

Third Annual Agriculture and Environmental Law Conference

By: Mayhah Suri & Samantha Watters

The Agriculture and Environmental Law Conference is back for a third year of dynamic presenters and discussion topics of interest to the farming, environmental, and legal communities. The conference is geared toward members of the agriculture community, including farmers, agricultural and environmental attorneys, regulators, agriculture professionals, environmental associations, and elected officials. It provides a unique opportunity to learn how to navigate the complex system of laws that Maryland farmers face. Unlike other conferences hosted by a single interest group, the Agriculture and Environmental Law Conference brings agricultural, environmental, and legal professionals together to discuss the relevant issues and the intricate laws regulating those issues.

The conference will be held on Friday, November 17th, 2017 from 8 am – 3 pm at the Doubletree Hotel Annapolis, 210 Holiday Ct, Annapolis, MD 21401. Nutrient Management Continuing Learning Education Credits (5 credits) and Delaware Continuing Legal Education Credits (5.3 credits) are available for attendees.

Topics at the conference will include: a keynote panel on Conservation Programs and the 2018 Farm Bill, Organic Farming - Challenges, Benefits and Legal Battles, Administering Antibiotics to Livestock in Maryland- the Legal Framework; Legal Resources for Improving Soil Health on Leased Land and a Nutrient Management Update and Preparing for an Audit. There will be an array of interesting and exciting speakers on these topics. One such presenter is Alison Howard, who will speak about organic farming and share her personal experiences managing her 600-acre diverse farm in Millington, Maryland.

Each panel around a topic represents a unique and diverse group of experts on a very pertinent issue. The antibiotic panel, for example, will feature State Veterinarian Dr. Michael Radebaugh who will share his experience executing the veterinary feed directive and how it affects animal health. The panel also includes Waterkeepers Chesapeake Executive Director Betsy Nicholas presenting her experience advocating for increased regulations on antibiotic use in livestock production and what the laws mean. Farmer and Maryland Farm Bureau Government Relations Director Colby Ferguson will discuss his personal experience as a livestock producer complying with antibiotic regulations as well as his experience with the legislative process as a farmer advocate. This panel, like others at the conference, is an opportunity to spark conversations between different stakeholders about how best to protect agriculture and natural resources in Maryland.

Given the federal political landscape, state level action to combat climate change is viewed by some as more important than ever. A highlight of this year's conference will be Maryland's Secretary of the Environment, Ben Grumbles discussing what is happening in Maryland to fight climate change.

As always, the conference is hosted by the Agriculture Law Education Initiative (ALEI). The Agriculture Law Education Initiative (ALEI) is a collaboration of the Francis King Carey School of Law at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB); the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources at the University of Maryland (UMCP); and the School of Agriculture and Natural Sciences at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. ALEI is an initiative of the University of Maryland: MPowering the State, a strategic alliance between UMB and UMCP created in 2012 to significantly expand research collaboration, business development, and student opportunities at both universities.

The ALEI team hopes the conference will evoke a lively discussion and advance the dialogue about the natural resource protection laws that affect Maryland farmers. State lawmakers are invited to attend so that they can hear from the panelists and attendees on these important topics.

For more information or to register, visit the [conference website](#).