

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Kevin Atticks, Secretary
Steve Connelly, Deputy Secretary



Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture

2024 Annual Report

**Prepared By:
Rachel Jones**

SUMMARY

The Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA) was established by Executive Order under Governor Ehrlich on June 29, 2006, to “promote the economic profitability of agriculture in the state by ensuring that all appropriate state agencies work in a cooperative, coordinated manner with local government and industry groups in planning, implementing, overseeing, and evaluating intergovernmental initiatives related to agricultural affairs of the state.” GICA is facilitated by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) staff.

REVISING THE EXECUTIVE ORDER

In May of 2024, Secretary Atticks proposed a revised Executive Order for GICA. The revision includes the following alterations based on stakeholder discussions in 2023:

- Adding the following purpose statements to highlight the modernization of the agriculture industry and the importance of agritourism and value-added agriculture:
 - WHEREAS, A thriving culture of farming and food production throughout the State will grow small opportunities for new businesses and fortify our food system resiliency;
 - WHEREAS, Increased soil health sequesters carbon and prevents runoff while growing farm yields and profitability;
 - WHEREAS, We must cultivate a clear path for entrepreneurs entering the fields of farming and value-added processing, promotion and sales so that agriculture remains the State’s top industry by growing new and profitable businesses, and adding jobs throughout Maryland.
 - WHEREAS, Agritourism plays a significant role in the the economic impact and the evolving nature of farming in our State; allows farms to diversify their operations, educates non-farmers about the importance of agriculture to a community’s economic base, quality of life, and culture, we must ensure ease of establishment viability, and sustainability of agritourism Operations.
- Updating the non-voting, state agency membership to include:
 - The Secretary of the Department of Emergency Management;
 - The Secretary of the Department of Labor;
 - The Secretary of the Department of Human Services;
 - The Secretary of the Department of Aging;
 - The Director of the Maryland Energy Administration;
 - The President of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.
 - The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Education

The revisions reflect growing concerns and challenges Maryland farmers face with state agencies regarding permitting and regulations for agritourism and value-added agriculture, particularly on-farm processing of farm products. The update membership reflects growing interagency engagement on issues such as solar development, labor shortage, lack of agriculture education initiatives and funding, and increased collaboration with agencies that address food insecurity and food deserts. MDA anticipates that the revised Executive Order will be signed by the end of 2024.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

GICA held two full Commission meetings in 2024, on June 27th and October 31st. Subcommittees were established at the June meeting and subsequently met in December 2024.

June Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Introductions - Rachel Jones

A. Background of GICA - Established via Executive Order 01.01.2006.06 to:

- Promote the economic profitability of agriculture by ensuring that all appropriate agencies work collaboratively with local government and industry to plan, implement, oversee and evaluate agency initiatives;
- Promote a clear and consistent “business-friendly” climate by serving as a liaison between the Governor and local governments and industry organizations;
- Develop annual intergovernmental goals for services and functions of agricultural affairs;
- Develop and implement specific a consistent, systematic method for the coordination of agricultural economic development activities;
- Develop and implement specific and measurable actions to improve the economic and regulatory climate for agriculture in the State;
- Make recommendations for programs and policies, if appropriate, in order to ensure that the needs and goals of the State’s agricultural strategy are met and accomplished.

II. Overview of GICA Objectives & Discussion - Secretary Atticks

- GICA will be able to present case studies and work as a group to find solutions to the agricultural industry’s most pressing issues:
 - Deer management
 - Across the state, crop damage due to deer is a major issue creating a negative economic impact for commodity farmers in particular.
 - MDA doesn’t regulate deer, DNR does and have been working with us to connect farmers and hunters to address the problem.
 - Solar siting on farm land
 - The Governor’s goal is 100% clean energy by 2040
 - Agritourism
 - Food System Resilience
 - Farm labor/workforce issues

III. Establishment of subcommittees

- Agritourism
- Natural Resources & Environment
- Labor & Development
- The MDA designee on the FSRC give a GICA report to the FSRC and vice versa

IV. Agency Updates

MDE - Sec. Serena McIlwain

- Agritourism - Agrees that the current MDA/MDE/MDH Agritourism workgroup should be absorbed by GICA as a subcommittee
 - The current requirements for restrooms, etc. for agritourism businesses needs to be streamlined and MDE is happy to work with MDA to achieve that

MDEM - Sec. Russell Strickland

- The Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) is an advisory body to legislature that provides an annual report to the legislature and is housed in the Office of Resilience
- See's perfect overlap with GICA subcommittees to enhance the FSRC's work

DOL - Sec. Portia Wu

- Heat stress rule is about to be published with guidelines for outdoor workers during extreme temperatures
 - Publishing deeper guidance, breaks-rests-shade
 - Won't take effect until late summer
 - Steve Connelly has been involved
- Current workforce initiatives
 - The GICA today addressed the need for more apprenticeships in agriculture, industry sector grants, workforce partnerships. This is an opportunity that can be built on through GICA
 - Blueprint
 - Funded career counselors in every HS in the state. Labor can promote more agricultural career opportunities through the career counselors
 - H2A, H2B - DOL offers tools to help business owners navigate the process for H2A/B visas
 - A Maryland workforce conference will be held in September

DNR - Josh Kurtz

- Land conservation - MD recently met its goal of preserving 30% of land, almost ½ is ag land, the next goal is 40% by 2040
- Deer management - Current programs that DNR has built up
 - Deer Cooperator Permit has seen a 67% increase this year from 3 to 5 people. Requires extensive sharpshooter training.
 - Deer Management Permit
 - 30,000 able to harvest, 10,000 were harvested
 - Crossover with MDA connecting farmers and hunters
 - Helping write leases/agreements to take does
 - Promotion of the Venison Donation Program

Planning - Debbie Herr Cornwell

- MDP has a few initiatives relevant to agriculture:
 - Solar facility siting guidance webpage
 - Case studies on local govts handling solar

- Agritourism/vaa
- Future of sustainable farming and forestry in Maryland
- Rural Economies workgroup - sustainable growth commission
- Connecting with small commercial kitchens and producers

MEA - Director Pinsky

- There is currently a modeling study being done with a modeling group to determine what the makeup of energy types will be in order to meet the Governor's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035. (I.e. 14.5% solar, 15% wind, etc.)
- Calvert Cliffs produces about 40% of our energy through nuclear
- The current solar goal set by the Clean Energy and Jobs Act is 14.5%. There are 3 types of solar projects:
 - Utility scale (optimal in helping to reach our energy goals faster)
 - Rooftop residential/commercial
 - Community solar
- MEA offers numerous grants to help fund renewable energy projects that farmers can take advantage of:
 - \$200k - \$5 mil grants for farmers for solar and geothermal projects

Dept. of Aging - LaTanya Clark

- Glad to join GICA to collaborate more to learn about resources and opportunities for seniors:
 - How can they connect seniors with grants for solar energy, community garden plots, etc.?
 - How can they ensure seniors know about various farmers markets and how to best utilize the FMNP program?
 - Interested in educating seniors who may be interested in apprenticeships or employment on farms.

V. Member Updates

Rural MD Council (RMC) - Glad to see GICA revived. They look forward to sharing the work of GICA with the rural ag community.

MARBIDCO - In response to the lack of veterinarians they will be launching an Animal Vet Loan program soon.

MD Farm Bureau - Young Farmers and Ranchers are very optimistic about seeing the agencies collaborate like this.

Tyler Majchrzak - On behalf of Horizon Farm Credit is glad to be a member of GICA. HFC just awarded fifteen \$10,000 grants to young farmers in MD, VA, WV, PA, and DE.

Ag Commission (MAC)

- State agencies can be difficult to navigate, GICA will help the industry do that more efficiently.
- Eager to share industry perspectives, case studies, proposals, and background from the MAC .

MAEF- Suzanne Richards

- MAEF focuses on ag education in schools, partnering with DOL for apprenticeship opportunities and utilization of Blueprint funding is an exciting opportunity.
- Collaborating with MDA on the upcoming July 16th Ag Education Summit
- Hosting two events soon:
 - Golf Tournament on 9/11
 - Annual Banquet on 11/7

Cheryl DeBerry

- Farm owner and former AMP, GICA member for many years, glad to see it revived.

Adjourned 2:23 pm

Attendees

State Agencies:

MDA- Sec. Kevin Atticks, Chair

MDA - Rachel Jones

MDA- Martin Proulx

MDA - Susan Kivioja

MDP - Deborah Herr Cornwell

MDE - Sec. Serena McIlwain

MDE - Suzanne Dorsey

MDE - Tyler Abott

Labor - Sec. Portia Wu

Aging - LaTanya Clark

MEA - Director Paul Pinsky

DNR - Sec. Josh Kurtz

MDEM - Sec. Russell Strickland

MDEM - Anna Sierra

Affiliate Members:

Ag Commission - Kelly Lewis and Harrison Palmer

MACP - Eddie Francheschi - AA Co Planning - Jennifer Dempsey designee

MARBIDCO - Stacy Kubofcik

Farm Bureau - Mitch Hopkins

RMC - Matt Teffeau

MAEF - Suzanne Richards

Public Member:

Tyler Majchrzak - Horizon Farm Credit

Cheryl DeBerry - Farm owner/ former AMP

Public Guests:

MD Grain Producers - Lindsay Thompson

DCA - Holly Porter

October Meeting Minutes

- I. Welcome - Sec. Kevin Atticks**
- II. Roll call - Rachel Jones, Director of Government Relations**

- A. Members present**

- Kelly Lewis - MD Ag Commission
- Stacy Kubofcik - MARBIDCO
- Stephanie Jones - MACO
- Angelica Bailey Thupari - MML
- Craig Umbel - MACHO
- Tyler Hough - MD Farm Bureau
- Matt Tefteau - RMC
- Tyler Majchrzak - Horizon Farm Credit
- Sec. Rebecca Flora- MDP
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman - MDH
- Cliff Mitchell - MDH
- Emily Berg - MDH
- Paul Peditto- MDE
- Naomi Howell- MDE Susanne Dorsey
- Susanne Dorsey - MDE
- Joe Milone - Commerce
- Sec. Russ Strickland- MDEM
- Annica LaFave MDEM
- LaTanya Clark- Dept of Aging
- Garry Aime - MEA
- Darren Jarboe - UMD School of Ag and Natural Resources
- Heather Bruskin- Guest
- Joshua Feldmark
- Susanne Richards - Member
- Melanie Pursel - Guest
- Secretary Kevin Atticks - MDA
- Rachel Jones - MDA
- Harrison Palmer - MDA
- Martin Proulx - MDA
- Susan Kivioja - MDA

- III. Revised EO - Rachel presented the revisions to the EO**

The revised EO adds the following agencies to GICA membership: MDEM, Labor, MEA, DHS, Aging, MEA, MSDE. It also adds a seat for a representative from the University of MD Center for Environmental Services (UMCES).

It adds several priorities to the introduction that will subsequently be addressed as directives of GICA:

- A thriving culture of farming and food production throughout the State will grow small opportunities for new businesses and fortify our food system resiliency;

- Increased soil health sequesters carbon and prevents runoff while growing farm yields and profitability;
- We must cultivate a clear path for entrepreneurs entering the fields of farming and value-added processing, promotion and sales so that agriculture remains the State's top industry by growing new and profitable businesses, and adding jobs throughout Maryland.
- Agritourism plays a significant role in the the economic impact and the evolving nature of farming in our State; allows farms to diversify their operations, educates non-farmers about the importance of agriculture to a community's economic base, quality of life, and culture, we must ensure ease of establishment viability, and sustainability of agritourism operations.

These establish food system resiliency, soil health and profitability, value added processing, promotion, and sales; and agritourism as priorities for GICA.

The revised EO is expected to be signed within the next 2-3 weeks. Members of GICA will be notified in advance when MDA receives a date/time.

IV. Agency reflections

A. DNR- Paul Peditto

- Deer population in MD is around 200k. Management of deer populations on farms has been a priority. Secretaries Atticks and Kurtz, Rachel and Cassie have been reviewing options to address crop damage from deer, both regulatory and legislative. Harvesting deer will reduce deer damage to agricultural interests.
- MDA and DNR pushed out opportunities to farmers and hunters on how they can collaborate to reduce the deer population. DNR facilitated the interests of both networks. Its Land Management team has coordinated with 5 land owners and incentivized hunting communities (pilot farms) to harvest on those properties.
- Plenty of hunters available, we need more land owners and producers willing to partner.
- Ideally, DNR looks to set up 4 regional managers to coordinate this long term effort statewide. (The deer management assistance team.)
- About 80k deer hunters participate annually in deer hunting season.
- Tyler from Farm Bureau asked about any intent to increase processing for venison. DNR hasn't seen lack of processors as a barrier yet. When there was an incentive of \$50 coupon for deer harvest, there still were only about 2000 harvests a year. Additional processing, in DNR's opinion, won't alter that in an impactful way.
- Sec. Atticks asks if deer hunting can be monetized. Paul says not necessarily. The hunter can harvest a deer and that hunter or anyone else can pay for the deer to be processed, but you cannot advertise the sale of venison meat.
- Kelly Lewis asked why can't you pay to hunt here in MD (or pay for the sale of deer) and will the gun hunting season be extended? Meat must have an anti and post mortem inspection to be sold in MD, stamped with a USDA inspection. A barrier is lack of USDA inspectors to manage those inspections. Money incentivizes quick and efficient harvesting that is often outside of the normal, rural hunting areas, it can also lead to people raising deer in captivity and hunting them. Limiting the season maximizes the deer harvest in the most effective way according to DNRs findings over the past few decades.

- Kelly Lewis asked if gun season can be extended. DNR said 2 weeks is the threshold. The majority of folks work 6 days a week to make a living but will take off 2 weeks during gun season to hunt. Maximized deer kill during consolidated deer season because it keeps them moving.

B. Cliff Mitchell - MDH

- Food Safety and Licensing falls under the purview of Asst. Sec. Niles Kalyanaraman in the Office of Food Protection, who was going to give this presentation but had to depart early.
- There have been several meetings in recent years with MDH on food safety and licensing in agritourism.
- Some of the major questions that have been raised are:
 - a) Food manufacturing and processing on farms to include mobile food trucks, cottage food production and labeling, on farm home processing, seasonal food processing, retail sales on farms.
 - b) Regulations and statute aren't always flexible and haven't kept up with the evolving nature of agriculture.
 - c) MDH recognizes that in some cases policy, regulations, and statute need to be revised to keep up with the times while continuing to protect public health.
 - (1) They will ensure that the consumer can have the same confidence in products regardless of where they are produced whether in a factory or on farms
 - (2) Seasonal food service production and sale (particularly on farms)
 - On farm home processing is part of the large movement to value added agriculture (VAA)
 - Most producers are well ahead of regulation, taking innovative ways for on farm production and sales.
 - Most licenses created in statute have led to a situation where counties have been "figuring them out on their own." Some counties have been working hard to work within the law and support farmers, some have not.
 - This is a situation where reality has been running ahead of MDH, we recognize that in some cases we need to reframe policy and regulation and statute to meet that farms can go as public enterprises successfully while protecting public health
 - Emphasized that MDH is absolutely committed to working with GICA and MDA to meet those goals
 - (3) Rachel noted that the Secretaries of MDA, MDH, and MDE all agreed over the summer that the agritourism workgroup should be absorbed by GICA as a subcommittee.

C. MDE - Naomi Howell and Assistant Secretary Suzanne Dorsey

- Wastewater permitting for storage and disposal have continued to be issues on which MDE collaborates with MDA. (Waste water discharge permitting for food processing,

maintenance of private wells, and potable water.) MDE acknowledges that sometimes regs need to be changed to adjust to industry needs

- Suzanne Dorsey says Sec. McIlwain reaffirms commitment to the mission of GICA. Promoting animal agriculture in conjunction with environmental protection and thanked the group for participating in the statewide listening sessions
- Animal agriculture- Animal feeding operations - about 450 permit holders statewide -and the environment.
 - a) Current statewide listening session for CAFOs
 - (1) Appreciate the feedback from the public statewide

D. Martin Proulx - MDA - Agritourism

- The agritourism workgroup that's been meeting for the past few years has been tackling various issues. Agritourism and food service includes value added agriculture, but value added agriculture is much more than that, it encompasses things like food processing. Retail sales of value added products is the third challenge. We appreciate the partnership with the other agencies.
- Sec. Atticks thanks the partnering agencies for their collaboration on agritourism and value added challenges. Operations outside of standard commodity production tend to face many regulatory challenges. Looking at the regulations and statute to create flexibility for appropriate exceptions to aid the industry is the ideal solution to address growing challenges. Things like lessees seeking permits and being denied them because they aren't the land owner, but the land owner won't sell the land.
- Cliff acknowledges that the workgroup has discussed that there is a lack of centralized information on what the permitting process for expanding operations entails.
- Naomi disagrees with exemptions and would prefer clear guidance so that there's no need for exemptions. MDE working on workflow charts to provide MDH/MDE staff to better inform consumers as they make business decisions.
- Atticks said clarity will cover about 80% of instances, with a few exceptions. We collectively as agencies often obstruct businesses from doing things they could easily do in neighboring states. We must future proof regulations and legislation to keep up with industry trends.
 - a) Any time we meet a farmer who is involved with something outside of commodity, there is friction with government (Driveway, septic, health, water ,etc
 - b) Each proposal comes with many unique scenarios and challenges, and each is VERY different.
 - c) From our perspective the best way is to take a look at all of the regs. How do we create something in statute that is as flexible as policy and allows for on the fly exceptions as they are needed? It can be a global effort to get an exception or something changed sometimes depending on the county, BUT WE HAVE TO GET IT OPEN. We have to find a way for businesses to be successful. Right now success is on-off and extremely complicated. It doesn't need to be. Everything needs to be safe.
 - d) Why can I do this today in Virginia and Pennsylvania, but I CAN'T in Maryland.

- Susanne Dorsey said reducing redundancies and lumping together as much as possible will help streamline the process. If you have 20 boxes in your flow chart then YOU are the problem. Streamline process, remove redundancies and unnecessary steps
- Cliff said MDH clearly needs to look at the variety of licenses and regulations more closely.
- RMC asks if we have data on how many counties have adopted the state or their own definition of agritourism and also how many additional agritourism businesses have been established since that definition passed in 2017.

E. Garry Aime - MEA

- MEA believes that the state can be stewards of the environment and climate goals at the same time. Reducing GHG emissions and promoting clean energy are their priorities. Net zero emissions by 2045 and 100% clean energy by 2035, and 14.5% solar Renewable Portfolio Standard.
- Estimated number of acres needed out of MD's approximately 2 million acres of solar is around 15,000 MEA has several programs, available to help cover the cost of solar:
 - a) Solar Canopy and Dual Use Program
 - b) Commercial Solar Grant Program
 - c) Solar Energy Equity Program
 - d) Public Facilities Solar Grant Program
 - e) Open Energy Program
- MEA will provide over \$200 million in resources/grants for solar development. MEA has received applications for agri voltaics projects in addition to projects on brownfields, rooftops, parking lots, etc.
- Farm Bureaus asks where MEA got their number of 15k acres needed for ground mounted solar. MEA calculated how many kw hours needed per acre of land in MD and used it to determine how many acres would be needed to meet the RPS goal.

F. Sec. Flora & Debbie Crumwell - MDP

- Agritourism/Value added
 - a) Previously attempted to establish an "agrihood" in her previous planning role and ran into many of the regulatory hurdles discussed in the agritourism discussion. Establishing model policies to address things like traffic, noise, dust, water capacity will help address challenges local jurisdictions have
 - b) MDP can work to assist in addressing that modeling. Share with them models that we know are working
 - c) MDP assisted with a livestock processing brochure years ago, this is an example of something they can assist with now and help centralize data. This would work for food systems as well.
- Solar
 - a) This issue is contingent on what is most profitable for the farmer. Solar is the easier cheaper path, we need to ensure that farmers have a variety of choices for what is profitable.

- b) MDP has a solar siting webpage to help jurisdictions determine what works best for their jurisdiction. Helping to incorporate agritourism and other industry considerations into local planning will help. Suggests a sharrete on agritourism.

V. No other agencies had an update to provide for discussion

VI. Vote to approve minutes from 6/27/24

- A. Minutes were posted on the MDA GICA website, but not circulated prior to today's meeting, an omission.
- B. Suzanne Dorsey motioned to circulate them via email and members can submit an email vote to approve them. The motion was seconded by Tyler Hough
- C. The motion was approved unanimously
- D. Minutes will be circulated via email and members can submit an email vote to approve them.

VII. Public member feedback

- A. Stacy - FSRC has a recommendation for their annual report to the legislature to request for \$1 million for the Certified Local farm and Fish Food Aggregation Program through MARBIDCO.
- B. Kelly - MAC creating case studies and looking at barriers for entry for agricultural producers
- C. Tyler - HFC offers financing for new and beginning producers for equipment, land, planning, etc.
 - Farmers on the Rise grant program - they've given out 10 - \$10k grants for business expansion
 - Jump Start program - for farmers in the first 3-5 years of operation

VIII. Public comment

- A. Lindsay Thompson representing Light Star Renewables-Stormwater management requirements for agrivoltaic operations. The technical guidance for french drains, grading, gravel requirements and restrictions on disturbing soil between panels.
 - MDE volunteered to address this directly with Light Star Renewables
 - MEA offered to assist with answering any questions Light Star may have.

IX. Future GICA meeting schedules

A. Proposed meeting schedule shared

January - Early April: No meetings (legislative session)

Mid-Late April: Full Commission meeting (legislative session recap)

May: Subcommittee meetings

July: Subcommittee meetings

August: Full Commission meeting (discuss proposed departmentals)

September: Subcommittee meetings

November: Subcommittee meetings

December: Full Commission meeting (pre-session joint planning on ag policy)

- B. Motion to approve the meeting schedule with an added exception of potential ad hoc meetings during the legislative session if necessary.
 - Motion made by Sec. Atticks, seconded by Suzanne Dorsey
 - Motion carried unanimously

X. Subcommittee Membership

- A. Agritourism and Value Added Agriculture
 - MDE, MDA, MDH, Farm Bureau, MACHO, MDP, Commerce, MACO, and MAC
- B. Environment and Natural Resources

- DNR, MAC, RMC, Tyler M, MDA, and MDE
- C. Labor, Education, and Development
 - MAEF, Farm Bureau, MAC, Aging, Labor, MSDE, and MDA

XI. Closing Remarks - Sec. Atticks

- A. MDA is responsible for helping new businesses open, stay open, and remain profitable. We look forward to working with GICA members to achieve that.
- B. Motion to adjourn by Suzanne Dorsey, seconded by Tyler Majchrzak.

XII. Meeting adjourned at 2:56

Public Guests:

MD Grain Producers Association - Lindsay Thompson

DCA - Grayson Middleton

December Subcommittee Meetings

I. Agritourism and Value-Added Agritourism - Martin Proulx, Subcommittee Chair

- A. A PowerPoint presentation was given - **REGULATORY ANALYSIS: VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE IN MARYLAND - Summary of Findings**
- B. Regulatory Themes: Value-Added Processing Agritourism and Food Service Retail Sales of Value-Added Products
- C. Challenges: Lacking Clarity and Consistency of Regulatory Framework Outdated Licenses and Regulatory Language for Agricultural Processing Limited Scalability for Infrastructure Requirements
- D. Opportunities: Licensing Alternatives to "On-Farm Home Processing License" Establish Scalable Regulations within State Code Reassess Revenue Caps for Direct Sales of Farm Raised Meat (and Cheese) Training for County-Level Agricultural/ Economic Development Professionals Guides and Materials Agricultural Enrichment Opportunities for Local Health Departments Forum for Problem Solving and Collaboration
- E. Primary friction points:
 - value-added food processing (State);
 - retail of value-added food products (Local);
 - agritourism & food service (State/Local);
 - Virginia and Pennsylvania seem to be able to find solutions and speedily license/permit farm-based businesses.
- F. Some consistent issues:
 - Producers often lack professional representation (attorney, engineer, etc.), leading to a heavier-than-customary reliance on the agency for guidance. Plus, it's my experience that this leads to consternation between agency staff/business, and often leads to stricter interpretations rather than a willingness by agency to seek/suggest alternative solutions;
 - Lack of scalability in the regulatory framework to allow businesses to scale up (i.e., you can make things in your home kitchen, but to scale up one must become a full-scale commercial kitchen...which may not be feasible on a farm or fit certain processes, i.e. Flour milling/Herb dehydrating);
 - Lack of definition regarding "seasonal" vs "temporary" related to processing, bathrooms, infrastructure (i.e., requirements re: on-farm camping);
 - Inability to propose creative solutions to permit requirements.

- The business/agricultural community does not understand/appreciate where state regulation ends and local regulation begins;
- Requirements change ("goalposts move");
- No clear business development navigator at MDH to support the startup/launch/development of rural, farm-based businesses (Kirk Engle has been a helpful resource for us, but is not a POC for businesses).

G. Opportunities:

1. Education for local health department staff. Industry was previously invited annually to workshops/in-service training to talk through the challenges we're seeing on the ground. Ideally, this starts happening again;
2. Education for business development specialists and industry. This is something we're taking on. Our value-added specialist Martin Proulx has developed regulatory seminars ("boot camps") to educate industry and county support staff (economic development, electeds, staff). Your team will be invited to each, and received a copy of the first agenda two weeks ago (still waiting for a response so we can announce). See attached draft we shared.
3. Guides. Develop FAQs and checklists with resources and roadmaps for each type of value-added enterprise to offer consistency across the state and counties. This is something the agritourism workgroup has been discussing.
4. Forum. GICA will provide a forum for these discussions going forward.

II. Environment and Natural Resources Subcommittee

- A. Discussion on topics of ongoing industry concerns for the subcommittee to address:
- CAFO permitting & considerations
 - Wastewater management on farms
 - Deer Management

III. Education, Labor, and Development Subcommittee

- A. Discussion on topics of ongoing industry concern for the subcommittee to address:
- Agriculture education: How can we best partner with the Department of Education, local school systems, and organizations like MAEF to enhance agricultural education statewide?
 - Solar development: The Clean Energy and Jobs Act of 2019 and the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 created renewable energy goals for the state that overlap and often even conflict with land preservation, resource conservation, and agricultural goals. How can we best bridge this gap?
 - Energy: Same as above. Projects like the Piedmont Reliability Project call into question what role agencies have in prioritizing energy needs versus small business and property rights
 - Workforce development/apprenticeships: There is a labor shortage across various job sectors and industries, agriculture is not exempt. How can we best partner with Labor on training for Ag sector jobs?
 - Jason from DOL Labor highlighted the MD Apprenticeship and Training Council and opportunities for ag sector job training that MDA can recommend to youth.
 - Food system resiliency: MDA is a member of the MD Food System Resiliency Council, which is facilitated by MDEM. We'd like to be more engaged. We have noticed that there aren't enough agricultural producers on the Council that can grow food en masse in order to really meet the needs of large food insecure populations. We want to bridge that gap.

GICA'S FUTURE

GICA will coordinate to address challenges and propose either regulatory, permitting, or statutory changes to streamline agribusiness and economic opportunity for Maryland farmers. MDA will convene quarterly GICA meetings and subcommittee meetings regularly as follows in order to continue addressing interagency matters pertaining to the industry:

January - Early April: No meetings (legislative session)

Mid-Late April: Full Commission meeting (legislative session recap)

May: Subcommittee meetings

July: Subcommittee meetings

August: Full Commission meeting (discuss proposed departmentals)

September: Subcommittee meetings

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