

# MFB Conducts Convention In Hagerstown

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HAGERSTOWN, Md - The 83rd annual Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) meeting and convention held here at the Ramada Inn drew more than 400 members to the western part of the state for three days of discussion groups, presentations, and an award banquet.

The meeting featured assistant secretary of agriculture Royden Powell III as a keynote speaker, and also offered Farm Bureau members an opportunity to review and discuss a number of policy updates that will form the basis for the organizations, legislative stances in Annapolis and Washington, D.C. next year.

Royden Powell is responsible for policy development and program management for soil conservation and water quality at the Maryland Department of Agriculture. During the past year Powell has played a major role in framing specific elements of the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998, the legislation passed last year by the Maryland General Assembly that will impose mandatory nutrient management plans on almost all Maryland farms. Only agricultural operations grossing less than \$2,5000

annually or ones with less than eight animal units (one animal unit = 1000 pounds) will be exempt from the new law.

Under the new bill the Maryland Department of Agriculture has been given full legislative authority to implement the law, and Powell is overseeing the development of the new nutrient management regulations.

Powell led a panel discussion on the new nutrient management law. He offered farmers a perspective on some of the sobering regulations that are being formulated in Annapolis as a result of the new law.

Farmers using commercial fertilizers are required to have nitrogen and phosphorus-based nutrient management plans developed by the end of December 2001. These plans must be implemented by December 2002.

Farmers applying animal manure or sludge must have a nitrogen-based plan developed by December 21, 2001, and implemented by December 31, 2002. Farmers applying sludge or manure are also required to develop a nitrogen and phosphorus-based plan by July 1, 2004. These plans must be implemented by July 1, 2005.

In other convention news,



Retiring directors honored for their service to Farm Bureau were, from left to right, Glenn Shirley, Carroll County; Charles Fry, Frederick County; Alfred Hanes, Cecil County; Trego Zimmerman, Frederick County; Ron Cashdollar, Howard County; Blan Harcum, Sr., Wicomico County; George Bradley, president of young farmers and ranchers; C. William Knill, past president; Steve Weber, president; Dan Shortall, first vice president; Mike Phipps, second vice president; and Michael Wilcom, incoming president.

after several years of discussion, MFB members voted to create a Political Action Committee, or PAC. Basically, the PAC will raise funds to help finance the political campaigns of candidates who, once elected to office, will serve as advocates for agriculture.

The Maryland Friends of Agriculture Fund, or AG Fund, as the PAX will be called, will work through political involvement to develop an atmosphere in Maryland that is favorable to a healthy agricultural community. It will function without regard to party affiliation, and will be a separate fund that is "connected" to Maryland Farm Bureau. The fund will be governed by a 14-member board of directors.

At the awards banquet, Frederick County was honored with the highest Farm Bureau honor, the silver bowl award. The award is presented each year to the county with the best overall program, as determined by the gold star awards for each of eight program areas. The eight program areas are membership, public affairs, national affairs, information, Farm Bureau women, young farmers, discussion group, and service to member. Frederick County had received a gold star in each program.

Other counties recognized for eight gold stars were: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Howard, and Somerset. Earning seven gold stars were: Alleghany, Cecil, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Wicomico counties. Six counties earned six gold stars: Caroline, Dorchester, Harford, Montgomery, St. Mary's and Talbot. Washington and Worcester counties were each awarded three gold stars, and Garrett County earned one.

The Anne Arundel County young farmers group was recognized as best overall young farmers group in the state.

The women's committee of Frederick County was selected as the outstanding women's committee for the 5th year in a row.



Cliff Turner, left, chair of the Anne Arundel County young farmers group, accepted the award for best young farmers group from Steve Weber, MFB president, and George Bradley, president of young farmers.



Three young farmers were honored with scholarships toward their college educations. From left Brinsfield Lowe, president of Dorchester County FB, accepting for Ralph Jackson IV: Donna Baumann; and Gina Rende.

Gibson's Texaco in Lothian, Anne Arundel County, was honored as the Safemark tire dealer with the highest sales for the past year. Safemark is the Farm Bureau service company that provides tires and parts at reduced prices to FB members.

Congress Roscoe Barlett as honored with a Friend of Farm Bureau Award. "When I look at the legislative agenda of the Farm Bureau, I have very little to quarrel with," said the congressman. "It's awfully easy to

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Michael Wilcom accepted the Silver Bowl Award for Frederick County.



The Frederick County women's committee was named the outstanding women's committee for the fifth straight year. Shown from left to right are Carolyn Lechlider, president of MFB women's committee at the state level; Louise Stup, chair of the Frederick County women's committee; and Steve Weber, president of MFB.