



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

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## Maryland Horse Industry Board – Annual Report FY 2019

The Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) consists of the Secretary of Agriculture or his designee and 11 members from a cross-section of the horse industry appointed by the governor to four-year terms. During FY 2019, the horse board operated with a full slate of board members and conducted 11 monthly board meetings. The board continued its active involvement with the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area's special events zone improvement project. This initiative, involving a number of state agencies and various equine industry stakeholders, is an outgrowth of the board's 2015 Horse Park System Study, conducted by the Maryland Stadium Authority. The effort intensified when Fair Hill international won the bid to host one of the seven premiere 5 Star equestrian events in the world. The first of these annual events takes place in October 2020.



In addition, the board successfully applied for a USDA rural business development grant and hired its first fulltime contractual employee, Anne Litz, to serve as a field marketing specialist to grow equine-related small businesses in rural areas of the state, namely our Horse Discovery Centers and licensed stables. In addition, the board was able to expand its marketing efforts to include the World of Pets Expo at the Timonium fairgrounds, add seven new Horse Discovery Centers to its network, roll out a new online stable licensing

system, help Potomac Horse Center in the first phase of its fundraising campaign to raise \$75,000 to replace a roof on an indoor arena and once again led the industry effort to host a successful Horse Industry Day in Annapolis for state lawmakers and the 11-day Horseland exhibition at the Maryland State Fair which drew 70,000 visitors.

Maryland law defines six statutory duties of the horse board. These duties are to:

1. Promote the use and development of horses in Maryland;
2. Support research related to equine health and related issues;
3. Create public awareness of the value of equine activities as they relate to green space preservation;
4. Develop and disseminate information concerning the equine industry;
5. Advise the department regarding matters affecting the state's horse industry; and
6. License and inspect commercial stables that solicit business from the public, either by giving lessons, boarding horses, renting them for activities such as trail and carriage rides, or offering them a rescue or sanctuary.

As the commodity board for the state's horse industry, the horse board develops projects to help spur the economic development of the entire equine industry and particularly to initiate marketing efforts to help grow the recreational riding sector. Key accomplishments of the horse board in FY 2019 are listed below.

- **The Maryland Horse Industry Board licensed 745 stables in FY 2019.** This figure represents the fourth highest number of stables licensed by the board. It is hoped that the new online licensing system will contribute to an increase in licensing by making it easier to communicate to stables via email and more accessible for them to license and pay digitally. A total of 27,434 tons of feed were sold, resulting in a \$213,624 contribution to the board's Feed Fund.



- **Construction began in June, 2019 at the Fair Hill site, which was identified in a 2015 Maryland Stadium Authority study as one two venues in need of major upgrades to comprise a world class Maryland Horse Park System:** The Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area in Elkton as the major field event venue and The Prince George’s Equestrian Center as the major show/expo complex. A third site to be recommended as the cultural and education center was not identified at that time. The Horse Park study actually began in 2004 from feedback generated at the first Maryland Horse Forum, attended by leaders of the state’s equine community. After 15 years of various stops and starts, Phase I of construction at the antiquated Fair Hill facility has actually begun.

**Fair Hill:**



The Fair Hill project is a public-private partnership with the state contributing 50% of infrastructure costs and the private sector the other 50%. Horse Board member Jay Griswold is at the helm of the Fair Hill Foundation, the entity raising the private funds. Under the leadership of DNR, who are the owners and managers for the State of Maryland of the Fair Hill site and the MD Stadium Authority/MD Sports Commission, the horse board is working with the Fair Hill Foundation, Fair Hill International, Fair Hill Training Center, Fair Hill Races, the National Steeplechase Association and others to raise \$10M to match \$10M already committed to the project by the State of Maryland. By July 1, 2018, \$2M had been raised both from the State and private donors to start design, engineering, environmental, water and various other studies. Phase I of the \$20M construction project got underway June 1, 2019 in time to host the first 5 star event in October 2020. Extensive improvements to the racetrack, construction of new facilities to hold internationally-rated horse shows as

well as the 5 star event and all the current equine amenities including 70 miles of bridle trails will make Fair Hill a world class equestrian destination. The site is already home to the National Steeplechase Association and the world-renowned Fair Hill Training Center. During Fiscal Year '19, the board helped with and supported the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fair Hill Races and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fair Hill International 4 Star event. The board also started working with the Fair Hill Community Group, a team of civic leaders working to involve Cecil County neighborhoods in the Fair Hill project, and hosted Jane Atkinson, an original founder/director of the Kentucky Horse Park and Rolex Kentucky 3 Day Event for a two-day briefing at Fair Hill.

**Goucher:** The Maryland Horse Breeders Association moved into the third year of its lease to house its headquarters at the Towson campus of Goucher College, which has a nationally-renowned equestrian team. The school's stable and riding center is licensed by the horse board. Plans include development of a Maryland horse museum and sporting library as well as a plan by Goucher to build a new \$14 million equestrian complex. This facility could eventually serve as the Horse Park System's cultural and educational center. However, because of extenuating circumstances, fundraising efforts have been put on hold and the future of the project is uncertain.

**Prince George's Equestrian Center:** Efforts to explore options to make improvements to the Prince George's Equestrian Center were put on hold after a developer, who had become greatly interested in the project, passed away. The Center remains filled to capacity with a full schedule of horse shows and equestrian events throughout the year. The county continues to make improvements to the facility and recently repaired a storm-damaged stable among other improvements. A new general manager, Bryan Anthony, was hired in spring 2019.

**The horse board continued implementation of its Strategic Marketing Plan. Key components include:**

- a. **Horseland continues to grow and according to Maryland State Fair officials, drew 70,000 visitors in its fourth year at the Maryland State Fair. The Horse Show for Military Veterans and Mounted Police Officers was held once again. The famed Caisson Platoon from Ft. Myer, VA. continued to be among exhibitors.**



In conjunction with a group of horse industry partners, the 11-day exhibit, designed to introduce new folks to horses in 2015, has become entrenched as a major industry outreach initiative. Folks can pet horses, learn how to work around them, make stick horses and jump a miniature course, dress in jockey silks and ride a simulated racehorse and take part in a myriad of interactive activities and demonstrations provided by over 45 stables, organizations and horse discovery centers. In addition, folks were introduced to farms and stables in their neighborhoods where they could learn to ride and learn more about horses. The horse board and its network of therapeutic riding programs that offer horsemanship programs to veterans (“Horses Healing Maryland’s Military”) staged the third Military and Mounted Police Horse Show for veterans and first responders. Veterans from the STAR Equestrian Center in Hagerstown and Freedom Hills Therapeutic Riding in Port Deposit as well as veterans from the Caisson Platoon competed in equitation and obstacle classes. The show continues to be such a success that plans were made to repeat it at the 2019 Maryland State Fair.



b. **Horse Discovery Center program and the affiliated Horse School Curriculum, “Horses for Courses,” continues to mature.** Through a grant from USDA, Anne Litz was hired as a fulltime contractual employee to work with rural Horse Discovery Centers and licensed stables/equine organizations to help them grow their business, largely through expanded marketing activities and use of social media. Anne held four regional workshops during Fiscal Year ‘19 and expanded the program into two more counties, Queen Anne’s and Charles. Seven new stables were certified. There are now 40 Horse Discovery Centers in 18 counties. Days End Farm Horse Rescue, Molly Hill Farm and Full Moon Farm are among stables using the “Horses for Courses” school curriculum for student visits. Anne attended and presented at various venues about the program, including the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoors Education and Grow & Fortify conferences.



c. **“Hope’s Legacy” feature film, a teen drama with an equestrian themed backstory and aimed for Showtime/Netflix cinema outlets, is produced at two Maryland Horse Discovery Centers.** Towson, Md. filmmaker Doug Maddox directed and wrapped up production in June 2019 of a sequel to his successful “Christmas Ranch” movie, that was also set in Maryland and has drawn over 5 million viewers. The new film is titled “Hope’s Legacy” and features 3-Day Eventing. The movie was filmed at Full Moon Farm (Finksburg) and Fairwinds Farm & Stables (North East), both Horse Discovery Centers, and also at GreenMount Farm a Thoroughbred breeding farm in Glyndon. The horse board contributed help with the script, local actors and extras and a small amount of funding.



d. **The horse board continued the Touch of Class Award, Social Media programs, and distribution of promotional materials.**

During 2019, the horse board honored Maryland horses and riders who won national and international recognition with the monthly Touch of Class Award in these disciplines: interscholastic polo, sport horse breeding, jousting, steeplechasing, Thoroughbred racing and Quarter Horse competitions. The horse board has more than 5,000 Facebook and Twitter followers. Promotional materials are available at Welcome Centers and Clark's Elioak Farm in Ellicott City, a Horse Discovery Center and major tourism center. All publications can be downloaded on the horse board website. The horse board participated in a 2-page horse industry spread in Destination Maryland, the state's official tourism magazine; and advertised trail riding opportunities and equine spectator events in the Baltimore County tourism guide and Recreation News.



e. **The horse board conducted national and international outreach.** In June 2019, the Md Dept of Agriculture received a grant from the U.S. Livestock Genetics Export association to take officials and Thoroughbred and Standardbred breeders to France. The group consisted of Ass't Secretary Steve Connelly, International marketing director, Theresa Brophy, horse board executive director Ross Peddicord; Cricket Goodall, executive director Maryland Horse Breeders Association and breeders Mike Pons (Thoroughbreds, Country Life Farm in MD) and Garrett Bell, (Standardbreds, Winbak Farm). The group visited major Thoroughbred stud farms in Normandy (Alec Head Stud Haras du Quesnay; Aga Khan Stud Haras de Bonneval; Nicolas Chambure Stud Haras d'Etream), trotting farms of Sebastien Guarato and Haras de Sassy; training centers at Chantilly and Grobois; racetracks at Deauville, Compiègne and Vincennes; and the Arqana horse auction house. The group was hosted by Le Trot, the French national harness racing governing body; Galop, the national Thoroughbred racing bureau; and officials from the Hauts de France region, Maryland's French sister state. In turn, MDA plans to host French officials in Maryland during the coming year.



The horse board also hosted David Burns and Patrick Diamond from the Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Board and the Irish National Stud, respectively, at The Preakness and Maryland Million races as well as taking them on tours of Fair Hill and major Thoroughbred breeding farms.





Executive director Ross Peddicord travelled on fact-finding missions to major 3-Day event competitions at Burghley (England), the World Equestrian Games (Tryon, N.C.) and Land Rover Kentucky; made a presentation about the Fair Hill 5 Star Event at the U.S. Eventing Association annual conference in New Orleans; toured the new World Equestrian Center now under construction in Ocala, Fla; and represented MDA at the USLGE conference in Dallas-Ft. Worth.



The board also designated Bob Zhang, from the Maryland Sister States program, to be it's Asian representative. Bob took Laurel jockey Angel Serpa to an international invitational race in Wuhan, China in October 2018. Serpa won the race over competitors from 10 other nations



**f. Promotions and participation at 97 Maryland horse and community events.** During the year, the horse board provided sponsorships for the Kid's Korral at the Maryland Million horse race; Horseland at the Maryland State Fair; Horse Industry Day in Annapolis; Eastern Shore Horse Expo in Denton; the EQUUS Film Festivals in New York and Timonium; the Hays-Heighe House Jim MacKay Award at Harford Community College; and the Maryland Horse Council.



**The horse board had booths, attended and/or made presentations at 45 venues:** Argentina International Polo Match in Poolesville, Cecil County horse history talk in Rising Sun, Tik Maynard booking signing at Full Moon Farm, Finksburg; MACO conference in Ocean City; Marlborough Horse Trials, Upper Marlboro; Md. State jousting finals, Crownsville; Appy Fest, Waldorf; Thoroughbred Makeover in Lexington, Ky.; Harford County Historical Society film night, Bel Air; Tuckahoe "Celebration of the Horse," Queenstown; Maryland Day at Fair Hill for 40 local and state officials, Elkton;



Harrisburg harness horse sales, Harrisburg, Pa; Waredaca Pasture Walk, Laytonsville; Potomac Horse Center fundraising party, Darnestown and Sally O'Connor party, Dickerson; Cecil County holiday party, Perryville; the Governor's Buy Local picnic, Annapolis; Potomac Plate Night at Rosecroft; Taste of Maryland Ag dinner, Glen Burnie; TROT dinner and annual meeting, West Friendship; MD Tourism Development Board quarterly meeting, Cross Keys; Days End annual fundraising gala,



Laurel; Talisman Therapeutic Riding Center Derby fundraiser, Queenstown; Horseland for 11 days at the Maryland State Fair, Timonium; the Maryland Travel & Tourism Summit, Cambridge; the EQUUS Film Festival, Brooklyn, NY; Lisbon Horse Parade, Lisbon; Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoors Educators Conference, Towson; Horse Industry Day in Annapolis; Maryland Horse Council quarterly and annual meetings, MHC annual barbecue, World Trade Center annual dinner, Grow & Fortify conference; National Steeplechase Association awards dinner; World of Pets Expo; Cloverleaf awards dinner; Renaissance awards dinner; USLGE conference; LEAD Maryland; City Ranch fundraiser; Rural Maryland Council annual meeting; PAWS meetings; MARBIDCO meetings; Equine Nutrient management day, MDA; Fair Hill public meeting;



Horse Talk in Annapolis; Elk Creek Driving Event, Fair Hill; Camp Letts Horse Show, Edgewater; Land Rover Kentucky Four Star event, Preakness/State of Maryland tent, Fair Hill Races and Fair Hill International. **The horse board also attended and participated in another 52 equine industry meetings and events** and hosted a meeting of the MD High School Rodeo Association at department headquarters. Many of these meetings involved the Fair Hill project and planning sessions for the 2019 Maryland Horse Forum, held August 8, 2019 during Fiscal Year '20.



- **The horse board awarded \$29,700 in grants to 30 Maryland horse organizations and individuals.** The board distributed \$29,700 in grants funding, one of the highest amounts in the board’s 21-year history.

- **Cross Disciplinary Cooperation.** The horse board continued coordinating meetings with the Maryland Horse Industry Marketing/Leadership Circle, comprised of 14 industry partner organizations. About 30 people, representing a cross section of racing and non-racing organizations, who are largely CEOs, executive directors and marketing staff, meet to discuss prospective initiatives and provide industry updates. For the fifth year, the group hosted “Horse Industry Day” in Annapolis which included legislative training sessions, visits to legislative offices and lunch for public officials at the Miller Senate Office Building. About 150 industry folks attended with outreach to nearly 70 legislators and their aides. The group also funds Horseland. Previously the group has also funded the “Racing the Times” documentary film, the writers for the School Horse Curriculum project, the industry’s 2016 Economic Impact Survey, the breakout study for Maryland in the American Horse Council’s national horse industry economic impact study as well as other marketing and advertising programs.

**2019 MHIB Statistics**

Number of stables licenses issued	745
Number of inspections performed annually	587
Percentage of facilities inspected and brought into compliance	100
Revenue collected from licensing horses stables in Maryland	\$ 91,900
Revenue collected from assessment based on tons of horse feed sold in Maryland	\$213,624

**Outcomes**

Total amount of money distributed as grants for promotional, educational or research projects for Maryland horse industry	\$29,700
Percentage of total revenue distributed as grants for Maryland horse industry	14.0
Staffed booths or presented talks at trade shows, conferences, fairs and exhibitions promoting Maryland equines	45

