

spotlight

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008 • ISSUE 0008

A PUBLICATION FOR VOTING MEMBERS OF MARYLAND FARM BUREAU

MFB Lawsuit Meets with Early Successes

By Valerie Connelly
MFB Government Relations Director

Early favorable rulings are seen as a good sign by the attorneys representing Maryland Farm Bureau in our nutrient management case against the state.

In October, the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County ruled that the three farmers named in the Farm Bureau case against the state could have their identities protected. The judge granted a protective order requiring that all documents in the case refer to the three farmers as John Doe, Jane Roe and John Poe. Judge Hackner also ruled that any papers filed with the actual identities of the farmers be protected and all identifying information be redacted in the public court record. Farm Bureau and its attorneys believe that since we are suing to protect the identities of farmers and their nutrient management plans, we should protect the identities of the farmers involved in the case.



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Teaching agriculture – one school at a time

By Caroline Isaacson
Miss Cecil County Farm Bureau

I am the daughter of Holly and Steve Isaacson and I am currently serving as Miss Cecil County Farm Bureau.

In September, I visited Cecilton Elementary School to talk to all of the students about agriculture. When I asked them what they thought agriculture was, no one had any idea! But after I began to explain what it is and what Farm Bureau is, they began to relate. I was able to go into every classroom in the entire school. I showed every student a map of Maryland agriculture and explained to them the top commodities in Cecil County.



(continued on page 3)

93RD ANNUAL Meeting & Convention

**Speakers and policy
fill busy
convention schedule**
*See you in Ocean City
December 7-10*

Maryland Farm Bureau members have much to discuss and much to celebrate – and it will all be done during the 93rd Annual Meeting and Convention at the Clarion Resort Hotel in Ocean City. The event will be held December 7 to 10, 2008.

Leaders are excited that the Young Farmers will hold their annual business meeting and competitions in conjunction with the convention this year. YF activities will run from noon to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 7.

Maryland Farm Bureau President Mike Phipps welcomes all members to attend and participate in the many activities planned at the convention, including several interesting break-out sessions led by AFBF staff. Other highlights will include committee meetings, discussion on resolutions and the annual awards banquet.

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**Maryland Farm Bureau
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 William Kenney, Wicomico
 Danny Holland, Worcester
 Evelyn Wilcom, FB Women
 Elaine Moreland, FB Women
 Brian Johnson, Young Farmers
 Hannah Amoss, Young Farmers

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WILDLIFE BRIEFS

*By Kurt Fuchs
 MFB Assistant Government Relations Director*

Black Bear Harvest Objective reached in four days

The 2008 black bear hunt in Western Maryland came to a close on October 23rd after hunters needed just four days to reach the Department of Natural Resources' harvest objective. The hunt began in Garrett and Allegany counties on Monday, October 20, one half-hour before sunrise with more than 452 hunters taking part in the hunt which resulted in 56 bears being harvested. The harvest objective for this year's hunt was between 55 and 75 black bears.

As a means to mitigate crop damage and address nuisance bears, the 220 permittees selected by a random drawing are encouraged to team up with landowners that have experienced crop and property damage by bears in the past. In doing so, the landowner becomes a subpermittee and may participate in the hunt, however, the permitted team may harvest only one bear between them.

This year's hunt is the fifth since the season was opened in 2004 and during the past five hunts, records show that between 74 and 95 percent of the bears harvested each year have been taken on private lands. In order to ensure harvest objectives are not exceeded, the department requires hunter teams to be in constant visual contact and closes the season immediately upon reaching the harvest objective.

Last year, DNR introduced a preference point allocation to the lottery system for those that have applied but not been selected in the lottery to have one additional drawing entry for each concurrent year they have entered. For detailed statistics and history of Maryland's black bear season visit www.dnr.state.md.us.



Atlantic Population Canada Goose Season Opens November 15th



Opening Saturday, November 15th and running through November 28th, the first portion of Maryland's two-part Atlantic Population Canada goose season is right around the corner. Don't forget that even if you're a landowner or otherwise qualify as exempt from a general hunting license, all migratory game bird hunters are required to obtain the Maryland Migratory Game Bird Stamp. Additionally, all waterfowl hunters over 16 years of age are required to purchase the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. Both of these stamps or proof of their purchase must be in your possession while hunting. For detailed maps, seasons and bag limits visit DNR's website at www.dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide.

Do Yourself a Favor - Support the PAC

By Harry Moreland, III

Hello! My name is Harry Moreland and I am a Caroline County farmer producing cash grain and straw. I am currently serving as chairman of the Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) Political Action



Committee (PAC) Board. I also serve on the MFB Board as president of Caroline County Farm Bureau. I am a staunch support of both organizations. These two organizations work together to help secure the future of Maryland agriculture.

We all know and believe in Farm Bureau's mission as the voice of agriculture. The work it does in representing us politically at the county, state and national level is unequalled and irreplaceable. However, Farm Bureau has a major limitation. It cannot and does not attempt to influence election outcomes. Farm Bureau has to play the hand it's dealt as far as dealing with elected officials.

This is why MFB decided about ten years ago to form MFB PAC. It operates as a separate organization and maintains an arm's length relationship to MFB. Its primary purpose is to help elect more farm-friendly elected officials at the state level. Its secondary purpose is to develop better relationships with and support from our current elected officials. In other words, MFB must play the hand it's dealt, while MFB PAC tries to reshuffle the deck and draw a better hand.

MFB PAC does this through two main methods. The most important thing we do is to endorse candidates for election. The other thing we do is make financial contributions to those candidates we endorse.

This is where you can help. Our contributions to candidates are limited by our minimal resources. MFB PAC receives no money from MFB. All of our money comes from contributions and fundraisers. Money is unfortunately a very big part of politics. With great income, we could make more and larger contributions and have greater influence. We may not like it, but that is the way it is!

Everyone should support the PAC – besides supporting agriculture, you will also be helping to elect candidates who believe in Farm Bureau values. These values include individual responsibility, private property rights, reasonable government regulations, lower taxes and smaller government.

Please give generously! I would encourage everyone to make a PAC contribution every time you renew your dues. MFB and MFB PAC work together as a partnership. You need to support both of them. The future of Maryland agriculture depends on it. Thank you!

AFBF Convention Deadline Nears

November 26th is the deadline to make your reservations for the American Farm Bureau Convention and Annual Meeting. The event will be held in San Antonio, Texas, January 10-14, 2009. Reservations after November 26th are subject to availability and a late booking fee.

A brochure with details of the group package arranged for the Maryland Farm Bureau delegation can be obtained by calling 1-800-248-9012 or by emailing melh.mdfb@erols.com.

Teaching agriculture – one school at a time

(continued from page 1)

With the pre-k, kindergarten and first grade students, I read them an educational picture book called "Little Star: Raising our First Calf." The kids seemed to like the book a lot and they thought the little calves were "so cute!"



With the second and third grade, we made "garden greenies," which are a ladies stocking stuffed with grass seed and potting soil. After adding a face to them, students sat them in a cup and left them in the classroom to water and observe as the grass grew, giving the greenie hair! Students and teachers liked this and learned a lot about the nursery industry, which is one of Cecil County's top commodities.

The fourth and fifth grade students made ice cream! Dairy is Cecil County's third top commodity. Students put milk, sugar and vanilla extract in a plastic baggie. Then they put the little bag inside of a bigger bag filled with ice and salt. After shaking the bag for several minutes, students then could eat their ice cream right out of the bag!

I really enjoyed teaching all of the students of Cecilton Elementary School about agriculture, and I hoped they all learned something. I plan to visit every elementary school in Cecil County to teach students about agriculture.

Young Farmer Speaker Dan Durheim

12:30 p.m. Sunday, December 7th

1:30 p.m. Monday, December 8th



Dan Durheim serves as coordinator of foundation and sponsorships for the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture and is director of program development with the American Farm Bureau Federation. He joined the AFBF staff in January 1999. Dan is responsible for coordinating the AFBF's Young Farmer & Rancher committee and its program. His goal is to build strategic partnerships with key agricultural organizations and to cultivate leadership among Farm Bureau members. Prior to joining the AFBF staff, Dan was East Central area program director for the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation. Dan earned his Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture education and development, with an emphasis on animal science, from the University of Minnesota. He is a member of the American Society of Association Executives and the Association of Fundraising Professionals. He is past vice president of the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association, and is a life member of the National and State FFA. Dan was Region II president of the Minnesota FFA. Dan lives in Fredericksburg, Va., with his wife, Cheryl, and their three children, Abigail, Caleb and Savannah.

Nationwide Speaker Lewis J. (Jack) Alphin

11:15 a.m. Monday, December 8th



Lewis J. (Jack) Alphin is a board member of Nationwide, a \$160 billion diversified financial services organization based in Columbus, Ohio. He was first elected to the board in 1993. He also serves on the boards of other Nationwide companies and is past board chairman of Farmland Mutual Insurance Company. Jack owns and operates a 1200-acre farm in Mt. Olive, N.C. He taught agriculture business at James Sprunt Community College in Kenansville, N.C., for more than 22 years before retiring in 1994. He is the former board chairman of the Cape Fear Farm Credit Association, a member and former leader of the Duplin County Agribusiness Council, and a former board member of the Southern States Cooperative. Jack is a member of the Duplin County Farm Bureau, the North Carolina Farm Bureau and the Farm Credit Council. He is a member and treasurer of the Oak Wolfe Fire Department and presently serves on the board of the North Carolina Small Grain Growers Association. A retired major in the North Carolina National Guard, he is a member of the U.S. and North Carolina national guard associations, the U.S. Reserve Officers Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. He served in Operation Desert Storm. Born in Duplin County, Jack obtained a degree in biological and agricultural engineering in 1971 from North Carolina State University. He is a Sunday school teacher and longtime member of Bethel United Methodist Church.

Margaret Wolf

1:30 Monday, December 8th



Margee Wolf is a training professional known for her enthusiastic, interactive presentation style. She has presented training programs to a variety of audiences, including farmers, managers, support staff and volunteers, in 48 states. She also serves as a consultant to state Farm Bureaus that are working on long-term projects such as strategic planning. As Director of Leadership and Program Development for the American Farm Bureau Federation, Margee also provides leadership to eight staff members who are responsible for a variety of programs including training, Young Farmers & Ranchers, Women's and promotion and education. Margee holds a bachelor's degree in English from Penn State University and a Master of Science degree in organization development from Loyola University Chicago. She is a certified executive coach and holds the Certified Association Executive designation from the American Society for Association Executives. She was raised on a dairy farm in western Pennsylvania, and before joining AFBF in 1997, served as Director of Training for the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. She, her husband Marty, and their daughter Emily live in a suburb of Washington D.C.

Bob Young

1:30 p.m. Monday, December 8th



Bob Young joined American Farm Bureau Federation in 2003 as the Chief Economist, coordinating the activities of the Economic Analysis Team. Prior to coming to Farm Bureau, Bob was Co-Director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI). He also served as an associate professor in agricultural economics at the University of Missouri. Before working for FAPRI, Bob served as the Chief Economist of the United States Senate Committee on Agriculture from 1987 through 1991. There he was active in the development of the 1990 Farm Bill as well as various budget and disaster assistance bills. Bob has a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Missouri, with a B.S. and M.S. in Atmospheric Sciences from the University of Missouri as well. Bob and his wife Victoria reside in Graysville, Maryland.

Greg Risberg

3:30 p.m. Monday, December 8th



"How to stay energized in a changing world" is the topic of Greg's presentation at this year's convention. The program will help you achieve more balance in your life, handle stress more effectively, use humor to renew your spirits, become a better communicator and achieve a more hopeful perspective. Greg is a social worker, educator and busy professional speaker. For the past 20 years, his "Humor with a Message" programs have touched over 500,000 people in 48 states, as well as England, Canada and Australia.

93RD ANNUAL Meeting & Convention

The Maryland Farm Bureau
December 7-10, 2008
The Clarion Resort Hotel
101st Street, Ocean City, Maryland

Sunday, December 7, 2008

12:30pm - 4:30pm	Young Farmers Annual Business Meeting Speaker: Dan Durheim, AFBF	Conference Room 2 & 3
4:00pm	Women's Hospitality Room	Rooms 302-304
4:00pm - 6:00pm	Registration	Upper Lobby
7:00pm	Vespers <i>Organized by the Maryland Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee</i>	Crystal Ballroom
8:00pm	Ice Cream Social <i>Celebrating 80 Years of Partnership between Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide Insurance Sponsored by Nationwide Insurance</i>	Crystal Hall 2A & 2B
9:00pm	President's Reception - Informal	Poolside in front of Room 201

Monday, December 8, 2008

7:00am	Exhibits Open	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
	Registration Desk Opens	Upper Lobby
	Continental Breakfast <i>Sponsored by Farm Credit</i>	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
7:00am	Farm Bureau Women's County Chair Breakfast <i>Sponsored by Choice Hotels International</i>	Crystal Hall 2A
8:00am - 10:15am	MD Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Program Speaker: Mary Conannon, Baltimore County Cooperative Extension <i>"Healthy Eating and Active Living"</i>	Conference Rooms 2 & 3
8:30am - 9:45am	Break Out Sessions	
	Wild Turkey and Upland Game Habitat Speaker: Bob Long MD Department of Natural Resources	Conference Room 1
	Addressing the Challenges for MD Dairy Farms in 2009 Speaker: Pat McMillan, MD Department of Agriculture	Conference Room 6
	Programs for Small, Beginning, Women and Minority Farmers Speaker: Frank Spray USDA - Farm Service Agency, Maryland	Conference Room 4
9:45am - 10:00am	New Delegate Orientation Session <i>Please attend if you are new to the MFB Annual Meeting</i>	Conference Room 4
9:45am - 10:15am	Break - Visit Exhibit Hall <i>Sponsored by Perdue Farms</i>	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
10:30am	Opening Ceremonies of Annual Meeting <i>Floral Arrangements sponsored by Bell Nursery</i> Roll Call of Delegates	Crystal Ballroom
	Credentialed Committee Report	
	Audit Committee Report	
	Auditor's Report	
11:00am	Maryland Farm Bureau President's Address W. Michael Phipps	Crystal Ballroom
11:15am	Nationwide Address by Lewis J. (Jack) Alphin Nationwide Insurance Board of Directors	
11:45am	MFB PAC Report Harry Moreland, Chairman	

11:55am	Invocation	
12:00pm	Luncheon	Crystal Hall 2A, 2B
12:00pm	Membership Recognition Lunch (By Invitation Only) <i>Sponsored by Nationwide Insurance</i>	Conference Rooms 2 & 3
1:30pm - 2:30pm	Break Out Sessions	
	"For the Love of It" Dan Durheim, AFBF Program Development Director & Coordinator, AFB Foundation for Agriculture and Sponsorships <i>Desire Jones is one of America's top professional photographers. Twenty years with National Geographic photographing stories around the globe has earned him the reputation as a world-class photojournalist. In this program, learn Desire's lesson that we all have the ability to love what we do through knowing our passion, making a contribution to those around us and expressing gratitude.</i>	Conference Room 6
	"Make It Magnetic: How to Attract & Keep Unbeatable Volunteers" Margos Wolf, AFBF Director of Leadership & Programming <i>Magnets attract objects, but they can also repel them. So it is with Farm Bureau and new volunteers. If we have great opportunities for involvement, communicate them effectively and provide people with fun and rewarding volunteer experiences, we can attract and keep volunteers. In this fun and interactive session, you'll explore the principles that attract members to volunteer opportunities and learn the tools you can use to help new volunteers to stick with Farm Bureau for years to come.</i>	Conference Room 4
	"2009 Commodity Outlook" Bob Young, AFBF Chief Economist <i>In this session, AFBF's chief economist will analyze crop yields and prices for 2008 and make predictions about 2009 commodities.</i>	Crystal Ballroom
2:30pm	Break - In Appreciation of Exhibitors <i>Sponsored by Hoover Inc.</i>	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
3:00pm	Delegates Reconvene	Crystal Ballroom
	Address by Miss Maryland Agriculture 2 nd Runner Up Bentley Arnold of Frederick County	
	Nominations Committee Report	
3:30pm	"How to Stay Energized in a Changing World" Speaker: Greg Risberg <i>Greg's program will help you achieve balance in your life, handle stress more effectively, use humor to renew your spirits, become a better communicator and achieve a more hopeful perspective.</i>	Crystal Ballroom
4:30pm	Nationwide Agent Membership Recognition	Crystal Ballroom
4:45pm - 5:00pm	District Farm Bureau Caucus Meetings	
	District 1 - Allegany, Garrett, Frederick, Washington	Conference Room 1
	District 2 - Howard, Carroll, Montgomery	Conference Room 2
	District 3 - Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, St. Mary's	Conference Room 3
	District 4 - Baltimore, Cecil, Harford	Conference Room 4
	District 5 - Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline	Conference Room 6
	District 6 - Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, Worcester	Crystal Ballroom
5:00pm	Dinner on Your Own	

5:30pm	LEAD MD Annual Alumni Dinner <i>(By Invitation Only)</i>	Crystal Hall 2B
8:00pm	Monday Night Social Entertainment by DJ Chris Startt <i>Sponsored by Atlantic Tractor</i>	Crystal Hall 2A & 2B

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

7:00am	Board of Directors Breakfast & Meeting <i>Sponsored by MARBDCO</i>	Conference Room 3
7:00am	Exhibits & Registration Open & Continental Breakfast <i>Sponsored by Farm Credit</i>	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
8:15am	Delegates Reconvene	Crystal Ballroom
	Call to Order	
	MFB Policy Resolutions Session	
10:00am	Break <i>Sponsored by Southern States</i>	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
10:30am	LEAD Maryland Update	Crystal Ballroom
10:45am	Policy Resolutions Session Continued	
11:55am	Invocation	
Noon	Lunch	Crystal Hall 2A, 2B & Conference Rooms 2 & 3
1:00pm	Delegates Reconvene	Crystal Ballroom
1:10pm	Address by the Honorable Roger Richardson Secretary, Maryland Department of Agriculture	
1:30pm	Policy Resolutions Session Continued	
3:00pm	Break - Ice Cream with the Exhibitors <i>Sponsored by Curton Healthcare</i>	Grand Ballroom
3:30pm	Address by Dr. Cheng-I Wei, Dean and Director of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, College Park	Crystal Ballroom
4:00pm	Policy Resolutions Continued	
4:30pm	Delegates recess	
5:30pm	Reception <i>Sponsored by The Clarion Resort Hotel</i>	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
7:00pm	Annual Dinner & Awards Banquet <i>Dinner sponsored by Nationwide Agribusiness</i>	Crystal Ballroom
9:00pm	Live Auction - Auctioneer: Andy Cashman <i>Sponsored by Delmarva Farmer Proceeds to benefit the MD Farm Bureau Scholarship Fund & the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation</i>	Crystal Ballroom

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

7:00am	Exhibits & Registration Open & Continental Breakfast <i>Sponsored by Farm Credit</i>	Grand Ballroom Lower Level
8:15am	Delegates Reconvene	Crystal Ballroom
	Call to Order	
	Continue Consideration of Policy Resolutions Final Adoption of Resolutions & Policy for 2009	
	Roll Call before Elections	
	Election of Officers	
	Final Motions Delegate Session Concludes Adjournment	

County Farm Bureau Final Membership Honor Roll

(As of October 30, 2008)

County Farm Bureau Membership Goals are based upon Regular Members, represented in the first two columns. The last column reports the total members paid, including both regular and associates.

County	YTD Regular Members Paid	Needed for goal	YTD All Members Paid
Allegany	16	114	31
Anne Arundel	103	836	995
Baltimore	72	454	1402
Calvert	28	252	222
Caroline	47	335	205
Carroll	118	811	365
Cecil		29	270
Charles	25	219	298
Dorchester	27	203	202
Frederick	71	830	543
Garrett	24	159	39
Harford	67	390	570
Howard	28	173	346
Kent	17	242	61
Montgomery	48	270	1250
Prince George's	20	207	704
Queen Anne's	22	301	121
St. Mary's	18	327	159
Somerset	16	220	94
Talbot	26	255	174
Washington	39	239	256
Wicomico	23	318	186
Worcester	24	244	130
Maryland Totals	908	7,670	8,541

Farm Bureau Members to Gather in San Antonio

More than 5,000 Farm Bureau members from across the nation are expected to attend the American Farm Bureau Federation's 90th annual convention, Jan. 11-14, 2009, in San Antonio. While in the Lone Star State, they will receive up-to-the-minute updates on the most important issues shaping agriculture today.

"It will be a pleasure to welcome Farm Bureau members from across the nation to my home state of Texas and the city of San Antonio," said AFBF President Bob Stallman, a rice and cattle producer. "Again this year, the convention program offers something for everyone. Members also have the opportunity to enjoy all that San Antonio has to offer, including the majestic River Walk, Texas' top tourist attraction – the Alamo, and world-renowned Tejano culture."

The convention begins Sunday morning, Jan. 11, with the opening presidential address by Stallman and presentation of state Farm Bureau awards. The annual Young Farmer and Rancher competitions, scheduled for Jan. 11 and Monday, Jan. 12, are a highlight of the agenda. Also on Sunday is the annual Farm Bureau Women's luncheon and business session, which is open to all women attendees, as well as delegates to the Farm Bureau Women's Business session. Advance tickets are required to attend.

The theme of the 2009 convention is "Forward Farm Bureau" which encompasses issues that are relevant to farmers and ranchers involved in all sectors of agriculture.

In keeping with the theme, the convention features 14 conferences developed to assist members in sharpening their understanding of a broad range of issues that affect them and their operations. This includes sessions on the turbulent global economy and how it relates to U.S. agriculture, the urgent need for livestock producers to become activists, the continuing debate over biofuels, crop and livestock outlooks for 2009, and much more. Several professional development sessions also will be presented.

On Monday, Jan. 12, the third annual Flapjack Fundraiser takes place to benefit the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. A short program during the fundraiser will include presentation of foundation and Farmer Idea Exchange awards, and recognition of the Book of the Year.

The convention concludes with the annual meeting of state Farm Bureau delegates discussing and voting on the positions that will guide AFBF in 2009.

Members can register for the convention by contacting their state Farm Bureau office. Additional information about the conference is available on Farm Bureau's Voice of Agriculture Web site, www.fb.org.

NEW POLL FINDS MIXED FEELINGS ON FOOD SAFETY

An Ipsos online poll conducted Oct. 14-16 found mixed feelings among Americans on food safety efforts in the U.S. It also identified problem areas and who respondents felt should be responsible for food safety.

Asked to rate food safety according to "school grades" (A, B, C, D, or F), only one in ten give food safety a grade of "A." Fifty-four percent rate food safety as an "A" or "B" and nearly half of Americans gave food safety a fair, poor or failing grade.

Americans place the greatest share of responsibility for food safety on food processing companies and U.S. government food safety inspectors. Food packaging companies were next in line followed by food producers such as farmers and ranchers. Respondents deflected responsibility away from consumers. Eight in 10 Americans report that most food safety concerns are related to imported food; two in 10 think most concerns are related to domestically produced food.



Get your winter citrus savings

Are you interested in citrus savings? The Maryland Farm Bureau Citrus program is offering great prices on fruit, juice and nuts. **Contact your local Farm Bureau** for information on the December citrus sales.



David Kushner

Nationwide agents recognized for Farm Bureau membership growth



In our 80th year of working together, Maryland Farm Bureau recognizes Nationwide's leading agents in membership sales for the 2007-2008 membership year, and Nationwide's top agents in farm insurance sales.

David Kushner of Kushner Insurance Agency in Gaithersburg sold 177 memberships. Robert Stastny of Stastny Insurance Agency in Baltimore sold 158 memberships and Jack Hutchison of Jack Hutchison Insurance Agency in Severna Park sold 133 memberships.

Nationwide agents wrote a combined 6,621 new Farm Bureau memberships for the 2007-08 membership year.

Nationwide's top agents in farm insurance sales were Melody and Rick Nelson of Nelson Insurance Agency in Princess Anne.

MFB President Mike Phipps commented, "It is rare when two organizations remain partnered for 80 continuous years. Over the years, leaders of both MFB and Nationwide have worked to improve on our unique partnership, and we look forward to another 80 years of service together providing reliable insurance options for our members."

Maryland Farm Bureau will receive the 2008 Navigator Award for membership growth from the American Farm Bureau Federation at its annual meeting in January 2009. This will be the fifth consecutive year for MFB to receive the Navigator Award.

Nationwide's MFB membership sales accompany sales of auto, home and farm insurance with discounted rates for MFB members. Nationwide also provides additional farm coverages exclusively for MFB members as a member benefit.



Robert Stastny



Jack Hutchison



Rick & Melody Nelson

A Good Day for Agriculture in Wicomico County

By William W. Kenney
Wicomico County
Farm Bureau President

As most of us will remember, 2007 brought a terrible drought in Maryland and Wicomico County was no different. During the 2007 growing season, many wells began to fail in the southern section of our county and with that people started to put blame on anyone they felt they could.

The media played it out as the wells were going dry, but in fact that wasn't the problem. Instead, the two-inch wells were no longer able to lift the water from the aquifers without deep well packers. More than 100 residents had to have new larger diameter wells drilled with the newer equipment to solve their water problems.

However, one of our local sod farmers was located in the area of where most of well problems were and so the blame began to be put on him. A local group of 29 residents filed an emergency injunction against Collins Wharf Sod Farm and the Fred Moore Family asking they be stopped from irrigating immediately. That injunction was not upheld in Wicomico Circuit Court, but the case has continued and legal fees have also.



Wicomico County has a Right-to-Farm Law and a reconciliation committee to hear complaints and so the committee heard the case. The reconciliation committee ruled in the favor of farmer and in fact awarded legal fees to him, however, the plaintiff's attorneys appealed their decision to Wicomico Circuit Court.

Both the plaintiffs as well as the defendants requested a summary judgment in court and the judge decided to hear the entire case. The day the case was to be heard, an agreement was reached by both parties whereby the plaintiff's agreed to dismiss the case with prejudice and not oppose Mr. Moore's future endeavors to obtain the well permits or withdraw water under those permits. The plaintiff's agreed to allow the reconciliation committee's report to stand. In return, Mr. Moore agreed not to pursue legal fees from the plaintiffs.

This is a good day for agriculture in Wicomico County, when our Right-to-Farm Law was upheld in the court system. The unfortunate thing is that there is a total waste in legal fees for a frivolous lawsuit that should never have been filed. We need to get the word out within the legal community, that before a suit is filed, attorneys need to investigate the Maryland Right-to-Farm Law as well as the county's Right-to-Farm Law.

Nationwide[®] Agribusiness Insurance & Maryland Farm Bureau
Working Together to Protect What Matters

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

November

- 11 Prince George's County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Baden Volunteer Fire Department, Brandywine
- 11 Montgomery County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 13 Howard County Farm Bureau Banquet, Lisbon Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

December

- 7-10 Maryland Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and Convention, Ocean City

January 2009

- 11-14 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting and Convention, San Antonio, Texas
- 16 St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Legislative Dinner

February 2009

- 3 Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis
- 5 Maryland Agriculture Dinner, Michael's Eighth Avenue

March 2009

- 6 Dorchester County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 13 Charles County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 14 St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 20 Talbot County Farm Bureau Banquet

(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.)

MFB Lawsuit Meets with Early Successes

(continued from page 1)

A second favorable ruling was also granted in October when the court denied the Department of Agriculture's Motion to Strike and Dismiss Farm Bureau's case. If the judge had agreed to dismiss the case, a ruling on the true meaning of the 1998 Water Quality Improvement Act's confidentiality wording would not have been made. The fact that the case was allowed to continue can be seen as early evidence that our argument has merit – that the General Assembly intended nutrient management plans to remain confidential indefinitely.

This case was filed by Farm Bureau over the summer to prevent the MDA from releasing farm specific nutrient management plans and other data to the Waterkeepers Alliance. The Waterkeepers filed a Public Information Act request with MDA requesting the documents. After twice denying the request because current law protects the information, MDA reversed itself under the direction of Attorney General Doug Gansler. His staff advised the department to reinterpret the 10-year old law and no longer protect the documents.

In court filings, Maryland Farm Bureau has argued that nutrient management plans are private business documents that should not be released to the public. The 1998 Water Quality Improvement Act and regulations approved to implement the Act require MDA to maintain the plans in a confidential manner. The next step in this lawsuit is a hearing on the merits, followed by a ruling on the actual meaning of current law. Stay tuned.

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Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppberger received the Friend of Farm Bureau Award during the Baltimore County Farm Bureau Banquet. Presenting the honor is Maryland Farm Bureau President Mike Phipps, left, and Baltimore County Farm Bureau President Keith Wills, right.

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