

The Maryland Farm Bureau Hotline

Legislative proposals that impact Maryland's farm community

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After early concerns about the introduction of several harmful bills, the 2014 General Assembly session proved quite successful for Maryland farmers. The highlights include passage of the mileage radius increase to 25 miles for the K-Tag farm vehicles, milk hauling weight increase on state highways and Sunday hunting in the Western Maryland counties.

We were able to fend off the Agriculture unfriendly bills such as the Poultry Fair Share Act, and GMO labeling. In addition, the raw milk /cow share bill along with the raw milk sales bill both died in committee.

Bills to require Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) economic impact study prior to the PMT implementation were introduced, but in the end were not needed as language was added to the budget bill (SB 170) that requires MDA to complete and submit to the Environmental legislative committees a PMT economic impact study before they can use any budgeted funding to pay for the implementation of the PMT. The two legislative committees are given 45 days to review.

Another bill that monopolized a lot of the legislator's time this session was the Minimum Wage bill. The bill passed and we are happy to announce that even though MFB was opposed to increasing the minimum wage rate in Maryland, we were happy to see Agriculture exemptions that are in current state law remain in place with the passage of the bill. One section is on Ag exemptions to the minimum wage increase. Current law states that if state rate ever exceeds federal, these Ag exemptions would be in place:

- Ag employees, if the employers used less than 500 worker-days in all calendar quarters of the previous year.
- An Ag employee who is the parent, spouse, child or other member of the employer's immediate family.
- An Ag employee who is employed as a hand-harvest laborer and is paid on a piece-rate as long as the employee commutes daily from home to work; was employed in Ag less than 13 weeks the year before; is employed on the same farm as his/her parents.

In addition to these Ag exemptions, an amendment to keep the Ag employee overtime exemption at 60 hours was approved and remains in the law.

Below, you will see several hunting bills that passed this year. However, there were several Sunday hunting bills that didn't pass. They were bills to allow Sunday hunting state wide; in Anne Arundel County and in Southern Maryland. The Maryland Horse Council was the primary opponent to the Sunday hunting bills as Sunday during hunting season is the one day they feel is a safe day to ride. MFB will be working with the Maryland Horse Council over the summer and fall to see if there is a way for both sides to try to address the out of control deer population while ensuring the horse riders safe riding.

Listed below are several of the bills that Maryland Farm Bureau tracked during the session. Bills that were "Returned Passed" or Passed Enrolled" are expected to be signed by the Governor by late-May and become law. The effective date for most new laws is October 1, 2014. For the remainder of the year, Maryland Farm Bureau will keep you informed through the Government Relations Bulletin, published every other week. The GRB will be sent to those on our email subscription list only and will be posted on our website at www.mdfarmbureau.com.

AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND PRODUCT MARKETING BILLS

HB0003 Health - Milk Products - Raw Milk - Consumer-Owned Livestock –

Delegate Hubbard

Died in Committee

This bill would create an exemption to the regulations in the current General Health Article that would allow distribution of raw milk directly from a milk producer (dairy farm) to the end consumer as long as the end consumer has purchased an ownership interest in the animal or herd from which the raw milk is being produced and has signed a written contract of agistment (to feed or pasture livestock for a fee) with the dairy farmer. However, the exemption does not apply to restaurant, retail, commercial, wholesale or other sales of milk and milk products to a subsequent buyer. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES HB 3.**

SB1092 Health General - Milk Products - Direct-to-Consumer Sale of Raw Milk

Senator Jennings

Died in Committee

This bill exempts the sale of raw milk and raw milk products from regulations governing the production, processing, labeling, and distribution of milk products where the sale is made directly from a registered dairy farmer to the final consumer. However, the bill requires farmers who sell raw milk directly to consumers to execute a written contract with each consumer that clearly indicates that the milk is unpasteurized, and that once it is in the consumer's possession, the proper handling, transporting, and cooling are the responsibilities of the consumer. Containers of raw milk sold by a dairy farmer must be marked with a prominent warning statement that the milk is not pasteurized. In addition, farmers must register with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), and meet other specific sanitary, testing, and reporting requirements.

Maryland Farm Bureau has policy against the sale of unpasteurized raw milk in Maryland. Maryland Dairy farmers have significant worries of what negative ramifications may come to all dairy farmers if/when there is a raw milk outbreak in Maryland. Currently, Maryland's dairy industry consists of less than 430 dairy farms. The current environmental regulations on animal agriculture along with residential land pressure is making it very difficult for dairy farms to remain viable in Maryland. Therefore, several dairy farms have diversified into direct to the consumer sales of properly pasteurized dairy products such as milk, ice cream and cheese and have been very successful. The demand for pasteurized milk products is at least 95% of the state's citizens versus less than 5% (unverified) requesting raw milk. Many Maryland dairy farmers believe that legalizing raw milk sales (and the sickness issues that would come from it) is a risk that they cannot afford to have happen if they hope to continue dairy farming in Maryland. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 1092.**

SB0778 (HB1191) Health - General - Genetically Engineered Food - Labeling Requirements

Senator Montgomery / Delegate A. Kelly

Died in Committee

This bill distinguishes what types of GMO products would be required to be labeled. This labeling requirement would be only for Maryland Manufacturers and Retailers of selected packaged products that contain GMO ingredients. Not only would this bill put Maryland manufacturers and food retailers at an economic disadvantage to similar entities in neighboring states, but it would also put a negative stamp on GMO crops without any scientific proof of any difference between GMO and non-GMO products.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 778 & HB 1191.

SB0700(HB0621) Registration of Pesticides - Fee Increase - Disposition of Fees

Senator Manno / Delegate Lafferty

Returned Passed

This bill increases the annual registration fee paid to the state Chemist by a distributor of a pesticide from \$100 to \$110. The additional revenue must be used exclusively by the Maryland Department of Agriculture for the collection, analysis and reporting of data on pesticide use in the State. The bill implements the recommendation of the Pesticide Workgroup that met over the summer to evaluate how to best collect and report data. The Workgroup recommended that the USDA National Ag Statistic Service (NASS) survey, which is voluntary and protective of personal data, be conducted more regularly. The report also recommended that efforts be made to seek a high level of participation by farmers through the use of USDA NASS personnel for follow-up calls. The report recommends that survey results in aggregate form be made available to the public. The additional expense

for improving the survey and compiling the results for publication will be paid through the increase in registration fees. Maryland Farm Bureau served on the workgroup and supported the recommendation for the improved survey as the preferred option over an electronic database with individual mandates on farmers.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 700 & HB 621.

HB0337 Farm Breweries - Location and Self-Distribution – Delegate Schulz

Returned Passed

This bill would add the holder of a Class 8 farm brewery manufacturing license to the lists of manufacturing licenses that can obtain a Class 7 limited wholesaler's license which would allow them to self-distribute their own product under the Class 7 limited wholesaler's license limitations.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 337

HB0356 Alcoholic Beverages - Class 8 Farm Breweries - Festival Licenses

Delegate Barkley

Returned Passed

This bill would allow a class 8 Farm Brewery to enter into a temporary delivery agreement with a distributor only for delivery of beer to a beer festival or wine and beer festival and the return of any unused beer as long as the beer festival or wine and beer festival is in a sales territory for which the holder does not have a franchise with a distributor under the beer franchise fair dealing act, and the temporary delivery agreement is in writing.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 356.

HB0451 Neighborhood Business Development Program - Financial Assistance for Food Desert Areas

Requested by DHCD

Signed into Law

This bill would alter the purpose of the Neighborhood Business Development Program to include help creating specified small businesses and other food-related enterprises in food deserts in Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). In addition, it would specify the criteria for designating an area as a food desert and would require the Program to provide financial assistance to projects in food deserts. Lastly, there would be financial assistance for projects in these designated areas and there would be the creation of the Interagency Food Desert Advisory Committee. This program supports sourcing Maryland grown produce and Maryland produced products.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 451.

HB0910 Water Quality Certification - Conowingo Dam - Required Studies

Delegate Rudolph

Died in Committee

This bill requires MDE, as part of the pending water quality certificate application, to require Excelon to fund studies to determine the impact that the transport of sediment contained in the reservoir behind the Conowingo Dam may have on the Chesapeake Bay and other waters downstream. The studies must include the identification and impact of materials contained in the sediment, which may contain high levels of nutrients, the impact of weather-related events on the sediment and the environmental impact of the sediment. The studies must also evaluate the cost and benefits of various methods of managing the sediment including innovative reuse, and methods of reducing the impact of flooding, before and during high river flows that are caused by weather-related events. Maryland Farm Bureau policy at line 347 reads: "We urge the state to remove the sediment and nutrients trapped behind the Conowingo Dam as a priority in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort."

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 910.

SB0127 Department of Agriculture - Manure Transportation Project

Request of MDA

Signed into Law

This bill removes caps on the Manure Transport Project and allows MDA to increase its level of match above that contributed by commercial poultry companies. The bill repeals the \$10 per ton limit on poultry litter cost-share and the \$20 per ton limit on livestock manure. The bill retains the cost-share limit of 87 ½ %. With this change, the manure transport project will allow farmers to move poultry litter and livestock manure further away from the farm. It will also allow farmers in phosphorus deficit areas of the state to procure organic poultry and livestock manure as their source of fertilizer. Under the current program, farmers and haulers identified shortfalls in cost-share funding only 1 month into the fiscal year when all existing funds had been obligated for the entire year.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 127.

SB0137 (HB1024) Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund - Revisions and Extension of Termination

Date – Senator Conway / Delegate McIntosh

Returned Passed

This bill would extend to fiscal year 2030 through which the Governor is authorized to include an appropriation in the budget bill for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund. It would also alter the manner in which disbursements of money appropriated to the Fund are required to be made; requiring that any money received by

a regional council under a specified provision of law be used for a specified purpose and add Rural Health Care as eligible services in the fund. Finally, the bill would extend the termination date of the Fund to June 30, 2030.
MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 137 & HB 1024.

SB0527 (HB 988) Maryland Horse Racing Act - Sunset Extension and Program Evaluation

Request of MDA

Returned Passed

This bill extends the termination date for the Maryland Horse Racing Act by 10 years to July 1, 2024, and requires a preliminary evaluation of the Maryland Racing Commission, the Maryland-Bred Race Fund Advisory Committee, and the Standardbred Race Fund Advisory Committee under the Maryland Program Evaluation Act to be conducted by December 15, 2021.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 527 & HB 988

SB0294 (HB256) Maryland Horse Industry Board - Sunset Extension and Program Evaluation

Request of MDA

Signed into Law

This bill would extend the sunset for the Maryland Horse Industry Board to July 1, 2026. The mission of the Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) is to safeguard the health and wellbeing of Maryland's Horse Industry as well as to provide for its future development. MHIB has three primary annual initiatives: Renewal of Licenses and Stable Inspections; Collection of Feed Fund Assessment fees and keep feed manufacturers abreast of MHIB projects and Awarding of Grants that develop the Maryland Horse Industry by supporting research, education and promotional activities. The bill was amended by Maryland Department of Agriculture to retain the current statutory limit on the use of the feed assessment fees, which are reserved for the educational and promotional efforts of the Board only. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 294 & HB 256 AS AMENDED.**

SB0027 (HB0193) Nutrient Management - Phosphorus Risk Assessment Tool or Index - Economic Impact

Analysis – Senator Mathias / Delegate Conway

Died in Committee

This bill requires MDA to prepare a full economic impact analysis prior to making any change to the phosphorus index (or adopting the phosphorus management tool – PMT). The economic impact analysis must estimate the cost or economic benefit of the proposed change to a person who is required to have a nutrient management plan (NMP). The analysis must also include estimates on the cost of implementing a NMP with the PMT, efficiency in the production of agricultural products, the workforce, capital investment, taxation, competition and economic development. The bill requires MDA to consult with other units of state government, local government, members of the agricultural community and representatives of the commercial lawn care, biosolids and ag fertilizer industries. The bill requires MDA to submit this economic analysis to the AELR committee when submitting its proposal to adopt the PMT or similar tool. The bill also provides that if MDA finalizes a regulation to implement the PMT prior to the June 1, 2014 implementation date of this bill, the department must suspend implementation of the tool until the analysis is complete; must report to the General Assembly by December 1, 2014 on the outcomes of the economic analysis and may not implement the tool until after the adjournment of the 2015 MGA regular legislative session. In the fiscal note MDA suggests the economic analysis may be completed without charge to the state by “interested sources” who have expressed interest in conducting the study. If the state has to pay for the contractual services to conduct the analysis, MDA estimates it will cost over \$100,000 in FY2014 or 2015. Maryland Farm Bureau believes that in addition to the need for an economic impact statement, the Phosphorus Management Tool should not be implemented until there are accurate scientific findings and until the 2017 recalibration of the Bay Model is completed and verified as accurate. **The PMT Economic Impact study was addressed in the Budget and therefore, these bills were not needed to address the issue.**

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 27 & HB 193.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BILLS

SB0259 (HB 861) Agriculture - Easements - Renewable Energy Generation Facilities

Senator Middleton / Delegate Fraiser-Hidalgo

Returned Passed

This bill authorizes a landowner, after submitting a written request to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), to use land subject to an agricultural easement to generate electricity with a facility utilizing a “Tier 1 renewable source.” The 4 Tier 1 renewable sources are: Solar, Wind, Anaerobic digestion of poultry litter if placed on fallow land and Anaerobic digestion of livestock manure if placed on fallow land. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 259 & HB 861.**

SB0071 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation - Value of Easement

Request of MDA

Signed into Law

This bill sets a minimum and maximum price that can be paid for an agricultural easement by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. Under the bill, MALPF may not pay more than 75% or less than 25% of the fair market value of land offered for easement purchase. MALPF is in the process of updating their valuation formula to incorporate current day land values. Without the floor, many rural counties without development pressure may find easement values dip very low.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 71.

ENERGY BILLS

SB0521 (HB1076) Agriculture - Poultry Litter - Energy-Generating Cooperative Program

Senator Pinsky / Delegate Conway

Died in Concurrence Committee

The bill was amended to only include the creation of an Energy-Generations Cooperative Advisory Committee. This Committee would be made up of one member of the Senate or House, the director of the Maryland Energy Administration, the Secretary and the Chair of the Public Service Commission. Appointed to this Committee by the Governor would include; one representative each from the electric utility industry, the environmental community, the poultry industry, and a poultry farmer. Two subcommittees would be formed (Environment and Energy), each to meet at least once each year to evaluate the performance of the program and make recommendations for improvements to the program.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS AN AMENDED VERSION OF THE ORIGINAL BILLS.

HB1122 (SB0745) Shale Gas Drilling Safety Review Act of 2014

Delegate Mizeur / Senator Young

Died in Committee

This bill would prohibit the Department of the Environment (MDE) from issuing a permit for the hydraulic fracturing of a well for the exploration or production of natural gas until a comprehensive gas development plan was conducted. This bill would also place a requirement for the Department of Natural Resources to issue a risk assessment on any shale gas drilling permits. Any permit given by MDE's would then be place with a fee, established by MDE. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES HB 1122 & SB 745.**

SB0360 (HB0292) Natural Gas - Hydraulic Fracturing – Prohibition

Senator Zirkin / Delegate Robinson

Died in Committee

This bill prohibits all fracking in Maryland. Under current law there is essentially a prohibition (pending a study) on Hydraulic Fracturing. The study is being conducted by an Advisory Committee with MDE and DNR to examine the extraction of natural gas from shale formations in Maryland. This study was funded with 1.5 million dollars in the current budget with a final report due in August 2014. The final report will determine whether and how gas production from the Marcellus shale in Maryland can be accomplished without unacceptable risks of adverse impacts to public health, safety, the environment and natural resources.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 360 & HB 292.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BILLS

SB0725 (HB0905) Chesapeake Bay - Nutrient Management - Poultry Fair Share Act

Senator Madaleno / Delegate Robinson

Died in Committee

This bill requires that beginning October 1, 2014 there is a Chicken Manure Pollution Fee to be paid to the Comptroller by a poultry integrator. The fee is 5 cents for each chicken a poultry integrator provides to a farmer in the State. The Comptroller must transfer the revenue (minus administrative costs) to the Maryland Agriculture Water Quality Cost Share Program (MACs) at MDA to fund cover crop activities on agricultural lands upon which chicken manure has been applied as fertilizer. The bill also repeals the provisions of the law that require that 40% of revenue generated by the flush tax on septic owners be distributed to MACs for cover crops. As drafted, this bill would take a significant portion of funding from the cover crop program - about \$10 million per year - that has been distributed to farmers of all crops across the state. Instead, funding from the "Chicken tax" would be distributed only to farmers who use chicken litter as their source of fertilizer. In addition, 5 cents per chicken is half the profit a chicken farmer makes in some cases. This tax would certainly be passed down to poultry growers and would result in unbearable economic stress at the farm level. Maryland Farm Bureau believes this bill is punitive and harmful to the economic viability of family farms and rural communities across this state. The potential for this tax has already raised concerns by bond rating agencies during negotiations for school construction funding in rural counties. Governor O'Malley pledged to veto this bill if passed.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 725 & HB 905.

HB1285 Agriculture - Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Restricted Use

Delegate Healey

Died in Committee

This bill classifies neonicotinoids as “restricted use” pesticides in Maryland. If the bill passes, neonicotinoid insecticides could only be sold to, purchased by and applied by certified applicators. This class of product is widely used to protect fruits and vegetables from destruction by insects. The product is also applied to seeds prior to planting to protect corn and soybeans from damage in the soil. Under this bill, a farmer who hires a certified applicator to apply pesticides (and thus is not licensed or certified) may not be able to adequately protect crops without becoming certified. This will also impact lawn care companies, who will no longer be able to hold one pesticide applicator license and supervise staff. Instead each lawn care employee will have to become certified by MDA. This has the potential to cost Maryland businesses hundreds of thousands of dollars. Neonicotinoids exist in nearly 300 products sold in Maryland. Consumer-use items that will no longer be available under this bill include: flystrips, flea collars and topical flea prevention, sticky mouse traps, homeowner termite control products, rose care products and more.

Supporters of this bill are concerned about the decline in pollinators. Maryland Farm Bureau shares this concern and urges a cooperative effort to determine the cause of the decline, including research into beehive diseases as well as farm chemicals and cellular signals – all suspects but none conclusively linked. There are already efforts underway at the national level to establish a uniform policy to protect pollinators based on scientific research as it is completed. Maryland Farm Bureau opposes putting Maryland producers at a disadvantage to growers in other states.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES HB 1285.

HUNTING/ WILDLIFE & NATURAL RESOURCE BILLS

SB0472 (HB0406) Allegany County, Garrett County, and Washington County - Sunday Hunting

Senator Edwards / Delegate Beitzel

Passed Enrolled

This bill would give the Department of Natural Resources the authority to set Sunday hunting dates in Allegany, Garrett, and Washington County. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 472 & HB406.**

SB0473 (HB0432) Frederick County - Deer Hunting – Sundays

Senator Edwards / Delegate Beitzel

Passed Enrolled

Frederick County delegation amended the bill to add Frederick County to the original list of Western Maryland Counties. Since SB 472/HB406 were passed, there was no need to include the three Western MD counties so the bill was amended again to be a Frederick County only bill. In its final version, this bill would allow Frederick County to hunt deer on Sundays. The department would allow deer hunting from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January. Deer Hunting would only be allowed on private property or public land that is designated for hunting by the Department of Natural Resources.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB473 & HB 432

SB0093 Natural Resources - Recreational Incentives Pilot Program

Request of DNR

Signed into Law

This bill would create a pilot program to determine whether incentive discounts offered to individuals who have not purchased a recreational fishing or hunting license within the previous 3 years, due to the increase in fees. The incentive program would be allowed to offer up to a 50% discount on fishing and hunting license fees.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 93.

SB0231 (HB0262) Bow Hunting - Possession of Handguns for Protection

Senator Edwards / Delegate Beitzel

Returned Passed

This bill would allow licensed bow hunters to carry a handgun while hunting in Region A for personal protection. The bow hunter must be at least 21 years old and may not use the handgun to kill wildlife wounded by a vertical bow or crossbow. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 231 & HB 262.**

SB0309 (HB138) Montgomery County - Archery Hunting - Safety Zone

Montgomery County Delegation

Returned Passed

This bill would amend current law to allow archery hunters in Montgomery County to be within a 100 yard safety zone while hunting. Allowing archery hunters to be within 100 yards will help with the growing deer population in Montgomery and allow archery hunters to utilize safety hunting practices.

MONTGOMERY CO. FB AND MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORT SB 309 & HB 138.

SB0966 Charles County, and St. Mary's County - Deer Hunting

Senator Dyson

Passed Enrolled

This bill would give the Department of Natural Resources the authority to establish a program in Charles and St. Mary's Counties to train rifle shooters to hunt deer for the purpose of controlling the deer population in the respective counties. If an applicant into the program holds a deer management permit, they are given priority before other applicants. Also, an individual who holds a deer Management permit in any of the two counties, would not have to apply for renewal more than once every 3 years. The Maryland Farm Bureau has policy, which supports the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed, and also enhances hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent to agricultural lands.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 759

LABOR POLICY BILLS

HB0295 (SB0331) Maryland Minimum Wage Act of 2014

Passed Enrolled

Request of Governor O'Malley

The final amended version of the bill would increase the state minimum wage over four years. January 1, 2015 - \$8.00; July 1, 2015 - \$8.25, July 1, 2016 - \$8.75, July 1, 2017 - \$9.25 and July 1, 2018 - \$10.10. As amended, this bill has removed the allowance of the Commissioner of Labor to increase the minimum wage each year after 2018 by reviewing the growth in the Consumer Price Index. In addition to the minimum wage amendments, the bill was also amended to remove the change to the agricultural overtime requirement from 60 hours per week to 48 hours per week. **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE BUT SUPPORTS THE OVERTIME EXEMPTION AMENDMENT TO KEEP THE OVERTIME EXEMPTION AT 60 HOURS.**

TAX POLICY BILLS

HB0223 Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property – Applicability

Returned Passed

Delegate Rosenberg

This bill allows a property tax credit for urban agricultural property that is enacted on or after June 1, 2014 to be retroactive to July 1, 2010. The bill allows a government jurisdiction to provide refunds for credits back to 2010. Under current law, "Urban Agricultural Property" is at least 1/8 of an acre but not more than 5 located in a Priority Funding Area and used exclusively for urban agricultural production. Urban Ag production is defined as crop production activities, including the use of mulch or cover crops to ensure maximum productivity and minimize runoff and weed production, environmental mitigation activities, community development activities, including recreational activities, food donations and food preparation and canning classes; economic development activities including employment and training and direct sales to restaurants and institutions; and temporary produce stands used for the sale of produce raised on the premises.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 223.

HB0739 (SB0602) Maryland Estate Tax - Unified Credit

Returned Passed

Senate & House Leadership

This bill increases the Maryland State Estate Tax exemption from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000 starting in 2015 through 2019. This bill does not change the current \$5,000,000 exemption for qualified agricultural properties.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 739 & SB 602

SB0670 (HB1083) Income Tax Credit - Qualified Farms – Gleaning

Died in House Committee

Senator Middletown / Delegate Jameson

This bill would allow a farm located in Anne Arundel County, Calvert County, Charles County, Prince George's County, or St. Mary's County a credit, for tax years 2014 through 2016, of up to \$5,000 against the State income tax; providing that the credit is equal to 50% of the value of the fresh farm products for human consumption (Eligible Food) donation or 75% of the value of donated certified organic produce. Each week, the Secretary of Ag shall establish and publish the categories and value of certified organic produce and eligible food donations. The Secretary of Ag, in consultation with the Comptroller, shall establish a process to certify a person or an organization to act as a tax credit certificate administrator. The total amount of tax credit certificates issued under this program may not exceed \$1,000,000 for a calendar year.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 670 & HB 1083.

SB0892 Maryland Estate Tax - Transfer of Qualified Agricultural Property by a Qualified Recipient

Senator Middleton

Died in House Committee

This bill Clarifies that the comptroller can only recapture Maryland estate tax if the qualified agricultural property ceases to be used for farming purposes for the minimum 10 years after the decedent's death even if the Ag property is acquired by another qualified recipient and that qualified recipient is not a relative of the decedent.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 892

TRANSPORATION BILLS

SB0221 (HB575) Farm Area Motor Vehicles - Registration and Authorized Use

Senator Middleton / Delegate Jacobs

Signed into Law

This bill would expand the current Class K Farm Area Vehicle registration, better known as a K-tag, from 10 miles to 25 miles from where the K-tag is registered. Also included in this bill is a provision to require verification of farmer-status when individuals register for the K-tag at the Motor Vehicle Administration. The bill was amended to put a 5 year sunset review for the expanded mileage radius.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 221.

SB0771 (HB1246) Motor Vehicles - Exceptional Milk Hauling Permit – Establishment

Senator Robey / Delegate Malone

Passed Enrolled

This bill was created to increase the milk hauling capacity of 5 axle trucks on State Highways. Because of the size of the dairy farms in Maryland, milk haulers make multiple stops to be able to fill their truck. Due to these multiple stops and fluctuation in daily milk production, the milk haulers need a higher weight limit because most are coming from Pennsylvania where they are permitted at 95,000 pounds. The bill was amended from its original version and created a temporary permit, good for the next 2 years and only during March through June, to allow up to 88,000 pounds of milk on 5 axle trucks on State Highways. This 2 year window was created to give the milk hauling company's time to add a sixth axle to their trucks. When the milk hauling trucks are equipped with the sixth axle and meet the truck length, they will be able to apply for a milk hauling permit to allow up to 95,000 pounds of milk on State Highways.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 771 & HB 1246.

SB0077 Vehicle Laws - Commercial and Farm Vehicles - Safety Inspections and Utility Emergencies

Request of MDOT

Signed into Law

This bill exempts a farm truck, a farm truck tractor and a class K (farm area) vehicle from presentence maintenance requirements.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 77.

**Stay tuned for the 1st edition of the 2014 GRB
- starting Thursday, May 8th!**