



DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
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Chesapeake Bay Program Office
Agriculture Work Group



COVID-19 Impact on Agriculture Across the Bay

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Caveats

- Information collected from May 28 Ag WG meeting
- Not comprehensive
- Not current



Maryland

- Mandatory telework for state employees.
- Conservation district can't come in to work on construction projects in which construction is eminent.
- Cover crop program is hamstrung. SCDs can't go out for verification work. Partners (USGS & USDA BARC) exploring remote sensing for verification. Numbers won't move forward.



Maryland – cont.

- Poultry industry has taken a huge hit, and, in some cases, whole flocks have had to be euthanized. Processing plant work force has COVID-19. Result is lost income and lost expenses to grower and integrators.
- SCDs haven't been able to go out and do any verification work. Numbers won't move forward.



Maryland – cont.

- UMD is under a hiring freeze and we have lost 5% of funding for next year. Potential for further cuts. Expect low funding through FY21.
- Significant costs for re-opening. Perhaps 25% of classes will be taught on campus for fall 2020.
- Focus is health & safety. Discussing COVID-19 testing for every person on campus on some recurring basis.
- Using webinars for outreach with mixed success.



Pennsylvania.

- Technical assistance capacity greatly diminished by teleworking orders. County offices experiencing layoffs and furloughs. Employees now beginning to come back.
- There is still NRCS implementation going on in the field and construction inspection planning.
- NRCS will be doing a sign up for emergency mortality disposal, particularly for poultry.



Pennsylvania – cont.

- Dairy industry downturn, milk dumped.
(again, sick workers, social distancing not possible)
- Dairy and swine industries are dialing back production.
- All processing units running but not 100%
- Verification not occurring – personal contact currently prohibited.
- NRCS offices are closed but employees are reporting to the field or teleworking



Pennsylvania – cont.

- Support businesses and ag production was exempt from the stay-at-home order so ag production has continued as normal.
- Meat packing and mushroom industries heavily impacted (sick workers, social distancing requirement)
- Education and outreach is mostly online.



Virginia

- VA in phase 1 for most counties. Restaurants - take out or outdoor seating (50% capacity) – much lower demand – farmers can't sell product.
- Some counties opening June 1.
- Extension working from home, doing some farm visits by appointment. Different in every county.



Virginia – cont.

- Poultry industry having a hard time finding employees, especially for turkey due to the high demand for lunch meat. Starting pay is less than unemployment.
- Assistance (\$) available for Dairy related to #cows (\$30-40K/100 cows) Funding through FSA – 1 employee/office. Prices for milk have rebounded to almost to what they were.



Virginia – cont.

- The produce doing very well. Cool weather has not been good for fruit (strawberries hit particularly hard).
- Campus-based extension and meetings of all sorts cancelled through summer. No in-person meetings.



EPA Response to COVID-19

- Disinfectant Products
- Enforcement Discretion Policy
- EPA Guidance on Managing:
 - Surplus Milk
 - Animal mortality associated with depopulation
- Pesticide applicator PPE options during shortage
- Grant Flexibilities

[epa.gov/coronavirus](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus)

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-enforcement-discretion-policy-covid-19-pandemic>

<https://www.epa.gov/agriculture/carcass-management-non-diseased-animals-response-coronavirus-outbreak-covid-19>

<https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/statement-regarding-respiratory-protection-shortages-and-reduced-availability-respirator>

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/rair-2020-g02>



NGOs (CBC)

- Legislators are focused on state revenue numbers.
- \$2-\$4 billion shortfall in expected revenue for the three states. Will probably lead to shortfalls for CBC and state environmental efforts.
- We are also working with partners on how to maintain momentum moving forwards.



NGOs (CBC)

- House is working on stabilizing the economy. Talk of a conservation corps (similar to the new deal during the Great Depression but it would focus on environmental conservation work).
- Legislatively, PA has still been in session but promising bills, like their fertilizer bill, are now on hold.



New York

- Hard hit. Everything was shut down.
Reopening: there are 7 metrics that have to be met to open. All Chesapeake Bay counties are eligible and in the process of re-opening. Then there are 4 phases of re-opening.
- All technical assistance and verification work was halted.
- Schools & restaurants closed, hence ag markets depressed.



New York – cont.

- Dairy industry hit very hard. Giving away milk.
- There is a 4-5-month delay in getting reimbursed funding from state grants.
- Most partners are working remotely or doing field visits with limitations.



Poultry & Egg Industry

- Need workers to help process poultry and eggs. Industry sharing and comparing practices.
- Some growers have had to depopulate houses due to shutting plants down or not having the capacity to process.

QUESTIONS



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