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**#2 January 24, 2019**

***Dates to Remember:***

**Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis - Wednesday, January 30**

8:30 AM - Briefing for farmers at the Calvert House, 58 State Circle, Annapolis

9:30 AM - Breakfast with legislators

12:00 PM - Governor Hogan delivers State of the State Address

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This week in Annapolis committees held several briefings to bring new members up-to-speed on important farm and natural resource issues. On Tuesday, Chairman Pinsky conducted an insightful set of briefings in the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, where 6 of the 11 members are new. The annual Buyer-Grower conference was hosted by MDA on Wednesday at the Naval Academy stadium. Many Farm Bureau members were on hand to negotiate potential sales with local chefs and retail purchase agents. On Thursday, the State of Agriculture briefing was presented to the House Environment and Transportation Committee. MFB President Chuck Fry presented along with Kurt Fuchs of MAFC, Evan Miles of MGPA, Charles Rice of MASCD and Holly Porter of DPI. Farm Bureau staff continued to promote our Day in Annapolis breakfast with legislators. A big turnout is expected next Wednesday.



The bills scheduled for hearing next week include:

## Tuesday, January 29, 2019

### [HB0084](#) - Maryland Farms and Families Fund - Purpose, Use, Funding, and Grant Qualifications - Alterations

*Delegate Charkoudian, APP at 1:00pm in 120 HOB*

This bill amends the Maryland Farms and Families Fund that were established during the 2017 legislative session. This bill expands the eligible nonprofit organizations to include nonprofit farmers markets and local nonprofit organizations along with the already eligible nonprofit organizations that match purchases made with FMNP, SNAP, and WIC benefits at participating farmers markets. The bill also requires the Governor to allocate \$500,000 a year to the fund. In the current law, the Governor is authorized but not required to provide funding.

Maryland Farm Bureau supported creating the fund in 2017 and has policy that strongly encourages the continuance of all farmers markets in Maryland. This fund would help encourage low-income households to shop at farmers' markets. However, like in 2017, this bill does not identify a new source of revenue for the funding mandate. There is still a concern that if MDA must fund this program with existing general funds, current marketing programs will be eliminated.

MFB did offer an amendment to the 2017 bill to remove the unfunded mandate which was accepted by the committee and incorporated into the final passage of the bill. MFB still has the same funding concerns.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 84 WITH AMENDMENT**

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### [SB0133](#) - Farm Area Motor Vehicles - Registration and Authorized Use

*Senator Gallion, JPR at 1:00pm in 2 East Miller*

This bill repeals the termination date for the expansion of the area K-Tag travel radius from 10 miles to 25 miles. This bill was passed during the 2014 legislative session with a 5-year sunset clause attached. The sunset clause was added in case there were considerable unintended consequences with the mileage expansion or with the farmer verification process required to be eligible for the K-tag.

During the first few years, there were improvements made to the verification process and since then, the process has worked well for both the farmer and for the Motor Vehicle Administration. Having the ability to travel 25 miles away from the primary farm location to farm rented land and deliver grain and other crops has become a more common practice around the state. Therefore, keeping the K-tag radius at 25 miles helps farmers reach remote fields that they farm, while staying compliant with State highway regulations.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 133**

**Wednesday, January 30, 2019**

**HB0028 - Natural Resources - Shellfish Nursery Operations - Wetlands License Requirements**

*Delegate Clark, E&T at 2:30pm in 250 HOB*

This bill exempts an aquaculture operation from being required to obtain a tidal wetlands license or permit from the Department of the Environment or the Board of Public Works when installing a pump, a pipe, or any other equipment attached to a pier for the cultivation of shellfish seed in a shellfish nursery under a permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources under § 4–11a–23 of the natural resources article, provided that the pump, pipe, or other equipment does not require increasing the length, width, or channel ward encroachment of the pier.

Shellfish aquaculture nurseries work their oysters on a regular basis to maximize the health and growth of their oysters. Having to go to the Board of Public Works to get a permit to lay a 1-inch pipe on a pier is cumbersome and should be included in the existing permitting process the nurseries already have to get. This bill just adds nurseries to the list of exemptions already allowed under current law, yet still requires DNR approval.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 28**

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**SB0128 - County Boards of Education - School Year - Start and End Dates**

*Senator Pinsky, EHEA at 2:00pm in 2 West Miller*

This bill repeals the state law that Maryland public schools must start after Labor Day. The bill also removes the requirement that the school year end no more than 5 days after June 15. The bill allows each county Board of Education to set their own start date and end date.

Maryland Farm Bureau has policy that opposes a year-round and/or a staggered school year and supports a school year that starts after Labor Day and ends no later than June 15th.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 128**

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Maryland Farm Bureau members are urged to contact their legislators and members of the relevant committees in support of Farm Bureau's positions on the bills listed above. To contact legislators, log on to the Maryland General Assembly website at: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov> and select the "Legislators" Tab at the top.

**Committees & Room Numbers:**

Senate: Budget & Taxation (B&T), 3 West Miller; Education, Health & Environmental Affairs (EHEA), 2 West Miller; Finance (FIN), 3 East Miller; Judicial Proceedings (JPR), 2 East Miller

House: Appropriations (APP), 120 HOB; Economic Matters (ECM), 230 HOB; Environment & Transportation (E&T), 250 HOB; Health & Government Operations (HGO), 240 HOB; Judiciary (JUD), 100 HOB; Ways & Means (W&M) 130 HOB

## In Other Ag News

### Governor Larry Hogan Honors 2019 Century Farm Families

Governor Larry Hogan honored Maryland's farm families for their commitment to farming and leadership in preserving agricultural land by presenting Century Farm designations to five families from five counties who have farmed the same land for more than 100 years. Visit [mda.maryland.gov](http://mda.maryland.gov) for more information.



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### USDA to Reopen FSA Offices for Additional Services During Government Shutdown

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced that all Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices nationwide will soon reopen to provide additional administrative services to farmers and ranchers during the lapse in federal funding. Certain FSA offices have been providing limited services for existing loans and tax documents since January 17, and will continue to do so through January 23. Beginning January 24, however, all FSA offices will open and offer a longer list of transactions they will accommodate. Agricultural producers who have business with the agency can contact their FSA service center to make an appointment. Visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov) for more information.

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### Sign up Now for NRCS Conservation Programs

Maryland farmers and forest landowners can now apply for assistance to protect the health and productivity of their land through federal conservation programs. NRCS accepts applications year-round but makes funding selections at specific times. Maryland has established February 15, 2019 as the next deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Agricultural Management Assistance program (AMA), and EQIP applications for Regional Conservation Partnership Program projects. Visit [www.md.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.md.nrcs.usda.gov) for more information.