



Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
Thursday, March 7, 2024
Approved - Minutes

- SMADC Members:** Joan Bearden, Gilbert 'BJ' Bowling, Steve Connelly, Jennifer David, Dan Donohue, Sydney Garner, Shelley Garrett, Willie Goddard, Edward Goodman, Bill Hitte, Linda Jones, Priscilla Leitch, Charles Sasscer III, Karl Shlagel, Russell Shlagel, Delegate Gary Simmons, Tresor Thomas, Deana Tice, Caroline Trossbach, Steve Wall, Lucille Walker, Mary Wood.
- Members Absent:** Senator Jack Bailey, Delegate Brian Crosby, Senator Michael Jackson, Elizabeth Robinson, Dan Rider, Brian Russell.
- Staff:** Sophie Brauns, John Hartline, Heather Hulsey, Kelley Koeppen, Susan McQuilkin, Rachel Norris, Craig Sewell, Kelly Swann, Shelby Watson-Hampton
- Guests:** Jay and Justine Farrell, SMILE Livestock Expo, Edna Primrose and Mel Litter, Maryland Apprenticeship Center

Minutes

Mary Wood called for a motion to approve 2 sets of minutes from January and February which were previously tabled due to lack of a quorum.

Dan Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes of January 4, 2024. Delegate Gary Simmons seconded the motion. All approved. Dan Donohue made a motion to approve the minutes of February 1, 2024. Bill Hitte seconded the motion. All approved.

Guest Speakers

Maryland Apprenticeship Center – Speakers and business connectors Edna Primrose and Mel Litter presented on the program structure for adults and youth in Southern Maryland. The youth apprenticeship program is designed for students ages 16 and up to lead to sustainable employment and further education based on career pathways in manufacturing and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) occupations or other occupations within the CTE Career Clusters. The Apprentice Maryland program offers students paid opportunities to join the workforce while in school, pursue their interests, and in the adult apprentice program, can help with college tuition.

Action: Director Watson Hampton commended the program for further discussion at the April Commission meeting to explore apprenticeship opportunities within SMADC and TCCSMD.

SMILE Livestock Expo – Craig Sewell introduced SMILE organizers Chairman, Jay Farrell and wife Justine, show coordinator, and commended the Expo as a well-run event staffed by volunteers whose sole

interest is the development of the region's next generation of livestock producers, which compliments SMADC's mission to support and promote the agricultural community in So.MD. SMADC has sponsored SMILE for more than 15 years. Current SMILE sponsorship funding is \$12,000 annually. Craig Sewell requested that his full endorsement of the SMILE Show be included in the minutes (see memorandum attached).

Jay Farrell expressed gratitude to the Commission for their valued sponsorship and gave an overview of SMILE's success, growth, and popularity over the years. The 2023 SMILE show featured 314 animals and 104 youth participants ranging in age from 8 years and under, up to 21 years. The 2024 show will take place on June 21 – 23 at Leonardtown Fair Grounds, all are invited to attend.

Deana Tice made a motion to continue SMADC support of the SMILE Show. Dan Donohue seconded the motion. The floor was opened for discussion during which Commission members expressed their enthusiastic support for the SMILE Show. **After discussion, Russell Shlagel requested an amendment to the motion on the floor and made a motion to increase the SMILE sponsorship to \$15,000 annually.** Following discussion of the proposed sponsorship increase, Director Watson-Hampton asked for Commission consideration to confirm SMADC budget availability for the additional \$3,000, and to identify from which program budget line the increased funding should be taken. Rachel Norris-Achterberg, Fiscal Grants Coordinator, confirmed funding is available in Programmatic Services, Advertising & Promotion and the SMADC Equipment Grant Program. Chairwoman Mary Wood recommended funds be drawn from the Equipment Grant Program. **Deana Tice requested to amend her original motion and made a motion to support the SMILE show at \$15,000 with funding drawn from the SMADC Rental Equipment Grant Program budget line. Dan Donohue seconded the motion. All approved.**

Director's Report

Legislative – Director Watson-Hampton thanked all those who sent in many letters of support and reported on legislative Bill (HB 812) to ensure SMADC's funding from the Cigarette Restitution Fund annual and permanent at the 5% promised in the original bill (or a minimum of \$1 million dollars). The sponsor in the Senate is Senator Bailey and cosponsors are Senators Jackson, Benson, Elfreth, Ellis, and Rosapepe, and it has bipartisan support. House sponsor is Delegate Long, cosponsors are Delegates Davis, Harris, T. Morgan, and Wilson.

Senate Testimony went well; testimony in the House is scheduled in E&T Committee on Friday March 8 at 1 p.m. This bill is being supported by all three lower SOMD County Commissions, the Maryland Farm Bureau, Rural Maryland Council, Prince George's County Farm Bureau, the Charles County Soil Conservation District, MARBDCO, and others.

Re-naming of Snake Head – a bill to rename the fish (an invasive species) is in process to incentivize diners to eat more of the fish. The Latin name of the fish 'Channa' is proposed.

Staff Program Reports

RAC - Test holes at location passed final PERC tests and are awaiting final approval from Dept of Health and MDE. Next milestone: On schedule for construction bids this Spring. Beginning monthly conference calls with senior management of SMADC and St Mary's on March 13 in ramp up to next stage. A new article on the progress was recently written in the Delmarva Farmer Newspaper – see it [here](#)

The Debut of the Grandma's Hands Documentary – invitations and announcements are forthcoming for the film premier on March 19 – Voices of previous generations resound through our food. Our Grandma's hands made the meals that touched our senses, kept alive our traditions, and nourished our souls. Wherever they may have lived, and however they went about sourcing our food, if we listen, we can hear the family celebrations, feel the appreciation of plenty, and experience the full flavor of their everyday lives. Our grandma's created family recipes that live on and are now taught to a new generation continuing their family's legacy which, in turn, defines a region and even a culture. Food tells a panoply of stories, with each story residing in the hearts and memories of the descendants of these creators. It is food from our 'Grandma's Hands'.

This documentary video of *Grandma's Hands* tells these stories that touch deep, human intimacies that take place every day in kitchens. We are privileged to hear just a few. Some of our storytellers are in their wisdom years. Others are quite young. They have radically different life experiences, but they all realize this very simple, but very important tenet: that the kitchen is the heart of the home. They know that families that eat together and share their lives at dinnertime and at celebratory events tell a story of lives that are enriched by the food heritage that they all can share. They know the power of *Grandma's Hands*.”

Lothian – progress and updates are now in the hands of the AAEDC.

SMM Website – the updated website is now live featuring a redesigned logo and provides space for the expansion of the SMM Producer Directory, the Junior SMM Program and advanced integrated software and database management capabilities for the Regional Agriculture Center's (RAC) services.

Maryland Market Money – is working on 2024 main season prep while winter markets are still happening and offering MMM incentives throughout the winter months. It's also conference and training season; two events are happening soon where MMM staff will be presenting along with numerous partners in the food access space:

MDA's farmers market conference, March 12, at MDA in Annapolis. For more info and tickets: <https://md.accessgov.com/farmers-market/Forms/Page/events/conference-registration>. Farmers will be able to get their SNAP Authorization on the spot from USDA, a rare opportunity to do this in person.

Train the Trainer Workshop – hosted by University of Maryland's [Ag Law Education Initiative](#) (ALEI) and the [Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology](#), for local agricultural marketing and economic development professionals, as well as service providers, who want to learn about increasing farmer participation as access points for benefits shoppers. Registration is due by March 12. In this workshop, attendees will:

- Learn how to help farmers become authorized vendors for SNAP, WIC, FMNP, FMNP-Seniors, and SMADC MMM.
- Meet points of contact for each agency involved and take away guidance resources
- Network with other service professionals in the state/region
- Receive support from the project training team to host their own local Benefit Programs sign up events for farm vendors.

MDH Cottage Foods Business Workshop – Basics, Next Steps & Beyond – presented on February 22. 405 people registered for the class. 190 people joined the webinar. The attendee's icebreaker poll indicated 63% are thinking about starting a Cottage Foods business or are established Cottage Foods businesses, 8% indicated they were market managers. The workshop included 3 assessment polls (comprehension recaps) on topics covered. The final Q&A session went into overtime to address more than 116 questions placed in the chat; over 100 people remained online to hear the answers. A post

workshop survey indicated more than 56% of respondents affirmed the quality of event, engagement, duration, responsiveness of presenters, and increased knowledge gained. Most helpful topics included review of Cottage Foods basics, how to determine when a food license is needed, and decision tools resources. All 405 registrants received a follow up information about the [SMADC Cottage Foods Tutorial](#) which hosts the presentation slides, MDH Cottage Foods guidelines and resources and soon to be uploaded live video recording of the workshop.

2024 Acidified Foods Better Process Control School Class Training Workshop – the BPCS workshop will be held simultaneously in-person and live webinar at MDA on March 11, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Topics cover the the basics of food safety and the regulatory norms and procedures for acidified foods. Registration closes March 7. 14 have registered to date.

Member Updates – Members shared news and updates.

Adjournment

Mary Wood called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Donohue made a motion to adjourn. Joan Bearden seconded the motion. All approved.

Next SMADC Meeting (first Thursday of the month):
Thursday, April 4, 2024

Attachment 1.

Memorandum to the SMADC Commission

Re: SMILE Show Funding

To the Commission:

SMADC has supported the Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Exposition (SMILE Show) since its founding 16 years ago. The Show was designed as a fun and educational place for the children to show their livestock in a friendly, supportive atmosphere prior to the County Fairs. It is also designed for the children raising livestock in the five-county region.

SMADC has a seat on the SMILE Show Board of Directors, and I have been honored to occupy that seat for the past 5 years. I have attended each Board meeting and each Show over that amount of time.

The SMILE Show is a well-run event staffed by volunteers whose sole interest is the development of our next generation of livestock producers. Held at the St Mary's County Fairgrounds, all species of livestock are shown in the Show Ring with expert advice on the best ways to present their animals with an eye to the upcoming fairs. The SMILE Board also strives to make the 2 day event as much fun for the kids as possible with tug-of-war contests and other games to enhance the visit. There is a well-attended dinner for participants, and the entire event is staged for the benefit of the children, and to make it a fun occasion for the parents as well.

The SMILE Show is also very fiscally responsible. In Board meetings, every dollar that is taken in and spent is discussed. Best prices for awards, t-shirts, and giveaway prizes are sought. It is a very well-managed show, and I strongly recommend that the Commission continue supporting the SMILE Show as one of our two outreach programs for young people (the other being the SMM Junior Livestock program). The SMILE Show is a very important part of SMADC's mission to support and promote the agricultural community in Southern Maryland. Craig Sewell, SMADC Project & Infrastructure Director.