

# Speak up for agriculture

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## Many Act to Hinder Farm Progress

Some go beyond talking and get to meddling, like the animal rights groups who wanted names and addresses of people who participate in animal damage control programs. The intent is to post the information on the Internet - a not-so-subtle call for attacks on people and property. Incredibly, the previous administration's USDA attorneys released the information. Your American and several state Farm Bureaus immediately went to court and obtained a temporary restraining order. We expect a permanent injunction at any time.

To prevent any more such sweetheart deals between extremists and their buddies in the bureaucracy, AFBF is working with USDA's National Agricultural Statistical Service to assure that privileged information remains confidential. We have a representative on the Agricultural Statistics Advisory Committee to help advise the USDA Secretary. Our presence there helped thicken the security firewalls when the Environmental Protection Agency sought USDA data as they were preparing water quality standards. We believe standards should be based on science, not on the location of the nearest chicken coop.

From the long-term overview of the nearly two years of preparation and discussion on this farm program, it is clear our elected and appointed leaders need to hear more from more of us. Farm and ranch families are suffering through some mighty tough times, with commodity prices at Depression-era levels at the lowest point.

Some prices have climbed back - they could not have gone any lower - but so have the costs of things we pay for to keep our business going and growing - like labor, taxes, fuel and fertilizer.

## Farm Families Must Speak Out

Arguments, opinions and misinformation injected into the farm bill discussion do not promote higher commodity prices, or reduce the costs of our inputs. Some would increase taxes to pay for more federal employees to administer or enforce their laws. Too many in Congress do not understand modern farming's needs and were tempted by schemes that would have reduced our efficiency, productivity and profitability, in the process weakening national well-being.

Farm Bureau represents our interests well in Congress, in the courts and with the administration and its regulatory agencies. But no one presents our interests better than you. Last August, AFBF had a special push for members to communicate with their members of Congress, to promote selected issues. As a result of your efforts, we secured farm-produced renewable fuels a place in the nation's energy security plans and we succeeded in obtaining Trade Promotion Authority for the president so U.S. negotiators can participate in trade discussions and open new markets for our exports.

Keep up the good work. Stay informed and involved, working through your county, state and American Farm Bureaus to speak up for agriculture. If you don't, others will.

# Wildlife bills beginning to hit in Annapolis

By Jessica Fritz

MFB Assistant Director of Government Relations

Several wildlife bills have been introduced already in the Maryland General Assembly.

## H. B. 9 - Delegate Owings, et al - Deer Management Plans-Increased Harvest

This bill would direct the Department of Natural Resources to manage the deer harvest, including the increased harvest of does and higher bag limits for antlerless deer, on a region-by-region basis or a zone-by-zone basis within a region. The bill calls for the deer firearms season to be at least 21 days long, including up to three Sundays. The bill also calls for a non-resident 3-day deer firearm license. The bill permits the Department of Natural Resources Deer Management Plan to allow for an increased harvest by the use of bait, professional sharpshooters, lethal darts or capture and euthanasia if the deer population in an urban management region has exceeded the carrying capacity of that region. In addition, the bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to report annually to the legislative policy committee, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, and the House Environmental Matters Committee on the status of the carrying capacity of regions in relationship to the current population of deer and the impact of increased harvest measures on the overpopulation of deer in each region.

## H. B. 10 - Delegate Edwards, et al - Black Bear Management

This bill would require that the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources adopt regulations by October 1, 2002 to establish a limited black bear hunting season to control the black bear population in a region where the black bear population exceeds the region's carrying capacity. The regulations will regulate the time period and locations where black bear hunting is allowed and establish the number of black bear hunting stamps issued at a level necessary to control the black bear population. The Department of Natural Resources will operate a lottery for individuals who hold a valid hunting license to compete for a black bear hunting stamp. The regulations will also provide that a person can only hunt on private land if they are carrying the written permission of the landowner. To the extent possible, a minimum of 10 percent of the black bear hunting stamps issued in a county where hunting is to take place will be awarded to county residents. The bill requires that the Department of Natural Resources fully implement the regulations adopted by October 1, 2002.

At press time, neither of these bills had been scheduled for hearing. They will be published in the Maryland Farm Bureau Hotline the week before they are scheduled for a hearing. Please contact Jessica Fritz at (410) 269-0656 if you have any questions.

# Unite for agriculture - Let your voice be heard

By Harry Moreland III

National Affairs Committee Chairman

It's time to plan your annual trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with officials on legislative initiatives that will affect the way you farm. Our Congressional Delegation needs to hear from us on vital issues like the farm programs, the Clean Water Act, AFO-CAFO standards, conservation programs and tax reform.

This year's Drive-In offers a unique chance to visit with officials from the People's Republic of China. China has the potential to become one of the largest consumers of U.S. agricultural products in the world. Maryland growers should take advantage of this opportunity to ask about the products that Chinese citizens want and about how to market to them. In addition, the Chinese Embassy staff has graciously invited us to stay for an authentic Chinese dinner after our meeting.

The briefing from the American Farm Bureau Federation staff will include not only the latest information on legislative issues, but it will also include a program on how to make your visit to Capitol Hill as effective as possible. This program will prepare our delegation for visits to Hill offices on Thursday morning. We will be advised on how best to discuss our issues, what type of questions to ask and how to follow-up with the Member of Congress or staff person.

And, because so many participants from last year expressed a desire to share more information about their county concerns and their meetings on the Hill, we have scheduled two sessions to allow county delegations to report to the group. The first is on Wednesday afternoon and the second is on Thursday during the closing lunch.

Please work with your county Farm Bureau to designate a delegation to attend the 2002 Washington Drive-In. We would like to have representation from every county this year. Farm Bureau can accomplish a great deal in Washington if we all work together.

3:30 p.m. Room Check-In  
 4:15 p.m. Board buses for trip to Embassy  
 5 p.m. Briefing at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China  
 Followed by dinner with Embassy staff  
 8:30-9 p.m. Arrival at the Holiday Inn-Capitol

## Thursday, March 7

7:30 a.m. Breakfast at the Holiday Inn-Capitol  
 8:15 a.m. Board Bus for Capitol Hill  
 9 a.m. Meetings in Congressional Offices  
 11:30 a.m. Lunch with our Congressional Delegation  
 1:15 p.m. Meet Bus to return to Hotel

Return before Feb. 13,  
 2002 to:  
 Maryland Farm Bureau  
 8930 Liberty Road  
 Randallstown, MD  
 21133

## Registration Form Registration Deadline - February 13, 2002

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

County Farm Bureau: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:  Single Room - \$205  Double Room - \$260

Room Preferences:  Smoking  Non-Smoking

Handicapped Accessible

## Wednesday, March 6

10 a.m. Participants arrive at the Holiday Inn-Capitol  
 10:30 a.m. AFBF Briefing on Legislative Issues  
 12:30 p.m. Lunch - Discovery II Ballroom - Holiday Inn-Capitol  
 2 p.m. Speakers and County FB reports - Discovery II Ballroom