

Agriculture Business Council Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2023, 7 pm @ Milkhouse Brewery
Frederick County Office of Economic Development

Council Members in Attendance: Tom Mullineaux, Tom Barse, Bob Black, Tim Pry, Gary Grossnickle, Brian Sweeney, Dick Bittner, Victoria Robinson

Staff in Attendance: Katie Stevens, Becca Tucker

ABC Chair Tom Mullineaux called the meeting to order

Approval of Minutes

Tom Barse moved to approve the minutes for April 25 as presented. Dick Bitner seconded the motion that passed 8-0.

Member Industry Updates (All):

- **Livestock** (Tim Pry)- Cattle market very strong. \$1.38/lb for recently sold bull, finished fat cattle- \$1.95/lb (contracted price). Crops had a very late start but doing okay now that there has been some rain. Stellar barley harvest (avg 80 bu)
- **Craft beverage** (Tom Barse)- 10th anniversary of Milkhouse Brewery! The craft beverage industry still hasn't fully recovered from Covid (not only locally but nationwide); however, it is better than last year. Have seen a change in consumer behavior. The industry is changing- Flying Dog, DuClaw and Guinness are moving out of Maryland, but locals seem to be doing well
- **Dairy/Crops** (Gary Grossnickle)- Milk- \$18.20 for 3.5% Fat Corrected Milk, best barley yields ever- 155/bu, Corn- \$7.42/bu sold from the bin which is higher than last month, contracted wheat- \$7.45/bu, Cull cows high - \$1/lb. Grateful for the recent rains.
- **Organic** (Dick Bittner)- Difficult time of year for organic producers- weeds are in full force, even in drought conditions weeds like Johnson Grass and Maretail thrive. Dense cover crops have helped crowd Maretail (Maretail seeds can travel up to a mile in air)
- **Nutrient Management** (Brian)- MDA will stop funding University of Maryland for Nutrient Management positions in an effort to build the private market. Agents will be on staff until August 31.
- **Direct-to-Consumer Marketing** (Victoria)- Busy time of year for farmers that sell direct-to-consumer; they seem to be doing well. Farmer's market season is in full force; however, about to hit that mid-summer slump. Marketing strategies sometimes shift this time of year due to the higher production and some decrease in demand.
- **Agri-Business** (Tom Mullineaux)- Optimism that Secretary of Ag, Kevin Atticks, is listening to producers. He has been doing County farm tours all across the state. Since Covid, there has been a change in business regarding inputs and supplies. We will be seeing much larger suppliers, but fewer of them. Chemicals are much lower than last year- some are half the cost from a year prior.
- **Produce** (Bob Black)- Strawberry farmers had the best season they've ever had. Best cherry crop Catoctin Mountain Orchard has ever had (cherries like dry weather). Apples, peaches and pears doing well. Georgia lost much of their peach crop due to weather patterns, so demand is high. You pick berries has started and is going really well.

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FCOED Update (Katie):

- **2023 Ag Awards**
 - **Farm Family of the Year**- Tom Barse moved to nominate Clyde Crum Family for Farm Family of the Year. Gary Grossnickle seconded the motion that passed 8-0.
 - **Ag Business of the Year**- Gary Grossnickle moved to nominate Andy Bennett with Piedmont Group for Ag Business of the Year. Tim Pry seconded the motion that passed 8-0.
 - **Young Farmer of the Year**- Tim Pry moved to nominate Justin Tucker as the Young Farmer of the Year. Dick Bittner seconded the motion that passed 8-0.
 - **Ag Advocate of the Year**- Gary Grossnickle moved to nominate Belinda Burrier as Ag Advocate of the Year. Bob Black seconded the motion that passed 8-0.
- **New permitting process**- FCOED staff are now notified when any ag business permit gets submitted.

Legislative Update (Katie):

- **Agritourism Workgroup**- CE Fitzwater put together an agritourism workgroup to look at the County's support and agriculture and agritourism. These will be public meetings.
- **Data Center Workgroup**- CE Fitzwater put together a data center workgroup.

Other business:

- **MD Farm Bureau Updates**- New Executive Director- Parker Welch, Colby Ferguson has left.
- **MD Sheep and Wool Festival**- 50th anniversary had a great turn out, Secretary Atticks spoke, this industry has a huge economic impact that many do not realize.

Next Meeting: August 22, 2023, 7pm @ Catoctin Mountain Orchard

Meeting Adjourned