



NEWSLETTER

Wicomico County Agriculture

WICOMICO COUNTY OFFICE * P.O. BOX 1836 * SALISBURY, MD 21802 * (410) 749-6141 * FAX (410) 548-5126

August 2008

FARM BILL WORKSHOPS

The Center for Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Maryland Cooperative Extension at the University of Maryland, the Maryland State Department of Agriculture, and the Risk Management Agency of the USDA are organizing Workshops on the 2008 Farm Bill. These workshops will be from August 26, 2008 to September 11, 2008 from 9:00AM to 3:30PM at sites throughout Maryland.

These workshops will outline and discuss major provisions of the new Farm Bill. New farm commodity programs in the bill are ACRE and SURE. Both will receive attention with focus on decisions farmers have to make about these programs. Conservation and other programs will also be discussed. Speakers will be from the Maryland Cooperative Extension, the Farm Service Agency of USDA, and the Natural Resources and Conservation Service of USDA.

Registration is necessary to determine the number of lunches and the number of handouts. Contact your local county extension office to register at a site near you.

MARYLAND 2008 FARM BILL WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

9:00AM-3:30PM

Tuesday, August 26, 2008	Chestertown Fire Hall
Wednesday, August 27, 2008	H117, Chesapeake College, Wye Mills
Thursday, August 28, 2008	Rockawalkin Community Center, Hebron
Tuesday, September 2, 2008	Mt. Airy Fireman's Activity Building, 1003 Twin Arch Road, Mt. Airy
Wednesday, September 3, 2008	American Legion Hall, Hughesville
Thursday, September 4, 2008	Friendly Farm Restaurant, Upperco
Tuesday, September 9, 2008	Washington County Extension Office, Boonsboro
Thursday, September 11, 2008	Room 2007 Garrett College, McHenry

Organic Twilight Tour August 28, 2008 - 6:00pm.

Come join researchers, fellow organic farmers and those interested in learning more about organic farming techniques for an informational evening discussing the 2008 organic research at LESREC.

This year we will hold training specific to using cover crops on an organic farm - which cover crops or cover crop combinations can work for your specific situation. Additionally, how to make compost on your farm - regardless of the scale of your operation. Bring questions, bring a friend!

Educating People To Help Themselves

Local Governments * U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

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Maryland's Online Farmer's Market- Foodtrader.org

The Environmental Finance Center located at the University of Maryland announces the launch of Foodtrader.org, a virtual farmer's market that will connect both buyers and sellers with local food as soon as it is harvested. In concert with its sister site Agtrader.org, Foodtrader.org will give consumers access to the rich diversity of agricultural resources within the state of Maryland.

With Foodtrader.org, farmers can create an instantaneous listing that will identify the description, quantity, price, and location of their items. Consumers can search listings within specific categories and communicate directly with the farmer to buy the food at the farm, at a farmers market or at another prearranged location. This site also allows for producers and consumers to post listing for events and wanted items. It is a free website for Maryland that complements the Maryland Department of Agriculture's "*Maryland's Best*" program.

For any questions regarding Foodtrader.org, please contact Joanne Throwe at 301/405-5036.

University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Offers Farm Management Classes for Women

The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension is please to conduct a new educational program titled Annie's Project. Annie's Project focuses on the many aspects of farm management and is designed to empower women in overall farm decision making and to build local networks throughout the state. The target audience is farmwomen with a passion for business, agriculture and involvement in the farm operation. Topics for the sessions cover the five areas of Risk Management – Production, Marketing, Financial, Legal Risk, Human Resources. This course is open to anyone interested in farm management practices. The course will be 8 evening sessions starting in January 2009 with classroom and computer lab work. Dates are being set now. For more information contact:

Jenny Rhodes jrhodes@umd.edu 410-758-0166 or Shannon Dill sdill@umd.edu 410-822-1244.

WMREC Pumpkin & Sweet Corn Twilight Meeting

Join us September 23, 2008 for an exciting twilight meeting! University of Maryland experts will present results of the pumpkin research project at Keedysville to current growers, as well as those interested in starting their own pumpkin patch. You'll see 30 varieties of pumpkins; no-till on vetch; and information will also be presented for the Bt sweet corn research project.

Time: 4:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Western MD Research & Education Center, 18330
Keedysville Rd., Keedysville, MD 21756
Contact: Bryan Butler 410-386-2760

Custom Rates and Rising Fuel Costs

Richard Nottingham, Extension Educator Somerset County, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension

One of the most frequent requests here at the extension office is for information on custom rates.

Since Pennsylvania updates their custom rates yearly, they are the most current source of information in our area. With the rising cost of fuel, it's no surprise that most rates have increased substantially. According to an article in the August issue of *American Agriculturalist*, custom rates are up an average of 8.64% over last year. But, these rates were calculated early this year and don't take into account fuel cost increases since March.

- Grain combining and storage did not change much from last year, but grain hauling costs went up 15%-25%.
- Tillage operations requiring high horsepower increased 13%-15%.
- Large tractor rental rates increased 16%.

If you would like a copy of the 2008 Pennsylvania custom rates, stop by the extension office and we will be glad to provide you with a copy, or they are available on the web at www.nass.usda.gov/pa.

Average custom rates should not be considered as "absolute fair charges". Rising fuel charges make it a necessity to adjust for fuel prices. Ag economists at the University of Illinois and the University of Minnesota estimate that fuel and lubrication costs can range from 15%-30% of total costs. Many operators are negotiating the job rate without fuel and then charging for the fuel used.

The University of Minnesota has recently updated a list of machine costs on tractors, combines, and implements. Costs, including labor and fuel are reported for more than 110 machines. We have copies in our office, or it is available on the web at www.apec.umn.edu/faculty/wlazarus under publications.

Jane Lawton Farm to School Program - Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week

September 22 - 26, 2008



A new initiative being implemented by the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Maryland State Board of Education and other organizations and individuals will bring more Maryland-grown products to school lunch rooms and help educate students about where their food comes, how it is produced, and the benefits of a healthy diet. The Jane Lawton Farm to School Program, so named in honor of the late Maryland House of Delegates member Jane Lawton of District 18, Montgomery County, was created during the 2008 Session of the Maryland General Assembly when *SB 158 Farm-to-School Program – Activities and Promotional Events*, sponsored by Senator Jamie Raskin, was signed into law by the Governor in May. In addition to facilitating the procurement of local Maryland produce for school menus, the bill also creates a Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week to promote Maryland agriculture through school meal and classroom programs and interaction between students and local farmers.

In 2008, Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week will be held September 22nd through September 26th with a kickoff event tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 23rd at Takoma Park Middle School in Montgomery County. The program will also provide educational materials for teachers to integrate into their lessons to help students make the connection between their lunch menus and the agricultural process. Thus far, Montgomery, Cecil, Carroll, and Anne Arundel Counties are planning to feature local products in their menus during Homegrown School Lunch Week, and other school systems have expressed interest in participating. For more information on the Jane Lawton Farm to School Program and where to find Maryland-grown food products and more,

visit www.marylandsbest.net/farm2school.php or call 410-841-5770.



Bob Davis Receives Maryland SCD Outstanding Leadership Award

Robert “Bob” Davis was recently honored with the Outstanding Leadership Award at the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts annual meeting. Mr. Davis has served as District Supervisor for 34 years for the Wicomico Soil Conservation District.

Congratulations Bob!

Wye Pumpkin Twilight Meeting

Join us September 25, 2008 for an exciting twilight meeting! University of Maryland experts will present results of the pumpkin research project at the Wye Research and Education Center to current growers, as well as those interested in starting their own pumpkin patch. You'll see 30 varieties of pumpkins; no-till on vetch; and information will also be presented for the Bt sweet corn research project.

A lite fare will be available.

Time: 4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Location: Wye Research & Education Center,
124 Wye Narrows Rd.,
Queenstown, MD 21658

Contact: Bryan Butler 410-386-2760 or
Mike Newell 410-827-7388.

2008 Delmarva Poultry Conference

The University of Delaware and the University of Maryland in cooperation with the Delmarva Poultry Industry will hold a poultry Conference in Ocean City on September 10. Some of the topics covered are:

- * Evaluating Tunnel Ventilations Systems
- * Poultry Manure Handling Regulations
- * Management Practices of Raising Birds without Antibiotics

Contact: Jennifer Timmons, University of MD
410-742-1178
mdchick@umd.edu



Maryland's Poultry has a new website!

Check out www.mdchick.umd.edu, a new website that has been established for Maryland’s poultry producers. The website is a work in progress and will continue to expand as the year progresses. If you have any suggestions or comments for the site please send them to Jennifer Timmons at mdchick@umd.edu



Greenhouse Conference

A Greenhouse Production Conference has been scheduled for anyone interested in starting a greenhouse to experienced greenhouse operators. The conference is sponsored by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension and Maryland Greenhouse Growers Association.

The seminar will be held on Tuesday December 2, 2008 from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm at the Talbot County Agricultural Center in Easton (10659 Hiners Lane). Topics will include: Energy Management, Bedding Plant Nutrition, Business Management, Diagnosing Disease & Insects/ Mites, Water and Soil Monitoring, New Products to Grow, Growing in Cooler Greenhouses. These sessions will be taught by University specialists, educators, scouts and experts from the field. Maryland Private Applicator Pesticide Re-Certification credits will be available at this conference.

Registration fee \$35 per person. This fee includes materials, continental breakfast and lunch.

For more information or to register contact the Talbot County Extension Office at 410-822-1244 or sdjill@umd.edu. **Registration is due by November 24th.**

The conference is open to anyone. If you have any special needs for the conference please contact the Extension Office a week before the conference.

NEWS RELEASE

www.mda.state.md.us

Office of the Secretary

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway

Annapolis, Maryland 21401



Maryland Agricultural Mediation Service Re-tools to Help Rural Communities

Resolve Conflicts and Avoid Lawsuits

Using mediation before filing lawsuits in agricultural disputes is the law

ANNAPOLIS, MD (July 29, 2008) – Farmers and others in the agricultural community who may be embroiled in nagging disputes with family members, neighbors, government agencies, or even lenders can get a fresh start by trying mediation through the Maryland Agricultural Conflict Resolution Service (Maryland ACRoS). Maryland ACRoS is a quick, confidential, no- or low-cost service offered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and is available to Marylanders to help resolve agricultural related disputes before they end up in court.

“There are no winners in agriculture when a disagreement goes to court,” said Agriculture Secretary Roger Richardson. The time and cost associated with lawsuits and litigation strain everyone’s resources and often result in outcomes that satisfy no one. We hope farm operators and their non-farm/off-farm neighbors will try our mediation service before a situation becomes unbearable or goes to court.”

MDA has provided U.S. Department of Agriculture-certified mediation services for nine years, through a program previously called Farm Sense, which is now known as Maryland ACRoS. Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process in which a neutral third party (the mediator) assists farmers, agricultural lenders, agencies, families and citizens to resolve disputes in a non-adversarial setting outside the traditional legal and regulatory process. Mediation is based on the voluntary cooperation and participation of all the involved parties. Working through the process, there is no finding of right or wrong and the mediator has no power to impose a solution. Maryland ACRoS has a roster of more than 20 skilled mediators trained to serve as non-adversarial, neutral, third parties to help resolve disputes. An initial consultation with program staff and initial mediation session is free of charge. If additional mediations sessions are needed, costs are shared by the parties, with full or partial waivers of fees based on income.

Maryland House Bill 396 passed in December 2006 and requires by law that an individual who wishes to bring action against an agricultural operation in any court to first: file a complaint with a local agency authorized to hear such complaints, if one exists; and obtain a decision or recommendation on the complaint from the local agency.

If there is no local agency, the individual may not bring the nuisance action to court until: the individual refers the complaint to the Maryland ACRoS in MDA and the program certifies that mediation has been concluded.

For more information about Maryland ACRoS or to request mediation services, log on to www.marylandacrs.org or contact Eddie Johnson at 410-841-5778 or johnsone@mda.state.md.us.

Ways for Farmers to Save Money on Energy



YOUR **POULTRY**
INFORMATION SOURCE

Gary Van Wicklen, Poultry Extension Engineer, University of Delaware

At two recent meetings sponsored by the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension about ways for farmers to save money on energy, I presented several recommendations for poultry growers. In summary, here are the ideas I presented. If you have any questions about how your poultry operation can reduce energy consumption, please contact me. I look forward to working with you.

First, you need to know where most of your energy is consumed. The majority of electricity is used by tunnel fans during hot weather and by lights during cold weather. LP gas is the largest component of energy consumption during cold weather.

Recently constructed poultry housing uses construction techniques, materials, and equipment that reduce energy consumption. Older housing and equipment can easily consume twice the energy of new housing. So, who can benefit from investing in house “improvements”? Those with older houses where:

- * electric rates are high
- * insulation has settled
- * wood has warped and shrunk
- * foundation has settled
- * equipment is worn and outdated.

Here is one possible line of thinking. Invest in equipment that uses current technology and building materials that will reduce energy use and pay back in less than 3 – 5 years. If there is funding available to help purchase these improvements, then a grower will have less of his/her money invested and the pay back period will be reduced. Most of these improvements will not only save energy, but likely will have production benefits!

Okay, so what are some possible improvements? Consider items that save energy and might qualify for funding.

- Convert light bulbs from incandescent to cold cathode and compact fluorescent bulbs
- Add attic insulation to older houses
- Convert curtain sided houses to solid, insulated side walls
- Convert heating system from forced-air furnaces to radiant tube heaters
- Replace low efficiency box fans with high efficiency tunnel fans
- Install insulated tunnel doors over pad opening, replacing tunnel curtain

Cold Cathode Light Bulbs

Although purchasing all new bulbs is somewhat expensive, the energy they save is pretty straight forward. Questions still remain regarding their life and effect on production.

- 5 watt and 8 watt cold cathode light bulbs replace 35 and 40 watt incandescent bulbs.
- Cold cathode bulbs – Cost between \$8 and \$11 each.
 - Are dimmable with typical dimmers
 - Have a life of 25,000 hours (3 years of continuous use every day and every night)
 - Generally pay back in about one year
- Cold cathode bulbs are being placed in the off chambers
- In the brood chamber, one alternative is to use 24 watt compact fluorescents to replace 100 watt incandescent bulbs.
- Purchase quality bulbs; cheaper isn’t usually better in the long run.
- Purchase bulbs from a reputable source who will replace defective bulbs.

Add Attic Insulation

- Insulation settles and shifts over time ...
 - A house built in the 1970s probably had 5-6 inches of insulation when new. By 2005 this same house often has less than two inches of insulation due to settlement and compaction.
 - Take precaution against ceiling insulation “moving” in the attic from wind; use batts instead of loose fill product.
- Attic insulation slows heat leaving during cold weather and slows heat gain during warm weather.
- Adequate attic insulation helps prevent water vapor from condensing (sweating) on the ceiling.
- Insulation that has settled (compacted) does not have its original R-value.

Solid, Insulated Side Walls

- Solid side walls now are nearly a housing standard on Delmarva!
grower choose fiberglass batt or sprayed-on foam insulation?

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- Fiberglass is less expensive, but foam seals the wall tighter.

Replace Furnaces with Radiant Tube Heaters

- Example 1: Tubes vs. Furnaces
 - Identical houses except heaters
 - “Paired” birds
 - Cold brooding period (Jan. 05)
- Results
 - Tube house: 20% less gas used
 - Tube house: 25 points heavier birds
 - Tube house: 2 points better feed conversion
 - Tube house: Made \$900 more than furnace house
- Example 2: Tubes vs. Furnaces
 - Grower installs four houses of tubes
 - Houses are “older”, not new construction
 - Dec. 06 / Jan 07 Flock
- Results
 - Company had a \$4,700 fuel allowance
 - Grower with tubes used \$1,700 of fuel
 - Grower received \$3,000 credit at settlement!



Replace Older Fans with High Efficiency Fans

How Much Can Efficient Tunnel Fans Save in Energy?

Example 1

- Let's use a house (46 ft wide) with 32,000 birds and 11 – 48” diameter tunnel fans
 - 1 horsepower Box Fan: 16,500 cfm @ 0.08” static pressure, 965 W or
 - 1 horsepower Cone Fan: 23,650 cfm @ 0.08” static pressure, 1150 W
- 11 Cone fans produce 707 feet per minute average air speed
- 11 Box fans produce 493 feet per minute average air speed

What does that air speed difference do for production?

- It would take more than 15 box fans to approach 700 feet per minute compared to 11 cone fans.
- 4 extra box fans each using 965 watts for 300 hours (each) on a warm month would cost \$180 (at 15 cents/kwh).

Example 2

- During Fall 2006, a house we visited had 4 cone tunnel fans and 4 older box fans.
 - Remember, Ventilation Efficiency Ratio (VER) = cfm/watt electrical input
 - Results from fan performance testing at 0.08” static pressure revealed
 - Cone Fans: 22,345 cfm using 6.65 amps, 1596 watts, VER=14.0
 - Box Fans: 17,040 cfm using 5.27 amps, 1265 watts, VER=13.4
 - 8 Cone Fans produce ~ 560 feet/minute air speed
 - 8 Box Fans produce ~ 425 feet/minute air speed
 - To achieve 560 feet/minute air speed, 10.5 box fans would be required instead of 8 cone fans.
- This would cost a grower \$225 more per house over a year assuming 15 cents per kwh.

Tunnel Doors Insulate Evaporative Pad Opening

- Tunnel curtains have nearly no insulation value (R-value)
- Tunnel doors:

Insulated boards covering the cooling pad.

They can especially help houses that “end brood”.

- During tunnel ventilation these doors appear to help distribute air to the center of the pad end of the house.

Products to Avoid

“Space Age” or “Nanotechnology” paints and/or coatings. They don't have the real R-value to significantly reduce heat transfer. Bubble pack “insulation”. This product has no real R-value, but its' cost is as high as a comparably sized sheet of foam insulation. There are many ways to reduce energy consumption in chicken houses. I'll be happy to work with you on identifying options for your farms.

**Pesticide Re-Certification
&
Nutrient Management Training**

November 5 - Somerset Extension - 6:00-10:00 pm 410-651-1350

November 11 - Snow Hill Library - 6:00-10:00 pm. 410-632-1972

November 18 - Wicomico Extension - 6:00-10:00 pm. 410-749-6141

November 25 - **Training for Pesticide Exam**
Wicomico Extension - 6:00-10:00 pm.

December 2 - **Pesticide Exam**
Wicomico Extension - 6:00-10:00 pm.

