

Farm Stewardship Committee



Governor Moore Appoints Kevin Atticks Secretary of Agriculture

The Maryland Horse Council is thrilled to report that Governor Wes Moore has appointed Kevin Atticks, a true friend of the horse industry, to be his Secretary of Agriculture.

Atticks is a man of many talents. He holds a masters in environmental journalism from CU-Boulder, a doctorate in communications design from University of Baltimore, and a bachelors in journalism and music composition from Loyola University. He has been a writer, a publisher, an educator, and a lobbyist. He wrote *Discover Maryland Wineries: A Travel Guide to Maryland's Wine Country* as well as the forward to *Maryland Wine: A Full-Bodied History*.

His resume is impressive. He is a past president of the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council and a past chair of the WineAmerica State and Regional Associations Advisory Council and the Maryland Tourism Coalition. He was the Executive Director of the Maryland Wineries Association as well as the Brewers Association of Maryland and the Maryland Distillers Guild. He has served on the University of Maryland College of Agriculture's Global Leadership Council and on the board of Future Harvest.

In 2015, Atticks founded Grow & Fortify to support value-added agricultural organizations and the businesses they represent, including agricultural startups. The organization's mission is to cultivate "an environment where value-added agricultural producers, startups, operators and growers innovate and thrive" and to "grow the organizations & businesses that fortify Maryland's agricultural heritage."

Atticks has included the horse industry in his work with Grow & Fortify every step of the way. Two of MHC's Industry Professional members are horse farm wineries – the Vineyards at Dodon and Hidden Hills Farm and Vineyard – and MHC Industry Professional member Waredaca is home to the Waredaca Brewing Company. Atticks made sure that the horse industry was included as a stakeholder in the recent study on methods for assessing agricultural improvements that was conducted

by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation. Grow & Fortify also provides substantial logistical support to MHC for Horse Industry Day in Annapolis, which this year will be held on February 14 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Most recently, of course, Atticks was the keynote speaker at our Nov. 21 Annual Membership Meeting. He offered his thoughts on the 2023 legislative session and a few predictions about Gov. Moore's potential cabinet. We note with retrospective humor that he did not predict his own nomination to be the Secretary of Agriculture, despite leading questions from the audience.

Congratulations Kevin!

MDA Opens Healthy Soils Competitive Fund Application Period

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has begun accepting applications for its new Healthy Soils Competitive Fund and will accept applications through March 3. The fund provides up to \$50,000 to support three years of enhanced healthy soil practices that provide soil, water, and climate benefits, with particular attention to farmers who are ineligible for other programs.

Projects considered include pasture and hay planting; nutrient management; integrated pest management; hedgerow planting; and windbreak and shelter-belt projects. There are no minimum or maximum acreage requirements.

The application and additional information are available here: https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/counties/Fillable_HSPApp_Com...

UME Hiring for Ag Research Summer Internships

The University of Maryland Extension (UME) is again hiring for its 'Creating Leadership and Professional Development Through Extension Internships.' This is a summer internship program with seven interns paired with competent mentors. Interns will gain hands-on experience and participate in leadership and professional development training. The focus will be on the eight core competencies in career readiness. Along with professional development and one-on-one pairing with a faculty mentor, interns will have networking opportunities with private industry professionals. It is a ten-week program in which interns work full-time.

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Provide experiential learning opportunities in Extension and agricultural research to undergraduate students, including those at community colleges and underserved institutions in Maryland;
2. Develop internal hiring and mentorship skills in UME Faculty;
3. Increase student interns' career-readiness and leadership skills; and
4. Increase the number of students from these institutions continuing their education and entering the agricultural workforce.

The Application for Summer Internship 2023 is open. For more information and to apply, visit <https://go.umd.edu/extensioninternships>

Do you have a Farm Stewardship story or topic you would like to see in this column?

Email your ideas to editor@equiery.com