

# spotlight

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A PUBLICATION FOR VOTING MEMBERS OF MARYLAND FARM BUREAU

## Progress is steady to ensure agriculture viability

By Valerie Connelly  
MFB Government Relations Director

### Farm Bill Passes Congress

After two years of wrangling, Congress voted overwhelmingly to pass the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 in May. Maryland's Congressional delegation voted unanimously to support the final version of the bill. Farm Bureau supported the bill and urged Congress to override a Presidential veto. Passage of this 10-year farm bill will provide needed safety net features for commodity growers as well as new conservation funding targeted at the Chesapeake Bay region.

For specialty crop farmers, the farm bill sets aside new money for marketing promotion programs. The Maryland Department of Agriculture and other promotion entities will be able to use the new funds to develop local and overseas markets for fruits and vegetables grown here in Maryland. For dairy farmers, the MILC program was reauthorized with a feed cost adjustor added-in. This means that the MILC target price will be adjusted upward to account for the rising cost of feed.

### MDE Re-Working CAFO/MAFO Permit Proposal

Maryland livestock and poultry farmers have been analyzing and commenting on the draft version of a new MDE permit since the beginning of the year. MDE held regional meetings in late winter to hear directly from farmers about how the requirement for permits on poultry and livestock operations would impact the industry. Hundreds of farmers turned out for the meetings. They made very sincere and reason-

*(continued on page 2)*



## Inspiration comes from Chinese delegation visit

Maryland Farm Bureau recently hosted a delegation from China's Hebei Provincial Agriculture Administration to discuss Farm Bureau and the benefits it offers to the agricultural community. The Chinese delegation, led by Liu Liming, Deputy Director of the Hebei Agriculture Administration, along with five representatives from his department were on their first visit to the United States to examine various aspects of the agricultural industry from advocacy organizations such as MFB to wholesale produce markets.

Representing MFB during the discussions were President Mike Phipps, Administrator Mel Hollingsworth and staff members Valerie Connelly and Kurt Fuchs. Prior to their two-day stay in Maryland, the delegation spent time in New York with the remainder of their trip to include stays in Mexico and Los Angeles.

After being given a thorough description of the organizational structure and mission of MFB, the delegation was briefed on the federal, state and local scope of our advocacy and government relations

efforts. We highlighted MFB's grassroots effectiveness – from the bottom-up – wherein our farmer-members come together to determine the policies and priorities of the organization. During a question and answer period, the Chinese inquired about the Farm Bill, crop insurance and the ins and outs of membership in Maryland Farm Bureau. There was genuine interest in the Farm Bureau model, especially when one of the visitors noted that no private, non-governmental equivalent exists within Chinese agriculture. It is hoped that MFB and Hebei Province can foster a dialogue to further the potential for private, grassroots agricultural advocacy within China.

At the conclusion of the successful visit, Liu Liming presented Mike Phipps and Mel Hollingsworth each with a colorfully detailed book about Hebei Province along with invitations to visit if they ever find themselves in China. Although our two countries remain vastly different in many ways, it is inspiring to focus on where we can come together, bridge gaps and learn from one another in an effort to bring mutual benefits to our two nations' agricultural communities.

## Maryland Farm Bureau

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## Progress is steady to ensure agriculture viability

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able suggestions about limiting the reach and cost of the permit.

As drafted, the regulation expands the number of farm operations that are required to comply with the federal and state Confined Animal Feeding Operation permit program. The new regulation also creates a Maryland Animal Feeding Operation permit to capture poultry operations. (Poultry operations have previously been exempt under the federal regulation, but are expected to be captured under the new federal rule that will go into effect in February 2009.) As drafted, the new state permit is required for poultry operations with 75,000 square feet of housing or more. There are annual permit fees and a requirement for a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMPs) written by the NRCS. The new state regulation would also apply to a dairy operation with 700 cows or a smaller operation if the cows have direct access to a stream or other body of water on the farm.

Maryland Farm Bureau filed written comments to MDE requesting that the new permit not exceed the authority of the federal CAFO law. We acknowledged that the poultry industry should not be exempted, but recommended that the new federal rule on poultry also be adopted at the state level. With regard to the specific requirements of the proposed permit, we urged MDE to do away with the MAFO concept and simply work with MDA to conduct better inspections of farms to ensure implementation of existing nutrient management plans. We recommended that new and expensive CNMPs not be required. Instead, we recommended that farms with water quality issues be required to work the local Soil Conservation office to develop a free conservation plan that could be implemented with state or federal cost-share funding. We also urged MDE to do away with any annual permit fee for the farm community.

At press time, MDE was in the process of redrafting the proposal to include many of the changes suggested by Farm Bureau and the farmers who attended the local listening sessions. The new proposal was expected to be published on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Interested parties can review the proposed regulation by logging on to the MDE website at [www.mde.state.md.us](http://www.mde.state.md.us). Formal comments on the proposed regulation can be filed with MDE and will be considered before a final rule takes effect. Maryland Farm Bureau will hold a combined meeting of our Livestock, Poultry, Dairy and Legislative Affairs Advisory Committees to make recommendations on the new proposal. The recommendations for comments will be considered by our Board of Directors and filed with MDE by the new deadline.

## Water Appropriations Issues Continue to Percolate

Maryland Farm Bureau is forming a Water Use and Appropriations Ad Hoc Committee to look at future water

needs for farms in Maryland. This is in preparation for the 2009 legislation session and actions by the House Environmental Matters Committee on the subject. Earlier this year, Chairwoman Maggie McIntosh urged her committee members to consider how best to address the concerns about water availability in the state.

Baltimore City relies on reservoirs in other fast-developing counties for most of its drinking water. Residents on the lower eastern shore had water access problems last summer when their older-model pumps and well pipes could not reach the water table. Expanding municipal corporations in central Maryland have looked to farms outside of the developed area to ensure water recharge for their citizens. And, many farmers who want to take some of the risk out of growing crops in a state that suffers drought three out of every five years have added irrigation to their management program. The concern about water scarcity has significantly slowed the process for obtaining irrigation permits.

The MFB Ad Hoc Committee will look at the current and future water needs for farms in Maryland. We will also work with the General Assembly as they study the issues and make recommendations that protect our ability to grow food, fiber, fuel and nursery crops in Maryland. If you have an interest in serving on the Ad Hoc Committee please contact your county Farm Bureau president.



### Sponsoring Ag Education

Members of the Baltimore County Farm Bureau stepped up its commitment to agriculture education by sponsoring the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation trailer at St. James School. Baltimore County Farm Bureau President Keith Wills and Vice President Mike Turley visited the trailer and met the teachers and students during its week-long visit.

### Fling in Annapolis



The Maryland Farm Bureau Women's Committee held its Spring Fling on May 16<sup>th</sup> in

Annapolis. Over 50 attended the day-long event that included a tour of the Governor's Mansion, lunch at Phillip's Seafood Restaurant and a narrated boat cruise with views of the Naval Academy and Bay Bridge.

## Something's Cookin' in Lothian

By Chris Griffith

One Friday morning in March or April, there is a business in the little town of Lothian that starts and ends its day differently than the rest of the year. A charcoal cooker arrives, tables and chairs are delivered, a temporary wall and door is assembled, coolers filled with chicken, beef, deer, pork and goose are lined up, and the day begins.

This special day occurs on the corner of Routes 2 and 408, known to many of the local residents as "the circle." This is the location of Gibson's Shell, owned and operated by Robbie Gibson. Robbie is also the Safemark dealer for the Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau and this is his day.

For the past several years, Robbie has held an annual Safemark Open House at his station. His week starts on Monday by offering Safemark product discounts to Farm Bureau members and ends on Friday with a dinner. Assisted by members of the county Farm Bureau and the women's committee bringing desserts, Robbie holds this open house as a way to thank the members for their support throughout the year. Robbie plans the menu and purchases the supplies. The shop area is turned into the event's gathering place by building a temporary wall and door onto the large bay doorway, helping to keep the shop area warm during the cold evenings of early spring. Tables and chairs are set up inside for the evening activities and fellowship.

This year Robbie held his open house on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The day started at 7 a.m. by getting the charcoal ready for cooking. Jeff Griffith, president of the county Farm Bureau, has been the chief cook for the past few years. Jeff's task was to barbeque the chicken and pork, and to roast the beef, deer and goose, and have it all ready to eat by 5 p.m. Of course, he had many "supervisors" as local farmers and life-long residents meandered in and out, checking on the progress of things in anticipation of an excellent evening meal. If they were lucky, and that day they were, Jeff would grill some hot dogs around lunchtime and offer a few samples of things to come. As 5 p.m. rolled around, Robbie's event was under way with a delicious meal, good social time and door prizes.

Robbie has been the Safemark dealer in Anne Arundel County for 30 years and has ranked either first or second for Safemark sales in the state for several years. This particular evening, with a solemn sound in his voice, he announced to the crowd that he is planning to retire and that this would probably be his last open house.

As he spoke, a silence fell over the crowd as they undoubtedly pictured in their minds what "the corner" would be like without Robbie, and coming to the quick realization that the little Lothian corner would never be the same. This station was not just a local business to these residents. Robbie's shop had become the "local general store" of years gone by. It was the place for the farmers to find out how everyone's crops were doing, learn about new technologies while deciding who amongst them were too old to worry about it, catch up on the local news, and even some joking and teasing between friends. But most importantly, Sunday was the time for coffee, doughnuts and the gathering of friends as they stood around in Robbie's shop, enjoying a quiet Lothian morning and enjoying each other's company.

Robbie has mixed emotions about the retirement but he says that it is time for him and his wife, Janet, to do some traveling. Robbie then lightened up things by giving out door prizes, of which included some hats from his Gibson Texaco days. Friends chose these hats as a commemoration to the life-long business and friendship that they had found in Robbie 35 years before.

As the evening came to an end, so did the 30 years of commitment that Robbie Gibson has given to Farm Bureau and Safemark.

### County Farm Bureau Membership Honor Roll (As of May 16, 2008)

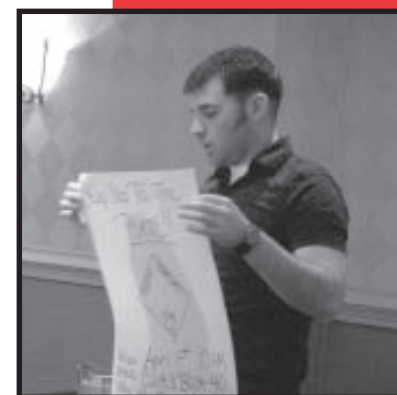
*County Farm Bureau Membership Goals are based upon Regular Members, represented in the first two columns. The last column reports the total members paid, including both regular and associates.*

County	YTD Regular Members Paid	Needed for goal	YTD All Members Paid
Allegany	117	9	132
Anne Arundel	878	90	3022
Baltimore	493	69	3988
Calvert	253	37	827
Caroline	332	33	787
Carroll	750	107	1480
Cecil	268	41	717
Charles	217	17	940
Dorchester	210	26	625
Frederick	788	93	1962
Garrett	143	35	169
Harford	399	40	1710
Howard	182	25	1037
Kent	242	7	339
Montgomery	302	23	3120
Prince George's	209	27	1972
Queen Anne's	282	30	539
St. Mary's	326	19	710
Somerset	197	31	450
Talbot	263	28	644
Washington	241	29	784
Wicomico	310	49	708
Worcester	258	14	572
<b>Maryland Totals</b>	<b>7,660</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>27,234</b>



300 attendees training to become Farm Bureau leaders. Sessions ranged from Ag in the Classroom to Fat-Free Meetings.

Thirty Maryland Farm Bureau members recently attended the first-ever Northeast Leadership Conference in Cherry Hill, NJ. Sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation, the event had over



Carroll County's Curt Kleinsorg shares his ideas during a group workshop.

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# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## June

- 8 Worcester County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest, Sturgis Park, Snow Hill, 4 p.m.
- 22 Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest, Quiet Waters Park, 1 p.m.

## July

- 9 Queen Anne's County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest, Centreville 4-H Park
- 17 Caroline County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest, Denton 4-H Park
- 18 Frederick County Farm Bureau Miss Contest, Woodsboro Fire Hall
- 18 Allegany County Fair Kick-off Picnic
- 20 Dorchester County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest, Cambridge Horn Point, 2 p.m.
- 20 Allegany County Farm Bureau Miss Contest, Fairgrounds
- 20 Cecil County Farm Bureau Miss Contest, Fairgrounds, 2 p.m.
- 23 Frederick County Farm Bureau Picnic, Mt. Tabor Park, Rocky Ridge
- 26 Anne Arundel Get Fresh, Buy Local 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ag Education Day
- 27 Talbot County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest, Easton Ag Center
- 31 Harford County Farm Bureau Miss Contest

## August

- 2 Blessing of the Combines, Snow Hill, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 3 Somerset County Farm Bureau Picnic and Miss Contest
- 3 Howard County Farm Bureau Miss Contest
- 20-22 Miss Maryland Agriculture Contest, Maryland State Fairgrounds

## September

- 23 Allegany/Garrett Policy Meeting, Allegany Fairgrounds
- 27 Carroll County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Gun Raffle

## October

- 7 Allegany County Farm Bureau Banquet, Fairgrounds
- 9 Frederick County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, New Midway Fire Hall
- 16 Garrett County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 28 Carroll County Farm Bureau Banquet

## November

- 5 Baltimore County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 6 Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation Banquet
- 8 Harford County Farm Bureau Banquet
- 11 Montgomery 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](mailto:ssummers@comcast.net).)*

**Maryland Farm Bureau  
Political Action Committee**

## Sporting Clay Event

**10 a.m. Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Prince George's County Trap & Skeet Center**

**Check the MFB website for registration information**

**[www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)**

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## Crisis Counseling: When the Unthinkable Occurs

**D**espite our best efforts, accidents still happen. If someone is seriously injured or dies in a farm-related accident, insurance can help get the farm back in business, but it takes more than insurance to help the people who are affected cope with the emotional aftermath. That's where professional crisis counseling becomes an important part of the recovery process.

Nationwide Agribusiness offers Maryland Farm Bureau member-customers crisis counseling service when a loss is the result of a covered claim. The initial session is free to Nationwide Agribusiness customers. The service is provided by CorVel, a national leader in healthcare management. CorVel counseling has proven to be effective in helping people deal with the numerous emotional stresses that often follow a tragedy.

In one example, following the accidental death of a customer's employee, Nationwide Agribusiness extended CorVel's crisis counseling services to the customer and his employees. According to the claims representative involved, Karen Bresser, "Every employee attended the counseling session – even those who weren't scheduled to be at work that day. My customer and his employees have told me that they found the experience tremendously helpful."

"When emotional trauma happens, it's important for people to be able to talk about it," says Gary Douglas, president of Nationwide Agribusiness. "Expressing emotions with trained professionals helps people process tragedy and return to normal activities sooner, and hopefully, with emotional resolution."

If your insurer doesn't offer this service, it may well be worth the investment to find this assistance on your own.

"We're not aware of any other insurance company currently offering this service for farm customers," Douglas adds. "Things are easy to fix; people are not. When tragedy strikes, Nationwide Agribusiness focuses on all the needs of those involved."

*Contributed by Nationwide Insurance. Maryland Farm Bureau has sponsored Nationwide since 1926.*