

Maryland Farm Bureau

Officers

Stephen Weber
President
Earl Hance
First-Vice President
Michael Wilcom
Vice President
Harry Moreland III
Vice President
Mark Zuzk
Administrator

Directors

Wilma Mallow, *Allegany*
Jeffrey Griffith, *Anne Arundel*
Robert Chase, *Anne Arundel*
Leslie Richardson, *Baltimore*
V. Wilson Freeland, *Calvert*
George Bradley, *Caroline*
Jim Steele, *Carroll*
William R. Rasche Jr., *Carroll*
Alfred Miller, *Cecil*
Pat Wathen, *Charles*
Brinsfield Lowe, *Dorchester*
Chuck Fry, *Frederick*
John W. Bell, *Frederick*
Delmar Yoder, *Garrett*
Ned Sayre, *Harford*
Philip Jones, *Howard*
Brad Morris, *Kent*
George Lechlides, *Montgomery*
Chris Parker, *Prince George's*
Alan Schmidt, *Queen Anne's*
James Norris Jr., *St. Mary's*
Charles Otto, *Somerset*
Larry Ewing, *Talbot*
Priscilla Harsh, *Washington*
William Kenney, *Wicomico*
Carlton Magee, *Worcester*
Beverly Burton, *FB Women*
Karen A. Callahan, *FB Women*
Richard Eaves, *Young Farmers*
Brent Kenney, *Young Farmers*

Maryland Farm Bureau Spotlight

Susan G. Summers, *Editor*
12221 Fingerboard Road
Monrovia, MD 21770
(301) 865-1045 • Fax (301) 865-1057
e-mail: sgsummers@worldnet.att.net

Designed by Jennifer C. Hankey,
HDI Corporation
4485 Lewis Mill Ct. • Jefferson, MD 21755
(301) 473-5140 • (301) 473-5141 Fax
e-mail: hdi@netcrafters.net

USPS 012-269-ISSN1080-3556
(410) 922-3426 mdfb1@erols.com
website: www.mdfarmbureau.com
Maryland Farm Bureau Spotlight is published bi-monthly by Maryland Farm Bureau Inc., 8930 Liberty Road, Randallstown, MD 21133-4295.

•Periodicals postage paid at Randallstown, MD and additional mailing offices.
•Subscription price to members (paid as part of Farm Bureau membership dues) is \$3.70. All other subscriptions are \$60 per year.
•**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Maryland Farm Bureau Spotlight*, 8930 Liberty Road, Randallstown, MD 21133.
•Any editorial material may be reproduced with credit to this publication.



National Awards and Legislative Priorities

By Stephen L. Weber, MFB President

The American Farm Bureau Federation held its 83rd annual meeting in Reno, Nevada, on January 6-9. A delegation of more than 30 from Maryland traveled west to attend the meetings. We proudly represented all Maryland farm families during the recognition program in which Maryland was presented with six Gold Star awards and a special commendation for retaining such a high number of members from one year to the next.

Maryland's Young Farmer representatives were among the most outstanding in both the discussion meet and the achievement award contest. Brad Morris of Kent County did an excellent job in discussions on issues that included farmer image, the environment and the future role of Farm Bureau as an advocate for farmers. Good work Brad!

Kevin and Elizabeth Anderson of Somerset County were named fourth runner-up in the Young Farmer achievement award contest. This grueling competition analyzes all phases of a young farm family's operation and recognizes the best of the best. This is the second year in a row that Maryland Young Farmers have risen to the top in this program. Congratulations Kevin and Liz!

The annual meeting also provided an opportunity for Farm Bureau members and staff to become familiar with the legislative agenda for the year ahead. Among the priority issues for AFBF in 2002 is passage of the farm bill. The U.S. Senate is scheduled to reconvene on January 23rd. After several failed attempts to end debate on the farm bill in 2001, Farm Bureau hopes to convince enough Senators to vote for cloture (we need 60) before the new budget priorities are outlined. The big question is will Congress provide the promised \$73.5 billion in the face of an economic slowdown, additional spending for the war effort and increased security after 9/11? The President and many members of Congress have sig-

naled that the money will be available. Farm Bureau believes that we must commit the money - in the form of a new farm bill - before the new budget bills are written in April.

Other issues on the priority list for Farm Bureau in Washington this year include the creation of an agro terrorism branch within the Office of Homeland Security. Concern over the introduction of a foreign animal disease is at an all-time high among producers. Consumers want to know the food supply is safe and is protected by a top-notch food safety inspection service at USDA.

Also at the top of the list for early action in the 2nd session of the 107th Congress is passage of Trade Promotion Authority. This will give the President the authority to negotiate trade agreements with other countries, in consultation with Congress, and be assured a straight up or down vote at the end of the negotiations. Farm Bureau believes that this is essential if the U.S. is going to have any success in negotiating tariff relief for U.S. producers during the upcoming trade discussion in Geneva.

Finally, Farm Bureau will work to seek a permanent end to the death tax. Last year, Congress passed a phase-out that completely eliminates the death tax in 2010, but brings it back in full force in 2011 if new tax law is not passed before then. It takes 60 votes to make a tax cut permanent in the U.S. Senate. We only had 58 votes to kill the death tax. We in Maryland will have to redouble our efforts to make sure our Senators will support a permanent end to the death tax when the next vote is taken.

2002 is shaping up to be a promising and yet challenging year for the American farmer. Through continued commitment to good government, fair policy, and grassroots action all of us in Farm Bureau can make a difference in the year ahead.

THE ag agenda



By **Bob Stallman**, President
American Farm Bureau Federation®

Speak up for agriculture

Agricultural advocacy is our most important chore. It is not a luxury. It is not something we do "if we have the time." We must make the time, as if we were changing oil or mucking out a calf stall. It may not be fun but the work has to be done. The forward to our AFBF policy book spells it out - individuals have a moral responsibility to help preserve freedom for future generations by participating in public affairs. People have the right and the responsibility to speak for themselves. As active, involved Farm Bureau volunteers, we recognize the necessity and accept the obligation to stand up and speak out for agriculture.

Over the years, we have seen many and heard even more who want to speak for farmers and ranchers. They come from diverse walks of life, far from the agricultural path, yet they profess to know our occupation better than we do and are eager to cram their pet philosophies on all who disagree. Farm Bureau was a driving force during the most recent farm program debate. America's agricultural system, renowned as the most productive and admired in the world, was under attack. Farm Bureau members did not hesitate to stand up to present and defend our member-written policies to address current concerns in ways that would offer long-term hope and recovery.

Apparently there are many who believe a farm program should not deal with strengthening agriculture, a major component of our national security and well-being. Some want a shift in emphasis from production to conservation. Others demand a shift from conservation to preservation. A few tried to monkey wrench the works to foster goals of eliminating meat from the diet, or earmarking funds and programs to help only the less efficient or the hobby producer. Others claim farm programs waste tax dollars.