8:15 a.m.	Meet in Governor Calvert House located at 58 State Circle
8:30 a.m.	Legislative Briefing by MFB Government Relations Staff
9:45 a.m.	Gather in lobby of State House to greet legislators arriving for session
10 a.m.	Sit in on Senate or House sessions
11:45 a.m.	Lunch back at the Governor Calvert House
1 p.m.	Visit committee hearings, stop by legislative offices or head home

Participants can either park in one of the garages downtown for about \$16 per day or the Naval Academy Stadium lot for \$5. A shuttle to downtown stops at Lawyer's Mall in front of the State House and runs every 15 minutes from 6:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. To get to the Naval Academy Stadium parking lot, take Route 50 to Annapolis and use Exit 24/Rowe Blvd. toward downtown Annapolis. Turn right onto Taylor Avenue just after the courthouse. Use the third entrance on the right.

Cost for the event is \$25 per person and includes lunch. Registration is due on February 4, 2011. Call 410-922-3426 for more information.

Maryland farmers gather with 6,000 at convention

Marylander Elected to American Farm Bureau Federation Board

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five board meetings per year to conduct the organization's business. "Farm Bureau's direction and leadership is the same – no matter what level you are on," she explained. "We are a grassroots organization so we have boards at the county level, the state level and the national level."

Maryland Farm Bureau was recognized for excellence in membership achievement and for implementing outstanding programs serving Farm Bureau members in 2010. AFBF President Bob Stallman presented Langenfelder the Awards for Excellence in all five program areas – agriculture education and promotion; leadership development; member services; policy implementation; and public relations and information.

"We were very excited and pleased to be honored in all five program areas," Langenfelder said. "We might be a small state, but our staff and leaders do an excellent job. We also received the Navigator Award for outstanding membership growth."

The state organization was also honored for outstanding financial support of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. The Apex Award is presented to state Farm Bureaus that have increased total investment to the foundation by 10 percent or more over the previous year.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

February

- 3 - Taste of Maryland Ag Dinner, Michael's Eighth Avenue, Glen Burnie
5-7 - AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Conference, Orlando, FL
9-10 - Maryland Farm Bureau Strategic Planning Session, Annapolis
15 - Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis
18-20 - Maryland and Pennsylvania Young Farmers Conference, Hershey, PA
22 - Food Check-Out Day Activity, Ronald McDonald House, Baltimore

March

- 5 - Charles County Farm Bureau Banquet
8 - Maryland Farm Bureau Executive Committee Meeting, Randallstown
12 - St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Banquet,
Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department Social Hall
19 - Prince George's County Farm Bureau Banquet,
Baden Volunteer Fire Department Hall
29 - Washington Drive-In

April

- 5 - Maryland Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Meeting,
Randallstown
12 - Maryland Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting, Randallstown
15-19 - National Women's Leadership Conference, Baltimore

June

- 14 - Maryland Farm Bureau Executive Committee Meeting, Randallstown
(To get your county's activities listed on the calendar, please send the date, event, place and time to Susan Summers at ssummers@comcast.net.)

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Big Challenges for Ag in 2011 Maryland General Assembly

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equipment and livestock from going on the auction block when a parent passes the farm to the next generation at death. Congress stepped up at the last minute in 2010 and increased the estate tax exemption to \$5 million per person. Unfortunately, the state's exemption is still only \$1 million – a level easily surpassed with Maryland land values and the high cost of equipment necessary to farm in the Bay Watershed.

This year, Maryland Farm Bureau is working with Senator Mac Middleton to introduce a bill to create the Livestock and Poultry Care Advisory Board at MDA. This effort came out of our grassroots process and was discussed by the MFB Livestock Advisory Committee in 2010. Throughout the summer, MFB members met with representatives of various livestock organizations in the state and determined that the creation of the board would be beneficial. We also included animal control officers charged with enforcing animal welfare laws for counties. Representatives of Professional Animal Workers (PAWS) of Maryland made positive contributions to the process.

The result is a bill that authorizes a 15-member board to compile and review science-based standards for animal care that have already been adopted by different segments the agricultural industry. The board will develop and maintain standards for education purposes to aid producers and local animal welfare officers. The board will also make recommendations to the Secretary

of Agriculture for publication and dissemination of generally accepted standards that consider Ag BMPs for animal care, herd health and safe, affordable and healthy food supplies for consumers.

Farm Bureau will also work for direct shipping of wine from Maryland vineyards to consumers; an increase in the Gross Vehicle Weight tolerance for trucks carrying farm products; and new restrictions on the University of Maryland's Environmental Law Clinic to prevent free representation of the Waterkeeper Alliance and other advocacy groups in suits against family farms.

We will oppose efforts to take locally grown organic fertilizer (poultry litter) out of the control of local farmers and award it to poultry companies; mandatory cover crops; impervious surface fees on farms; mandatory riparian buffers along all streams in the state; a new level of fertilizer and pesticide use reporting; and a ban on Marcellus Shale extraction.

There is a great deal on the line this year in Annapolis. It is critically important for Farm Bureau's grassroots members to be heard. Please take the time each week to read the Hotline. We send it out to over 800 members and we post it online at www.mdfarmbureau.com. Please contact your legislators to let them know how your farm will be impacted by bills pending in Annapolis. Our success as an organization increases exponentially when elected officials hear from the folks back home!

Food Check-Out events slated for February

Food Check-Out Week 2011 will be held February 20 to 26. The Maryland Farm Bureau Women's Committee will meet on February 22nd at the Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore to mark the important event and present them with food and financial support.

The purpose of the event is to celebrate the abundance and safety of our nation's food. Farm Bureau helps consumers find solutions to eating healthy on a stretched budget and want to assure consumers that America's farmers and ranchers are committed to producing safe, abundant and healthy food. Through charitable donations to local Ronald McDonald Houses and other charities during the week, Farm Bureau recognizes the need everyone has to find solutions to feeding families healthy foods on a tight budget.

Again this year, Food Check-Out materials for use by county and state Farm Bureaus will be available through AFBF. This will include an event planning kit, news release, logo, stickers, posters and banners.

Information on downloading and ordering the materials are available through Cyndie Sirekis at cyndies@fb.org or

MFB/Nationwide sponsor Farm Safety Seminar

Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance will jointly sponsor a Farm Safety Seminar on Wednesday, March 9, at the Baltimore County Agriculture Center. The seminar will begin in the morning, include lunch and conclude by mid-afternoon.

Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide Insurance have made large commitments to farm safety over the years and this event will be a continuation of their efforts. The seminar will feature Nationwide Agribusiness Safety Specialists discussing safe operation of farm fleets, grain bin safety, working safely with propane, safe movement of farm equipment on the highway and electrical and heating hazards on the farm.

Nationwide Agribusiness is the largest insurer of Farms and Commercial Agribusiness in the U.S. and is a member of the Nationwide Family of Companies.

Mark your calendars now and call Laura Ruhlman at 410-374-2325 to reserve your spot. Reservations are limited.