

## **MSBA Participates in December 2010 Maryland Farm Bureau Convention**

Recent events around Maryland have underscored the importance of beekeepers staying informed and contributing both information and some networking time to protect beekeeping here. Along these lines, MSBA Treasurer Bob Crouse and Marc Hoffman recently represented MSBA at the 2010 annual convention of the Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB). We are an affiliate member, which entitles us to attend and contribute to (but not vote) at board meetings, and to attend the annual convention, at which we are entitled to 2 voting delegates. MFB has chapters in every county, and its PAC supported 110 candidates in recent elections, 102 of whom won. Buddy Hance, the current Secretary of Agriculture, is a past MFB president.

The main benefit of attendance was that we were there and seen. It's important for the MSBA to be considered a part of the farming community, get to know the leaders, and for people to be comfortable with us so we're not just calling them when we need them. Another benefit was learning about MFB's primary concerns. Finally, we learned about their procedures so that we can propose policy recommendations for 2011.

We had a productive conversation with the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture about the ETO chamber, resulting in some concrete agreements on how to proceed. We were able to talk to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Dean of Agriculture at UMD, the head of Maryland Cooperative Extension, the presidents of many of the county farm bureaus, and the staff of MFB, making future cooperation easier. As a side note, one of the speakers, the head lobbyist of the American Farm Bureau Federation, took the Montgomery County beekeeping short course.

MFB works with the Maryland legislature's schedule, which enables their 2 lobbyists to speak for their membership and be effective in securing legislation. The MFB process involves soliciting suggestions from the county farm bureaus early in the year, and putting each suggestion to a vote at the annual convention. There is a section on beekeeping in their policy document, which urges full funding for research, permission to use chemicals for mite reduction, and advocates that all counties encourage beekeeping.

While MSBA participation in meetings such as this is important, there are MFB branches in every county, the organization's agenda is set by vote of these groups, and local farmer support for beekeeping make come in handy at a zoning hearing near you! Each county club is therefore strongly encouraged to attend meetings of your local farm bureau. Learn more at [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com).

## **UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS**

### **MSBA Winter Meeting:**

February 19, 2011, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD

### **MSBA Spring Meeting:**

June 18, 2011, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, University of Maryland/College Park Entomology Department Plant Sciences Building Auditorium

### **MSBA Fall Meeting:**

November 12, 2011, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD

**2011 Maryland Queen-Rearing Class** presented by Dr. Larry J. Connor, 2 1/2 Days, May 20 - 22, 2011. Location: Churchville - Bel Air area, Harford County, MD. Tuition \$290. For reservations: Joe Lewis, 1102 Runnymede Ct, Bel Air, MD 21014. For more information email [lewisjoseph@verizon.net](mailto:lewisjoseph@verizon.net)

**Delaware Beekeepers Association Annual Meeting**, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM March 19, 2011, 818 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover, DE 19901, more at [www.delawarebeekeepers.com/events.html](http://www.delawarebeekeepers.com/events.html)

**West Virginia State Beekeepers Association**, April 9, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Mercer County 4 H Camp, Glenwood Park Rd near Princeton, WV. More at [www.wvbeekeepers.org](http://www.wvbeekeepers.org)

**Virginia State Beekeepers Association Meeting**, June 17-18 Fredericksburg, VA. Visit [virginiabeekeepers.org](http://virginiabeekeepers.org) for more details.

### **Other Upcoming Events:**

**"Organic Beekeeping: A Day with Ross Conrad"** by the Philadelphia Beekeepers Guild, Sunday February 6, 2011 from 10:00 AM to 3 PM at The William Penn Charter School, 3000 W. School House Lane, Philadelphia PA. Non-member cost \$25, reserve at <http://rossconradinphilly.eventbrite.com/>

**Fourth Annual Meeting of the Organic Beekeepers Group**, March 4 -6, 2011 in Oracle, Arizona. Registration \$175. For more information/to register: Dee Lusby, tel. 520-398-2474 (AZ number, evenings please).

### **EAS 2011 Short Course and Conference**

July 25 - 29, 2011, Warwick, RI. More information at [www.easternapiculture.org](http://www.easternapiculture.org)

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## **MSBA WINTER MEETING WEATHER POLICY**

In the event of a major winter storm, please listen to WBAL (AM 1090) or WTOP (FM 103.5) for announcements. If a Anow Emergency Plan is in effect for Howard County, the meeting is cancelled.