

Colby Ferguson, Government Relations Director, Maryland Farm Bureau

Colby Ferguson is the Government Relations Director for Maryland Farm Bureau, where he is in charge of representing Maryland Farm Bureau on issues in both Annapolis and Washington D.C.

Prior to joining Maryland Farm Bureau, Colby was the Agriculture Business Development Specialist for Frederick County for nine years. In that capacity, he worked with elected officials at the state and local level to implement flexible zoning and legislation important to the farm community.

Prior to his county position, Colby was the sales and marketing manager for Sinclair Cattle Company, a purebred Angus ranch in Pennsylvania. He has also been a nutrition specialist for dairy, beef, swine, sheep and horses with Southern States Cooperative.

He holds a bachelor's degree in animal science, biotechnology from Oklahoma State University. He is a 2006 LEAD Maryland fellow and served on the LEAD Maryland Board of Directors for 10 years. Colby also serves on the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, Maryland Healthy Soils Commission, Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council, Maryland Agriculture Council and Maryland Agriculture Marketing Professionals group.

Colby is an experienced livestock judge and lives with his wife, Stacy on their farm in Walkersville.

Hannah Quigley, Policy Specialist at the National Sustainable Agriculture Commission

Hannah (she/her) holds an M.P.H from the University of North Carolina and a B.A. from NC State University. North Carolina is where she found her place in food and agriculture and more specifically in the synergies between promoting public health through a regional food economy. Her programmatic work has included designing and managing sliding scale CSAs and business development resources for food and farm entrepreneurs, while her policy design and advocacy experience rests in farm to school, healthy food finance initiatives, capital access, and urban agriculture. Her approach in the work seeks to disrupt power imbalances in policy design and decision making by centering community voices, particularly those that have been historically displaced or marginalized. She joins NSAC from Richmond, Virginia to staff the Marketing, Food Systems and Rural Development committee, which focuses on local and regional food systems, farm to school, healthy food access, and economic development.

Michael J. Wilson, Director, Maryland Hunger Solutions

Michael (He/Him) joined Maryland Hunger Solutions in July 2013 as Director. In this role, he is helping to lead Maryland's premier hunger advocacy, education, and outreach organization as it works to end hunger and improve the nutrition, health, economic security, and well-being of low-income families in Maryland. Michael serves in a leadership role in many statewide coalitions and is a collaborator with other anti-poverty advocates.

For more than three decades, Michael has been a leading advocate for economic and social justice. He worked on Capitol Hill as a legislative and press assistant for the late U.S. Representative Charles Hayes (IL). He also served in numerous positions at the U.S. Department of Labor, culminating as Chief of Staff in the Employment Standards Administration where he coordinated legislative, regulatory, communications, and policy development. Michael also was an international officer and director at the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union where he headed the legislative and political department and led the union's efforts in food policy and worker advocacy.

Michael served as a FRAC Board Member for more than a decade, as well as a Board Member for the Consumer Federation of America and Americans for Democratic Action, where he also served as National Director.

Michael currently chairs the Board of the Montgomery County Food Council, formerly co-chaired the Prince George's County Food Equity Council, and served on the Howard County Food Task Force. He also serves as a member of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Advisory committee, and on the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, where he chairs the Communication and Coordination Committee. Michael has a B.A. in communications arts and sciences from Michigan State University.

Vanessa Garcia Polanco, National Young Farmers Coalition

Will be updated after the meeting