



The Maryland Farm Bureau Hotline

Contact: Colby Ferguson (240) 578-0396, Parker Welch (443) 480-4059, or Valerie Connelly (443) 690-2411

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This week in Annapolis subcommittee, committee and floor voting sessions were the main focus in both the Senate and the House. With the bill cross-over deadline being March 18th, committees are scrambling to make time for voting sessions. Tuesday was the only day MFB testified on bills, and we want to thank Harford County Farm Bureau members Janet Archer, Harmony Miller, and Miss Harford County Farm Bureau Eliza Freeman for coming down to testify in support of the “Truth in Milk Labeling” bill.

Many members have asked for updates on priority bills heard this session. Here are a few:

- The Area K Tag sunset removal bill (HB331/SB133) that MFB supported has been passed by both the House and Senate.
- The noxious weeds bill (HB 808) that MFB supported has passed the House and will be heard in the Senate over the next week or so. The Governor proposed \$150,000 in additional funding through a supplemental budget to address Palmer Amaranth and other noxious weeds.
- (HB 20/SB 344) that MFB supports to remove the developer loophole that allows them to not pay the Ag Transfer Tax has passed both the House and the Senate with amendments. The amendments require the developer to pay no less than 35% of the Ag transfer tax when they finally transfer the land to another use. This won't make the local preservation programs whole, but it is much better than the 0% they have been receiving for several years now.

- The Anne Arundel County Agritourism bill (HB 639/SB 99) that MFB supported has passed both the House and the Senate with amendments to add the following counties: Allegany, Baltimore, Kent, Prince George's, and St. Mary's.
- Unfortunately, the Ag Education bill (HB 255/SB 407) that MFB supported was given an unfavorable vote in the Senate.

We continue to work on problem bills to make sure the voice of the Maryland farmer is being heard. MFB has worked on bills, such as Livestock and Poultry Antibiotics (HB 652/SB 471), Nutrient Management (HB 904/SB 546), Chlorpyrifos (HB 275/SB 270) and the \$15 minimum wage (HB 166/SB 280), to get amendments added to address many of our concerns.

This will be the last weekly edition of the Hotline for the 2019 General Assembly session. With the cross-over date being March 18th, the last three and a half weeks of session will be bill hearings, but they are scheduled on a much shorter notice, sometimes only a day in advance. At this point, most of the hearings will cover bills that have already been heard in their house of origin and have crossed over to the opposite chamber. In addition, many of the remaining bill hearings will be "Sponsor Only," which means the public may not provide oral testimony but may file written testimony. If there is movement on any of Maryland Farm Bureau's bills of concern, we will send an email alert to those of you on our email list as well as use the Maryland Farm Bureau Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MDfarmbureau. If you are following a bill and want more information or an update on its progress, please call us or log onto the General Assembly website at www.mlis.state.md.us.

You will receive the final hotline soon after the close of the Maryland General Assembly on April 8th.

Thank you for your support and interest in Maryland agriculture!

In Other Ag News

Fall 2019 White-Reinhardt Grants Available

Fall 2019 White-Reinhardt mini-grant applications are now being accepted! They are looking for engaging ag literacy projects to fund with \$1,000 grants. Remember, mini-grant funds cannot be used for consumable items like food or paper, transportation, wages or stipends, or safety programs. Additionally, grant payments can only be made to a state or county Farm Bureau. Visit www.agfoundation.org for more information.

Dairy Risk Management

The FSA has provided fact sheets from New York Extension comparing the 3 risk management options for dairy farmers from crop insurance. To view this information, visit <https://www.agriskmanagement.cornell.edu/>.

Maryland Farm Bureau | www.MDFarmBureau.com | 410.922.3426
3358 Davidsonville Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035