

Agriculture Business Council Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2023, 7pm at Catoctin Mountain Orchard
Frederick County Office of Economic Development

Council Members in Attendance: Tom Mullineaux, Tom Barse, Bob Black, Tim Pry, Gary Grossnickle, Dick Bittner, Sarah Welty

Staff in Attendance: Katie Stevens, Becca Tucker

ABC Chair Tom Mullineaux called the meeting to order

Approval of Minutes

Tim moved to approve the minutes for June 27 as presented. Gary seconded the motion that passed 7-0.

Member Industry Updates (All):

- **Livestock** (Tim Pry)- Drought concerning- 16.5” less water than where they were last year. Started chopping. 2nd cutting 7 bales/acre, Cattle strong Choice- \$1.79, Feeder \$2.15 large frame (400lb), Grain markets concerning- Corn dropped to \$5.60/bu, Beans- \$13.38/bu Wheat- \$5.25/bu. Johnson grass everywhere- likes hot dry weather. County roads struggling to find labor.
- **Craft beverage** (Tom Barse)- Breweries busy. Behavior has changed since Covid- Consumers don’t buy tickets in advance like previously. Extremely dry weather. Hop yields lower because sheep needed pasture ground in hop yard due to drought. The grape crop is doing great; wineries looking to have a vintage year.
- **Dairy/Crops** (Gary Grossnickle)- Dairy- lowest \$16.93/cwt for 3.5% FC Milk, Cull cattle market doing well \$1.10/lb. Black calves selling great. Drought concerns- Corn Silage yields poor- 2/3 a typical silage yield. 2nd cutting hay nonexistent, SB hurting. Challenging year with low grain and low milk prices.
- **Organic** (Dick Bittner)- Good year. Asparagus, tomatoes, and blackberry crops have been great.
- **Agri-Business** (Tom Mullineaux)- Bracing for what’s to come. Fertilizer is stagnant except pot ash is up. Seed prices off. Ag businesses struggling with labor
- **Produce** (Bob Black)- Great season until 2 hail storms, 2 weeks ago. Great crops. Cuts in tender bark from the hail could lead to infection in the plants- took preventative measures. \$.14/lb for juice apples now down to \$.08 due to plants shutting down.
- **Equine** (Sarah Welty)- Industry shaking up. Wolfe’s prices were really low last week. First time in years since Covid. Think it is due to drought and hay shortage.

FCOED Update (Katie):

- Fair- Awards first Friday night 7pm
- Ideas on how the County can better support ag businesses, local food movement, ag education?
– Internships, apprenticeships

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Legislative Update (Katie):

- **Agritourism Workgroup**- First meeting end of July- Overview of County support and policy for ag. Next meeting Thursday night- what is the vision for Agritourism in Frederick County?
- **Recreational Cannabis**- ABC stance for growing on farm. There is a Micro grow license for growing under 10,000 sq ft.
 - o Gary Grossnickle moved that the Ag Business Council does not support the growing of recreational cannabis on farms in Frederick County. Tim Pry seconded the motion that passed 7-0.

Membership (Tom M):

- Bylaws- Three-year terms for membership. Up to two consecutive terms. There are 3 upcoming vacancies.

Other business (All):

Next Meeting: October 24 at Johnsville Ruritan

Meeting Adjourned