



THE BUSHWACKER

St. Mary's County Farm Bureau News

Website: stmarys.mdfarmbureau.com

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Banquet

Our banquet will be held on Saturday, March 10, 2018 at the Ridge Volunteer Fire Department. Doors open at 5:00 pm with dinner starting at 6:00 pm. See the form in this newsletter to order tickets. Deadline to order and pay for ticket(s) is March 5th. We hope to see y'all there!

The President's Message

Dear Farm Bureau Members: The year 2017 proved very successful for the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau. During the past year, farm bureau took the lead in updating our county's Right to Farm Ordinance. Working with the Ag, Seafood, and Forestry Board and county staff, St. Mary's now has one of the strongest Right to Farm ordinances in Maryland. Farm bureau also submitted language for the Animal Control Ordinance to define and exempt agricultural livestock from the ordinance. The Board of Commissioners passed both ordinances with the wording requested by farm bureau. Additionally, in both updated ordinances, (Right to Farm and Animal Control) farm bureau was successful in getting the same ag-related definitions included in the ordinances that are in the County Zoning ordinance. Now, there is uniformity of definitions across county ordinances.

A farm bureau service related project was also successful last year. After the tobacco buyout, many farmers mechanized their operations to produce corn and grain crops. According to the 2012 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Census, 114 St. Mary's County farms have on-farm grain storage tanks with a grain storage capacity of approximately 1.2 million bushels. Farm bureau determined that a need existed for Grain Bin Rescue Equipment to assist first responders in the event of a confined-area grain bin rescue. Farm bureau worked with the county Emergency Services Committee and others to find the best rescue equipment and develop funding to purchase it. We appreciate the support of the

Board of Commissioners in approving the purchase of the equipment, which is now housed at the 7th District Volunteer Fire Department. The "Great Wall of Rescue" apparatus, from a division of the Eastland Feed and Grain Company in Shannon, IL, is the only equipment in all of Southern Maryland specifically designed for grain bin rescue operations. The Farm Bureau Grain Bin Rescue Equipment project was submitted to the Maryland Farm Bureau as our 2017 County Award of Excellence program. Our program was recognized by Maryland Farm Bureau and we received the prestigious Silver Bowl award at the state convention last December.

On the Ag Education front, farm bureau continues to support the FFA Chapter at the Forrest Center. We solicited donations last year totaling \$1,110.00 from county farmers to provide discretionary funds for the FFA program. We donated \$850.00 to the CASE program for the purchase of coveralls to be used by students for farm visits. Our farm bureau is also offering a free one-year student membership in Maryland Farm Bureau for all qualifying FFA Ag Education students. The membership will provide the students with all of the benefits of an associate farm bureau member, including access to our scholarship program.

Since 2014, farm bureau has advocated for the relocation of the North End Farmers' Market. Last year, we supported a request submitted to SMADC by the county's Department of Economic Development to obtain grant funds to support the relocation of the North End Farmers Market to land purchased by the Board of Commissioners. The request was approved for \$25,000. It was combined with a companion grant request supported by the Charles County Farm Bureau resulting in \$50,000 to support the new market. If structured and managed properly, the new market potentially can become a significant economic driver for agriculture in the tri-county area. Farm bureau has asked the Board of Commissioners to be included early on in future discussions about the development and implementation of the new market in Charlotte Hall.

Your Farm Bureau, currently representing 825 members, is the leading voice for agriculture in St. Mary's County. It is a strong advocate of safe, environmentally responsible, and economically sound food and fiber production. Our goal is to increase net farm income and improve the quality of life for everyone in the agricultural community.

Regardless of changes in policies, trade agreements, laws or regulations at the national and state levels, farm bureau will continue working for our farmers protecting their best interests, keeping farming sustainable, and helping farmers remain profitable.

It has been an honor to serve as your Farm Bureau president for these past six years. Thank you to our members and the board of directors for their support during my tenure as president.

Best personal regards,
Jamie Raley

James K. Raley, Jr.
President

Legislative Update

The annual legislative dinner was held on January 5, 2018. State elected officials attending were: Senator Steve Waugh, Del. Matt Morgan, Del. Deb Rey, and Del. Jerry Clark. County Commissioners attending were: President J. Randy Guy, Commissioner Todd Morgan, and Commissioner Tom Jarboe.

President Jamie Raley informed attendees about the successes of farm bureau during 2017. He also presented information about a new policy titled the "Farmers' Market Protection Act." This policy was discussed and approved at the 2017 annual membership meeting, and approved as a state policy at the Maryland Farm Bureau convention.

Director Joe Wood discussed insurance issues regarding the Board of Education work release policy for school students who work on farms.

Bruce Young, District Manager for the St. Mary's Soil Conservation District, provided an update on stormwater management issues affecting agriculture.

Elected officials shared their thoughts with our directors concerning the 2018 legislative session in Annapolis and about local matters pertaining to agriculture.

Annual Meeting Report

The St. Mary's County Farm Bureau held its 70th annual membership meeting on October 17, 2017 at the Agricultural Services building in Leonardtown,

Maryland. The meeting was held to elect directors for 2018 and to transact other corporate business. There were 36 persons in attendance with 23 voting members present.

The membership heard a financial report, approved the report of the audit committee, and were given a report by Farm Bureau President, Jamie Raley, on activities for the preceding 12 months. Members also reviewed and voted on issues of concern to the agricultural community, state policy proposals, and the selection of county delegates to the 102nd Maryland Farm Bureau annual convention held the week of December 1, 2017, in Ocean City, Maryland.

Incumbent directors Joan Hill Bearden, Wes Cory, Jim Moore, and Joe St. Clair were reelected to serve two-year terms. Former Young Farmer Committee Chairperson, Susan Vallandingham, and Farm Bureau member, Rhonda Riche, were elected as new directors. Mr. Brian Oliver was appointed in January by the board of directors to fill an open director vacancy.

Please read further in this newsletter for information about our new directors.

Farewell to Former Director

Farm bureau thanks Mr. Willie Goddard for his years of service as a director of farm bureau. Willie was very active with the rental equipment program. He managed the mobile meat freezer trailer.

Welcome New Directors

Welcome to Susan Vallandingham, Rhonda Riche, and Brian Oliver. Susan is the former chairperson of our Young Farmer Committee and a former Miss St. Mary's County Farm Bureau. She is also the 4H leader of the Tudor Hall 4H Club. Rhonda grew up on a local farm. She has been a 4H volunteer for the past 7 years. Rhonda is a member of the De La Brooke W Foxhunting Club and the St. Mary's Riding Club. Brian's family farm is in Budd's Creek. He works at Three Mules Welding in Mechanicsville.

These new directors bring a diverse set of skills to our board which will be of great benefit to the corporation over time. Thank you to our new directors and to all returning directors for their service.

Seeking Miss Farm Bureau Program Candidates for 2018

Farm Bureau is looking for young ladies between the ages of 16 and 19, who would like to become Miss St. Mary's County Farm Bureau and represent our county

in the State Fair competition. We are also looking for young ladies between the ages of 8-11 to compete in the Little Miss Farm Bureau contest and young ladies between the ages of 12-15 to compete in the Junior Miss Farm Bureau contest.

Please contact Mrs. Marbeth Raley at (301) 769-3860 for more information. The Miss Farm Bureau, Junior Miss, and Little Miss will be selected at the 2018 Farm Bureau banquet in March.

Floyd Raley Scholarship

The Raley Scholarship application for farm bureau member dependents is available through the Business, Education, and Community Alliance, or BECA, website. The essay topic for 2018 is: "With 3 to 5 generations removed from the farm, how do you see your role as an advocate for agriculture to minimize the knowledge gap between farmers and consumers in order to promote a more positive image for agriculture?"

Farm Bureau will grant one or more awards up to \$1,000 depending on available funding. The scholarship can be renewed for up to four years. Eligible applicants must be a graduate of a St. Mary's County public or private high school, accredited Home School Program, or, currently enrolled in an accredited two or four year college. The applicant must be a dependent of a St. Mary's County Farm Bureau member. (Membership will be verified). Recipients must enroll as a student in a two or four year college for the 2018-2019 school year and major in agriculture, horticulture, environmental (water, air or soil) science, biological science, natural resources, or a related field of study. Renewal requests must also be filed through BECA's Common Scholarship Application with a new essay. The BECA due date is March 1, 2017. The Board of Directors of the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau will make the award selection.

Women's Leadership Committee

The St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Chairperson is Mrs. Trisha Thomas. We look forward to 2018 being a year of renewed interest and activity for the Farm Bureau's Women's Leadership Committee.

For information on how you can become a member of your local Women's Leadership Committee, contact Trisha Thomas at 301-475-5787.

Dissolution of Rental Equipment Program

Farm bureau started an equipment rental program in 2011 with grant funds provided by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). Nine pieces of equipment were purchased to assist farmers in the five Southern Maryland counties to transition from tobacco production to other crops. Equipment rental income was used to license, insure, and maintain the equipment. However, farm bureau was not compensated for the time and indirect costs required to manage and maintain the program.

After 6 years of operation, the board of directors determined that continued management and operation of the rental program is no longer in the best interest of farm bureau. SMADC has been notified that farm bureau will no longer support or manage the program and has asked SMADC to find another organization to assume management of the program.

Farm bureau is exploring new programs and projects that will be more closely aligned with our mission of member support.

FLIP TABS

St. Mary's County Farm Bureau continues to collect aluminum flip tabs to support the work of the Ronald McDonald Foundation. The Foundation, in turn, supports the Children's Hospitals that serve our area by providing respite and housing services for the families of seriously ill and injured children in the hospital.

Flip tabs can be dropped off at the Farm Bureau Office in the Ag Services Center Building on Radio Station Way in Leonardtown.

Ads – Voting members can place a business card size classified ad in the Bushwacker for free. Non-members can place a business card ad for \$10.00. A one-quarter page business ad is \$25.00 for members and \$50.00 for non-members. If interested in placing an advertisement, please call 301-475-0050.

NATIONWIDE AGENTS

Contact one of the Nationwide agents to check on the discount offered on your car, homeowners, and farm insurance. Nationwide agents for St. Mary's County are:

Frank Goldbach 301-862-7283
J. Patrick Haley, II 301-475-2866
Judi Sterling 301-994-0401

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2018 Officers
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L. Bryan Thomas, Sr., Vice President
Cathy Mattingly, Secretary/Treasurer
Trisha Thomas, Chair, Women's Committee
Vacant, Chair, Young Farmers

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