

Conference Proceedings
Maryland Agricultural Educators Conference July 7-9, 2025
Conference held at Boonsboro Middle School Boonsboro, Maryland
Lodging at Holiday Inn Express Clear Spring, MD

MONDAY, JULY 7th

Professional Learning: (1.5 hrs.) Turfgrass Tour Flying Boxcars Baseball Stadium Tour

Presenter: Maggie Walling, PR & Marketing Specialist for Flying Boxcars Stadium

Recorder: Lee Ruark, Smithsburg High School

The tour started with a general tour of the baseball stadium with a question and answers session. The tour included all aspects of the stadium and how each department works together for the common goal of fan experience. This is a new stadium with state-of-the-art irrigation systems and grounds maintenance. The tour related to community engagement and in the horticulture industry.

Professional Learning: (1.5) Misty Meadows Dairy Farm and Creamery Tour

Presenters: The Mellott Family of Misty Meadows Dairy Farm

Recorder: Pat Beachy, Linganore High School

The family showcased their dairy farm, a cow to cone operation. The group took a tour of the completely robotic milking parlor and retail creamery store. The farm has been family owned and operated since 1920. They milk 150 cows (Holsteins, Jerseys and Milking Shorthorns) and farm 350 acres they own and rent a lot more to keep up with demands of feeding the herd. The dairy farm is managed by Mrs. Mellott, the crops by Mr. Mellott and the creamery by Mrs. Mellott's brother. The tour demonstrated how dairy farms can use technology to be more efficient; and connecting with the community to better educate the next generation to where their food comes from.

Professional Learning: (1.5) Claude E. Kitchens Outdoor School Tour

Presenter: Chris Kopco, Coordinator of WCPS STEM & Environmental literacy

Recorder: Mary Zielinski, Marshall Street School

This outdoor school offers opportunities in hosting Envirothon's, service projects, Supervised Ag. Experiences for area agriculture programs. The group climbed the Brandywine Fire Tower to view the watershed and talked about all of the activities hosted onsite including: tree ID, invasive species, soil and water testing. They discussed ways to coordinate school programming with staff to meet the needs of the students. The school is a great resource for local educators for materials, facilities and hands-on learning. This tour is beneficial for any environmental, natural resource and forestry programs.

Professional Learning: (1) MSDE Blueprint Presentation

Presenter: Richard Kincaid, Director of Career & Technology Education/Assistant Superintendent of CCP.

Recorder: Aaron Geiman, Manchester Valley High School

Richard reviewed the newest content standards for Agricultural Education within the state. He shared the timeline of revision process and Perkins compliance. He addressed how teachers can adjust their courses to match the content standards being adopted and the future direction of CTE pathways to meet the demands of the Blueprint. The revised CCR standards projected for August, 2025. The entry level courses may allow for Ag Classes. The Core Flex CTE pathways is hoping to alleviate the 65% loss of participants from course 1 to 2.

Professional Learning: (1) Utilizing FFA Educator Resources

Presenter: Leasa Gudderra, Gwynn Park High School

Recorder: Lori Mayhew, Damascus High School

Leasa addressed the extensive agricultural education resources through the National FFA Organization at www.ffa.org. There are bill ringers, choice boards, and even substitute lesson plans. These are valuable resources for all ag. educators to use in their current course work by enhancing and enriching student experiences. The teachers then shared personal ideas and curriculum resources within the group. All of these resources are available on the website for free.

Professional Learning: (1) Simulated Workplaces in Career and Technology Education

Presenter: John Cameron, Automotive Teacher in Washington County Public Schools

Recorder: Timothy Bromhal, Frederick CTC

The simulated workplace program enables students to be better prepared for real-world success. It deals with professionalism, accountability and getting students under control enough to learn. Using career coaches to help with resumes, cover letters and interview preparation. The program includes a competency list that students should be able to master upon completion of the program. Some tech programs have over 250 items listed on their competency sheets. This topic covered professional skills that can help in any CTE program and can offer incorporating other skill sets within the system. (Ex: Fork lift Operation)

Professional Learning: (1) Technology Integration in the Classroom

Presenter: Tonya Rowe, WCPS CTE

Recorder: Mary Zielinski, Marshall Street School

The presentation included a brief overview of a variety of technology that can be used in any classroom, not just agriculture. The group discussed how and why to use each and any concerning issues of: Google VIDS, Canva and Kami. We also addressed the issues with technology in IRC's and accommodations. We reviewed the nine digital capacities: self-evaluation, reflection, photo/video annotation, compare & contrast, word processing with multimedia, real-time collaboration, mass communication and feedback, personalized learning, project based learning, formative and summative assessment. This information is useful in IRC's, SAE's, and for students to complete activities more independently.

Professional Learning: (1) Student Behaviors- Post COVID

Presenter: Dr. Stacy Eckels, Southern High School

Recorder: Richard Stonebraker, Frederick High School

How can we, as educators, change student mindset post-covid since students have been become fixed in a unmotivated state? Dr. Eckels shared some mind games that help to motivate learning. They are called: The Pit Game- Corner the Market; Commodity Game which is a great ice-breaker; and workreadymindset.weebly.com- a site for free lessons that can make great substitute plans. All of these activities help to bolster student engagement and participation. Understanding how students' mindsets are now (lack of motivation, focus, self-control) will allow us to better educate them. Because Ag Ed Programs are hand-on, being live in person allows us to pick up the pieces and get students back on track for quality instruction.

Professional Learning: (1) Integration of Industry Recognized Credential

Presenter: Adam Parry, Supervisor of Career and Technical Education, WCPS

Recorder: Terrie Shank, MAEF Assist. Director of Secondary Education

Updates were shared with the IRC's and the process of submitting them for approval. A handout was distributed to all showing the ag related Industry Recognized Credentials in the state. New IRC's can be recommended annually. This information will be helpful for teachers for supporting new programs of study for agricultural education.

Professional Learning: (1) Greener Tomorrow Project

Presenter: Staff members

Recorder: Victoria Stone, MAEF Director of Middle School Education

The project focuses on providing food to the local community in partnership with the MD Food Bank. They also serve as a resource to grow your own food and provide educational resources to the public. The group toured the farm where they saw a hot house made from recycled materials built by volunteers that are convicted felons as part of their stepping stone to re-enter the work force. Everyone on the tour got to help assemble "Grow at home kits" to be used at community events. This program helps with educating children on fresh food and growing their own. This project would be helpful in celebrating Earth Day with elementary students.

TUESDAY, JULY 8th**Professional Learning: (1.5) Ernst Grain & Livestock Operation Tour**

Presenter: Josh Ernst, Owner/Operator of Ernst Grain/Livestock Farm

Recorder: Brittany Sentelle, Frederick High School

This farm is a 7th generational family farm and has adapted to the new consumer needs and meeting the demands of the grain industry. The group toured the entire whole grain facility, barns with a separator, crimper, warehouse, store, bagging station, grain bins, equipment shed and a mechanic shop. They started with making hog feed and now have made their living on producing/marketing Non-GMO feeds for many feed types. They have over 40 stores selling their products and now on Amazon. Currently have 15 employees that hold the mission of the operation: Quality and Consistency. This information is useful in sharing with students interested in any farm business, financial literacy and SAE guidance and support.

Professional Learning: (1.5) Biotech/Agricultural Research Center Tour

Presenters: Dr. Joe Fiola, Grape Researcher & Spielman, Assist. Manager, Western MD Res. & Education Center

Recorder: Dr. Stacy Eckels, Southern High School

The tour showcased the research being done at the University of Maryland Research Farms. The group went on a wagon ride to see all of the research plots. Dr. Fiola talked about his current grape research. The center is also conducting research on chestnut and apple trees, sheep and cattle research and the history of the property. This information shows the application of agriscience research for high school students.

Professional Learning Tour: (1.5) Tractor & Equipment Dealership Tour

Presenter: Ryan Shank, Sales Manager

Recorder: Thomas Hawthorne, Linganore High School

There are tremendous job opportunities as a mechanic or salesperson in the tractor/equipment industry. The requirements to qualify for those jobs depends on the protocols of the dealership/brand. Teachers got the opportunity to actually drive tractors and operate some equipment. They viewed the latest technology advancements and the service areas. Interesting fact- most of the mechanics onsite grew up on working farms. The operation focuses on developing problem solving skills with an emphasis on providing excellent customer service. The tour provided teachers with hands-on tractor driving experience and learning the inner workings of a tractor dealership.

Professional Learning: (1) Business Planning/Young Farmer Program

Presenters Ellie Grossnickle & Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald, Horizon Farm Credit

Recorder: Bethany Meyers, Hancock Middle/High School

The focus on the workshop was to understand strategic planning and the importance of it. The group learned how to develop a mission and vision statements, writing smart goals and keeping accurate records. The presenters explained the Young Farmer Loans Programs through Farm Credit. There is an educational program that is being offered as well through Farm Credit titled, Ag Biz Basics. There is also Jumpstart and Farmers on the Rise Programs. Valuable information was shared including: Farm Credit business plan templates, financial projection and accounting record books. This information is very useful to any ag program teaching business skills.

Professional Learning: (1) Agriscience Fair

Presenter: Dr. Anna Warner, Associate Professor, Washington State University

Recorder: Kathy Wojcik, Howard County Applications and Research Lab

Dr. Warner described why and how to integrate Agriscience Fair into every agriculture course. She provided a QR code to joinmyguy.com to make the presentation interactive. She clarified the divisions as outlined by the National FFA. The group discussed the rules. It was suggested to contact community members to conduct their projects. It was decided to incorporate either all or parts of the Agriscience Fair guidelines. Surveys also make it easier to conduct data without the need of a lot of money, and can be done anywhere or any topic. She suggested using student curiosity to guide them to selecting their topics. It is also helpful to have students present/share their results with community stakeholders.

Professional Learning: (1) Artificial Intelligence in Teacher Planning

Presenter: Dane Grossnickle, Institute of Applied Agriculture, University of Maryland

Recorder: Sarah Shriner, Urbana High School

Artificial Intelligence can be a great tool to enhance your teaching. He started with a gallery walk to learn about what we know and what tools are available in AI. He demonstrated a good way to use Chat GPT doing three tasks: revise an announcement, create a rubric for a student project and create a differentiated lesson for the FFA Creed. There are other resources available: Diffit, Magic School, Canva and Brisk. He stressed these should only be used as a tool, not a replacement. They are made to save time and create alternate lessons. AI can be used to create and/or check emails, make lesson plans and rubrics. They can even make slide shows. Great information to incorporate into classrooms with supervision.

Professional Learning: (1) World Food Prize & MD Youth Institute

Presenters: Diamond Nwaeze & Theresa Maggio, University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Recorder: Jordan Cencula, Tuscarora High School

The leaders made a brief summary of the history and establishment of the World Food Prize and the benefits of having student compete. The World Food Prize recognizes contributions to the global food security. The Global Youth Challenge empowers high school students to explore, analyze and solve the world's most pressing problems in food insecurity. The Maryland Youth Institute allows students to present their research from their global challenge and/or volunteering activities. These concepts could easily be adapted to a senior capstone project. There are scholarships and internships available for students. The registration is in the Fall of 2025.

Professional Learning: (2) Floral Business Management

Presenters: Kayla Crigger, Owner/Operator of 4065 Florals & Events

Recorder: Diane Herndon, Frederick CTC

Kayla turned her passion for floral design into a business. She just opened her store front in May, 2025. Being a former FFA member and agriculture student, she used her skills to expand her business through partnerships she had already formed. She allowed participants to create their own fresh floral arrangements, while identifying the materials and how to set pricing to include delivery and any onsite work. She discussed marketing techniques and boutonniere trends. In working with tree sap, try using vegetable oil or hand sanitizer. She shared a much needed tool kit ideas: nails, container tape, zip ties, glue dots, ribbon and shear white.

Professional Learning: (2) Biosecurity Lab Activity

Presenter: Patricia Sanville, Local Sheep Breeder

Recorder: Brittany Stiles, South Carroll High School

Advanced biosecurity is key to preventing the spread of dangerous pathogens especially with recent diseases. (HINI, Bird Flu, Screwworm) It is important to plan biosecurity measures on a farm to prevent the exposure from MFMD exposure/disease outbreak. Producers are the gatekeepers of their farm and should establish a moat around the property as a security measure. Confinement and dry areas are fine to use if issues occur naturally in fields. (Ex: parasites) For the classroom, have students design their own farm and have them implement effective biosecurity practices, especially in the line of separation. Have them create a timeline and possible contingency plan to help make decisions about biosecurity.

Professional Learning: (2) Agriculture Heritage Museum Tour

Presenter: Elizabeth Stefanick, Museum Curator

Recorder: Shelby Althoff, Francis Scott Key High School

This museum focuses on rural development over hundreds of years and how the their early development of farming tools and equipment helped to develop the tools used today. Farmers back in the day only had one set of wheels that would fit on several pieces of equipment, saving money and time. The old time stone crusher used in farming helped to improve roads for civilians. Many manufacturers in Washington County area helped to improve the agriculture industry of today.

Professional Learning: (1) MD Ag Ed Vendor Showcase

Presenters: Rob Limpert, iCEV Curriculum and Cerifications; Karen Hutchison, MyCAERT and Safety Cerifications; Kendall Abruzzesse, MD Farm Bureau Young Farmers Program; Sock Fundraiser, Bloom for Good; CPH Programs, MD Nursery/Landscape & Greenhouse Association; World Food Prize Contest Information, UMES.

Recorder: Shelby Althoff, Francis Scott Key High School

The vendor showcase allows participants to talk one on one with each representative supporting agriculture education programming.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9TH**Professional Learning: (.5) Maryland and National FFA Updates**

Presenter: Terrie Shank, Maryland FFA Executive Director

Recorder: Leasa Gudderra, Gwynn Park High School

The updated calendar of events were shared for the upcoming school year. The information on registrations for the upcoming COLT Conference, The Big E, National FFA Convention, with housing information. She also discussed the MSDE current curriculum , IRC and collegiate articulations.

Professional Learning: (2.5) AGsploration

Presenter: April Hall, Cecil Co. Extension; Sherly Bennett, Howard Co. Extension

Recorder: Gabrielle Graham, Calvert High School

The presenters took a closer look at AGsploration, careers, healthy animals, healthy you and veterinary science experience programs offered by the extension service. Participants were exposed to curriculum available and participated in hands-on activities. These resources can be utilized on the middle and high school level and activities within the community.

Professional Learning: (2.5) Food Science CDE Advisor Training

Presenters: Ann Platou, Superintendent of the State Food Science CDE; Erin Myers, FDSC Assistant

Recorder: Emily Muller, Winters Mill High School

The Superintendent of the Food Science event took the teachers through the major individual components and the actual team activity from the 2025 state event. Teachers got to simulate being in the actual contest in learning more about the sensory section, customer complaint letters and identification of aromas. Teachers worked in teams to complete the team activity and were evaluated by the presenter. The advisors have a much better understanding of the event and can better prepare their teams.

Professional Learning: (2.5) Turf Management Event Advisor Training

Presenters: Geoff Rinehart, State Superintendent and Chuck Schuster, State Committee Member

Recorder: Bridget Nicholson, Middletown High School

The main focus was to learn how to maintain turfgrass, the environmental requirements and the types and seasons of turfgrass in the industry. The IRC's can easily be tied to Turf Management. iCEV have modules on the topic. They showed extensive resources that are available through the MD Department of Agriculture website. They are both willing to provide more assistance in the future.

Professional Development Recognition Luncheon- Elmwood Farms B & B in Williamsport, MD

Host: Sarah Welty, Agriculture Educator, Oakdale High School and President of MATA

Recorder: Erika Edwards, Hereford High School

This program recognized accomplishments of Maryland agriculture teachers and programs across the state by the Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association (MATA). Special guests and supporters of agriculture education were recognized, along with introductions of the newly elected MD FFA State Officers. Greetings were brought by Susanne Richards, Executive Director of the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation.

Major Awards and Recognition:

Years of Service Recognition:

5 years- Gabrielle Graham, Calvert CTA; Chris Jennings, Green Street Academy;

Glenn Miller, Sherwood High; Anne Stark, Allegany High; Rachel Summers, Urbana High;

Shawn Wingard, Phoenix Academy; Jaimie Wyckoff, South Hagerstown High.

10 years-Thomas Diffendal, Liberty High; Erika Edwards, Hereford High; Ashok Sookdeo, Fairmont Hgts.

15 years-Jervis Bryant, Croom Vocational High; Rachael Coffey, Cecil School of Technology;

Jodi Neal, Caroline CTC; Sara Seiser, Middletown High.

20 years-Diane Herndon, Frederick CTC; Amy Jo Poffenberger, Catoctin High;

Sarah Shriner, Urbana High; Kathy Wojcik, Howard County ARL.

25 years-Leasa Gudderra, Gwynn Park (2023); Todd Stewart, North Harford High.

30 years-Lori Mayhew, Damascus High; Greg Stull, Walkersville High.

Outstanding Leadership Award: Sarah Welty, Oakdale High School as the 2024-2025 MATA President

First Annual State Golden Owl Award: Kathy Wojcik, Howard County ARL

National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Awards:

Ideas Unlimited- Sarah Shriner, Urbana High

Teacher Turn the Key – Timothy Bromhal, Frederick CTC

Outstanding Early Career Teacher- Amanda Farmer, Boonsboro High School

Outstanding Teacher – Jerry Kelley, Parkside CTE High School

Outstanding Program- Howard County Applications & Research Laboratory

Outstanding Mentor – Thomas Hawthorne, Linganore High School

Outstanding Service – Naomi Knight, MD FFA Program Coordinator

Outstanding Visionary Impact Award- Kristine Pearl, Frederick County CTE Director

Outstanding Lifetime Award- Jim Ferrant, Retired Ag. Educator, MD FFA Executive Director

Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association (MATA) Awards:

Outstanding Classroom- Lynne Thomas, Boonsboro Middle School

Outstanding FFA Chapter (Single Program)- Emily Muller, Winters Mill High School

Outstanding FFA Chapter (Multi Teacher Program)- Sara Seiser & Bridget Nicholson, Middletown High School

Spreading the Word- Sara Seiser, Middletown High School

Outstanding SAE Award- Middletown High School

Teacher of Teachers Awards- Michael Harrington, Retired Ag. Educator of Brunswick High School

The 2025-2026 MATA Executive Board of Directors elected:

Past President- Sarah Welty, Oakdale High School

President- Patricia Beachy, Linganore High School

President Elect- Sarah Shriner, Urbana High School

Secretary- Bethany Reese, Tuscarora High School

Treasurer- Thomas Mazzone, UMCP IAA

Website Reporter: Gabrielle Graham, Calvert C/T Academy

Social Media Reporter: Kathy Wojcik, Howard County ARL

Membership Chair- Amanda Farmer, Boonsboro High School

MAEC 2025 Conference Planning Committee

Co-Chairs:

Amanda Farmer, Boonsboro High School

Lynne Thomas, Boonsboro Middle School

Members:

Mary Zielenski, Marshall Street School

Lee Ruark, Smithsburg High School

Naomi Knight, Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation

Listed below are the teachers who participated in the conference and earned hours toward an MSDE continuing education credit

MAEC 2025 Completed Hours of Instruction MSDE Accreditation																													
Professional Learning Hours			1.5		1	1		1	1	1.5			1		1	2			1	0.5	2.5			2	17				
First Name	Last Name	School	T- Turfgrass	T- Animal Science	T- Environmental School	MSDE Blueprint Directive	W- FFA Educator Res.	W- Simu. Work. in CTE	W- Technology in Class.	W- Student Beh. -P Covid	W- Integration of IRC's	Greener Tomorrow/Project	T- Agrib. - Grain/Live.	T- Biotech/Ag Research	T- ATMS Tractor/Equip.	W- Business Plan. & YF	W-Agriscience Fair	W-AI Use in Planning	W- World Food Prize/MYI	W-Floral Bus. Manage.	W- Biosecurity Lab	T- Ag Heritage Museum	Ag Ed Vendor Showcase	State/Nat FFA Updates	W- Agsploration	W- Food Science CDE	W- Turf. Manage. CDE	Prof. Awards Luncheon	Total Hours Earned
Shelby	Althoff	Francis Scott Key		1.5		1	1			1		1	1.5			1		1				2		0.5	2.5			2	16
Pat	Beachy	Linganore		1.5		1		1			1	1	1.5				1	1		2				0.5	2.5			2	16
Tim	Bromhal	FCPS CTC	1.5			1			1	1		1			1.5	1		1				2		0.5	2.5			2	16
Jordan	Cencula	Tuscarora High	1.5			1	1			1		1	1.5				1		1			2	1	0.5		2.5		2	17
Stacy	Eckels	Southern High		1.5		1			1	1		1		1.5			1	1				2	1	0.5			2.5	2	17
Erika	Edwards	Hereford High	1.5			1		1			1	1		1.5		1		1		2			1	0.5		2.5		2	17
Amanda	Farmer	Clear Spring High	1.5			1		1		1		1	1.5				1	1		2			1	0.5			2.5	2	17
Aaron	Geiman	Westminster High	1.5			1		1		1		1			1.5		1		1		2		1	0.5		2.5		2	17
Gabrielle	Graham	Calvert C/T Acad.			1.5	1		1		1		1		1.5			1	1			2		1	0.5	2.5			2	17
Leasa	Gudderra	Gwynn Park High		1.5		1	1			1		1		1.5			1		1	2			1	0.5	2.5			2	17
Thomas	Hawthorne	Linganore High	1.5			1	1				1				1.5		1	1		2			1	0.5			2.5	2	16
Diane	Hemdon	Frederick CTC	1.5			1		1		1						1		1		2			1	0.5			2.5	2	14.5
Theresa	Maggio	UMES				1											1		1	2									5
Lori	Mayhew	Damascus High	1.5			1	1				1	1	1.5				1	1		2			1	0.5			2.5	2	17
Bethany	Meyers	Hancock M/H		1.5		1	1				1	1			1.5	1			1	2			1	0.5		2.5		2	17
Emily	Muller	Winters Mill High		1.5		1	1				1		1.5				1	1		2			1	0.5		2.5		2	16
Bridget	Nicholson	Middletown High		1.5		1		1			1			1.5		1		1		2			1	0.5			2.5	2	16
Diamond	Nwaeze	UMES				1											1		1	2									5
Bethany	Reese	Tuscarora High		1.5		1		1		1		1	1.5				1	1			2			0.5	2.5			2	16
Tonya	Rowe	WCPS CTE	1.5			1			1	1			1.5																6.5
Lee	Ruark	Smithsburg High	1.5			1		1		1		1																	5
Sara	Seiser	Middletown High	1.5			1		1		1		1			1.5	1			1	2			1	0.5	2.5			2	17
Brittany	Sentelle	Frederick High		1.5		1	1			1			1.5			1			1			2	1	0.5	2.5			2	16
Terrie	Shank	MAEF	1.5			1	1				1				1.5		1		1	2			1	0.5		2.5		2	16
Sarah	Shriner	Catoctin High			1.5	1	1			1				1.5			1	1				2	0.5	0.5	2.5			2	15
Brittany	Stiles	South Carroll High		1.5		1		1			1			1.5		1		1			2		1	0.5	2.5			2	16
Victoria	Stone	MAEF	1.5			1	1			1		1		1.5			1	1				2	1	0.5	2.5			2	17
Richard	Stonebraker	Frederick High	1.5			1		1		1		1	1.5			1		1				2	1	0.5	2.5			2	17
Lynne	Thomas	Boonsboro Middle		1.5		1	1			1		1	1.5				1	1		2			1	0.5		2.5		2	17
Sarah	Welty	Oakdale High	1.5			1	1			1		1												0.5		2.5		2	10.5
Kathy	Wojcik	Howard County		1.5		1		1			1	1		1.5			1		1		2		1	0.5			2.5	2	17
Mary	Zielinski	Marshall Street Sch			1.5	1			1	1		1		1.5			1	1		2			1	0.5	2.5			2	17