

Ag Notes

Harford County Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION



July 2019

The Extension Office will be closed on
July 4 & 5 in observance of
Independence Day.

University of
Maryland Extension

Harford County
Agricultural Center

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M—F 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

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Hello, Harford County!

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer weather! It's hard to believe we are in the month of July already!

Last week I had the privilege of spending a few days in Western Maryland for our third LEAD Maryland seminar. I am enjoying the opportunity to travel the state and to learn more about our agriculture and natural resource industries. Last week in Garrett County we learned quite a bit about Maryland's Forestry industry; much of which was very surprising and interesting to me.

As you might imagine, forestry is a big industry in Western Maryland; however, it is big in all areas of our State. As a matter of fact, Maryland's forestry industry is larger than it's seafood industry; yet if you ask the average person, they'd likely tell you that Maryland is famous for blue crabs, not trees!

Maryland has over 2.5 million acres of forest, which is about a half a million more acres than we have of farmland. These forests are held predominantly by private landowners in small tracts; which, as we learned in LEAD Maryland, makes management of Maryland's forests a challenge.

One of the biggest problems that Maryland has is that we actually have too many trees. Most landowners are under the false impression that forests should be left undisturbed to let "nature take it's course." As a result, many of Maryland's forests are poorly managed and under-utilized. Maryland's forests evolved in a highly disturbed environment where both

natural and human intervention rejuvenated the forest. As a matter of fact, the Native Americans cut and burned our forests—a lot! As a result, our forest ecosystems evolved to thrive in this disturbed system. Woods that are left undisturbed tend to lack biodiversity and desirable species (both plant and animal). Proper management of our forests includes clear-cutting and selective cutting so that the forest can flourish, while producing desirable and high quality timber.

An important component of a viable forestry industry revolves around a market for low-quality wood, or pulp wood. These are undesirable trees that are removed from the forest to create room for desirable species, such as oak, hickory, poplar, etc., that can be managed to produce high-quality timber.

Interestingly, Maryland has the potential to, and does, produce highly sought-after and quality timber. Buyers all over the world seek out Maryland hardwood timber because of it's quality. Buyers also seek Maryland pine because it is stronger and of better quality. Our loblolly pine on the shore is much stronger than loblollies grown in more Southern states because our growing season is shorter, which results in more growth rings and hence stronger wood for the same diameter tree.

For those of you that may have forests and are interested in learning what you can do to better manage them, check out our [Forest Stewards Extension program](#), or contact [Jonathan Kays](#), Extension Forestry specialist.

Until next time,
-Andy

*Dan Rider, Forest Stewardship & Utilization Program Manager
Maryland Forest Service*

It's interesting to me how different parts of the world are more similar than different. I've had the opportunity to travel to unusual places and see how other people address the same problems we have. I recently saw an example in Austria while traveling with a small group of American foresters and engineers. We were seeking to answer: "How did Austria become the world's expert in using wood for energy?" What we learned could (and should) be a treasury of good ideas applicable to Maryland.

A striking first impression of Austria is how similar it is to Maryland. Our itinerary kept us zig-zagging around the Danube valley region of Austria and southern Germany, which looks and feels like Baltimore or Carroll County. We never went into the Alps, although we saw them looming in the background for a couple of days. Curiously, Maryland could be a twin sister to Austria. We share highly similar statistics regarding population, urbanization, age class, land use distribution, etc. To us forestry folks, it became more similar. Forests cover 47% of their landscape and 80% of the forest is privately owned. Nearly all of the ownerships are less than 500 acres and 40% of forest landowners have just five acres of woods or less. Of the 200,000 forest owners, a handful (1.5%) own over half of the forest – a continuing legacy of their feudal history, which we fortunately do not share. Sawtimber markets provide the driving force of their forestry enterprises. Sound familiar?

Not once did we see a neglected woodlot. The woods are very healthy natural stands of spruce, pine, oak and beech. None of them appeared manicured as some sort of sterile fiber factory. On the contrary, they were all very natural – just well kept. Everywhere we saw family-owned forests, all with proper spacing, excellent structures, free from invasive species and abounding with wildlife.

So what's their secret? We think we discovered it: strong markets for low-grade wood. Just like here in Maryland, sawtimber markets are the financial backbone of silviculture but Austria deliberately created markets for low-grade wood. Those markets enable good forestry practices. They also have a supply chain and wood distribution system that captures production efficiencies so that very small producers can tap these markets. More on that in a future article perhaps.

Beginning in the 1990s, the Austrian government began heavily investing in the private development of renewable energy to deal with the dual issues of national security and climate change. They saw early on that even with solar and wind resources fully developed they could not come close to meeting their energy needs. And so they turned to wood. This came in the nick of time for forestry. Before government investments, sawmills had limited outlets for residues and landowners had none. Tapping the government cost-share (up to 40% of project costs), local mills and landowners formed cooperatives and built community scale district heating plants fueled by wood chips. It started slowly while the technology and concept was new, but results were significant and suddenly a new industry was born.

Today, Austria has over 1,400 plants heating communities with hot water piped underground into homes, offices, hospitals, and factories. There are also thousands of individual systems, all using wood grown and harvested nearby. As the Austrians developed wood for renewable energy, they primed economic development in scales beyond their expectations. Wood heat is so reliable, so price stable and so efficient that towns with wood-fired district heating systems became magnets for economic investment. Factories wanted to locate there. Cost of living expenses were also affordable, so employers could attract workers. The investment fed on itself, generating real prosperity.



3 Another benefit the Austrians discovered was that their forests become healthier. Now, landowners have a way to recover the cost of properly managing their woods. And as the woods improved they became more productive — increasing their value. Areas with wood energy plants were growing more wood and that provided feedstock for new and different forest enterprises to spring up. Again, it fed on itself and prosperity ensued. Ironically, Austrian foresters quietly lamented to us that their biggest problem today is a good problem to have: there's actually too much wood. Forest growth outpaces mill production. Another outcome of strong markets is that the farmers are moving marginal land out of grain and pasture and into forestry.

What Austria accomplished is impressive and laudable. In thirty years, they turned around a struggling industry, addressed a national security crisis and

mitigated climate concerns. They improved their economy and environment, because they decided to cook water with wood.

Could Maryland do the same? Yes! Should we try to replicate the Austrian model? Not in my opinion. Their history, resources and economy are unique and as similar as we are, our situation is much different — especially our culture. But, the Austrian model demonstrates that it is possible and that outcomes go beyond green energy. Particularly intriguing is how public money was invested into private solutions to address national issues. Backing wood energy in Maryland would eliminate out-of-state investments in high-cost fossil fuels for low-value heat, inject money into local economies, create jobs and new wealth, displace carbon and vastly improve our forests.

**Article used with permission; originally printed in the Maryland Forests Association [Newsletter](#)*

Hops Farm Tour & Field Day

July 17

8 AM—6 PM

Western MD Research
& Education Center

This is a unique opportunity to get a closer look at hops production! Learn more about varieties, disease and insect management, harvesting,

trellis systems, on-farm brewing and much more. The first stop is the experimental research hopyard at University of Maryland Extension, Western Maryland Research and Education Center (WMREC), where you will see 24 hop varieties under intensive management. After lunch on the farm, head over to Milkhouse Brewery at Still Point Farm for a look at a commercial brewery and hopyard in action.

Agenda:

8:00: Bus pick-up at Charlotte Hall Shopping Center Park & Ride (behind SunTrust and Burger King) 29946 Three Notch Road, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

10:30: Arrive at WMREC, 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756

Tour research hopyard with Bryan Butler, Extension Agent

12:00: BBQ Lunch at WMREC

12:30: Depart for Milkhouse Brewery at Stillpoint Farm

1:30: Arrive at Milkhouse Brewery, 8253 Dollyhyde Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21771

Tour hopyard with Tom Barse, Owner of Stillpoint Farm

Beer Sampling + Networking

3:30: Depart Milkhouse Brewery

6:00: Arrive at Charlotte Hall Shopping Center Park & Ride

Farm Tour Description:

Western Maryland Research and Education Center—In an effort to support the new and rapidly growing brewing industry in Maryland, 24 varieties of hops have been established at the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station in Keedysville, MD. Although not the first hops planting on a research farm, this planting is about 1/2 acre and contains 24 varieties replicated three times. It is being managed intensively with regard to fertility and irrigation, as well as insect, disease and weed management using IPM principles.

Milkhouse Brewery at Stillpoint Farm—Join Tom Barse at Milkhouse Brewery at Stillpoint Farm. Established in 2013, the on-farm brewery features a 1-acre hopyard with Cascade and Chinook hops. The farm specializes in classic styles of beer “improved with Maryland hops.” The brewery produces five year round beers and rotates a couple of seasonal releases. In August of 2015 a new series, “Stillpoint Reserve” was launched. These beers focus on locally sourced ingredients, including hops, grains, fruits, herbs, honey, and other Maryland agricultural products.

Registration:

<https://2019hopstour.eventbrite.com>

Vegetable & Fruit

Join us for a horticultural tour at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center at 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756. Refreshments will be served at 5 PM with the walking tours starting 5:30 PM. Topics include:

Tree Fruit Disease Update, Dr. Kari Peter, Penn State; Bee Monitoring Project, Kelly Kulhanek, Research Graduate Assistant, Entomology; Pumpkin Disease and Insect Update, Dr. Kathryn Everts, Extension Vegetable Plant Pathologist; Jerry Brust, Extension Vegetable Specialist; Peter Coffey, Extension Agricultural Science Educator; Spotted Wing Drosophila & Disease Management In Brambles, Dr. Kelly Hamby, Assistant Professor, Entomology; Dr. Mengjun Hu, Assistant Professor Pathology; Weed Management Project Update, Kelly Nichols and Dave Myers, University of MD Extension; The Maryland Apple Tree Selections Project, Dr. Chris Walsh, Extension Professor, Horticulture; Trellis Apples & Hops Trial Show and Tell, Bryan Butler,

University of Maryland Extension.

Questions regarding program content, please contact Bryan Butler at bbutlers@umd.edu.

August 15

5 PM—8 PM

*Western MD Research & Education Center
Keedysville, MD*

There is no charge, but registration is required to help us plan for handouts and refreshments.

RSVP at <https://wmrectwilight.eventbrite.com>, or contact Susan Barnes at sbarnes6@umd.edu or (301) 432-2767 x301 by **Friday, August 9**. If you need special assistance to participate, please call (301) 432-2767 x301 by August 9.

Funding for the refreshments is provided by Maryland State Horticultural Society. Program is sponsored by University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland Extension, and Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station.

Section 18 Re-authorization for Stone & Pome Fruits

The Environmental Protection Agency has re-issued specific exemptions under the provisions of section 18 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, as amended, to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) for use of dinotefuran on stone and pome fruit to control the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) in Maryland. The MDA re-certified that the emergency conditions still exists and that there are no changes to the use directions as approved in the last authorization dated June 8, 2018, including the use rate, and type of application. These exemptions are subject to the conditions set forth in MDA's request dated May 20, 2019, as well as the following conditions, modifications, and restrictions:

1) The registered products, Venom Insecticide (EPA Reg. No. 59639-135, containing 70% dinotefuran), manufactured by Valent U.S.A. Corporation and Scorpion 35SL Insecticide (EPA Reg. No. 10163-317, containing 35% dinotefuran), manufactured by Gowan Company, LLC, may be applied. All applicable directions, restrictions, and precautions on the EPA-registered product labels, as well as those outlined on the Section 18 use directions submitted with your request must be followed.

2) Venom Insecticide may be applied to stone and pome fruit at a maximum rate of 4 to 6.75 ounces of

product (0.179 to 0.302 lb. active ingredient (a.i.)) per acre. Scorpion 35SL Insecticide may be applied to stone and pome fruit at a maximum rate of 8 to 12 fluid ounces of product (0.203 to 0.304 lb. a.i.) per acre. A maximum of 2 applications of products containing dinotefuran may be made per acre per season, with a minimum 7-day application interval. No more than a total of 0.608 lb. a.i. may be applied per acre per season, regardless of product used. Use is only allowed by foliar application using ground equipment.

3) A maximum of 3,730 acres of stone and pome fruit may be treated in Maryland under these specific exemptions.

4) A 12-hour restricted entry interval (REI) and a 3-day pre-harvest interval (PHI) must be observed.

5) To help minimize exposure to pollinators, the following statement on the application timing must be strictly followed: "Do not apply this product until after petal fall." Also, the following statements from the section 3 label are reiterated:

This compound is highly toxic to honey bees. The persistence of residues and potential residual toxicity of dinotefuran in nectar and pollen suggests the possibility of chronic toxic risk to honey bee larvae and the eventual instability of the hive. This product is toxic to bees exposed to residues for more than 38 hours following treatment. The exemption expires October 15, 2019.

On-Farm Readiness Reviews for Produce Safety Rule

Deanna Baldwin, Food Quality Assurance Program Manager
Maryland Department of Agriculture

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension and University of Maryland Plant Sciences is offering On Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRR) to assist produce growers with compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act, Produce Safety Rule. An On Farm Readiness Review consists of a team comprised of a MDA regulator, University of Maryland Extension and a University of Maryland Plant Sciences Produce Safety Specialist visiting your farm and discussing/observing your food safety practices as they relate to the Produce Safety Rule. The visits are **non-regulatory** and intended to assist growers with identifying areas that may not be in compliance, providing the resources necessary to come into compliance and are offered at no cost to growers. Growers that participate receive a handbook that provides interpretation of the Produce Safety Rule and suggestions on ways to comply and a note sheet at the end of the OFRR that indicates the areas in compliance and areas that may need improvement. Past participants have indicated the

OFRR was very useful in understanding the Produce Safety Rule and how to comply. In most cases, growers were reassured that they were generally in compliance with the Produce Safety Rule with only minor corrections needed.

As you have may have heard by now, House Bill 50 passed the Maryland Legislature this past session and is effective July 1, 2019. This legislation gives MDA the authority to inspect farms that must comply with the Produce Safety Rule and enforce the requirements rather than FDA inspecting and enforcing. Inspections of farms with more than \$500,000 in produce sales (compliance date of January 2018) have already started and will continue throughout this growing season. Inspections are scheduled with the grower and are not unannounced.

If you have not yet requested an OFRR, I encourage you to request one as soon as possible. To request a review, visit the [MDA website](#), or call Deanna Baldwin, (410) 841-5769.



Maryland Thoroughbred Industry Scholarship



Featuring the Eddie McMullen & Lucy Acton Memorial Scholarships, a total of \$60,000 or more will be distributed this year!

If you are a backstretch employee, work on a Thoroughbred farm or within the Maryland Thoroughbred industry, and you are enrolled in school this fall, you may qualify. Applications are due by **July 15**. For more information call (410) 902-6842 or click [here](#).



How to Find Lawyers & Insurance Agents For Farms

*Neith Little Urban Agriculture Extension Agent
University of Maryland Extension, Baltimore City*

First, read enough to know what questions to ask.

The UMD Agriculture Law Education Initiative is a great place to start learning about legal issues that might affect your farm: <http://umaglaw.org/>. In particular, I've found helpful their articles on farm business structures, labor laws, and liability. The Maryland Insurance Agency also has a helpful [guide to farm insurance](#), including the difference between crop insurance and liability insurance.

But once you know enough to know you need a lawyer or insurance policy, how do you find professional help that has experience with farms? Referrals from another farmer are great, but if you need to widen your search here are two lists that can help.

Lawyers who practice agricultural law:

The Maryland State Bar Association is the professional association for lawyers in Maryland. They keep [a list of their members who practice agricultural law](#).

Insurance companies who work with farms:

The Maryland Insurance Agency is the consumer protection agency that regulates insurance companies in Maryland. As mentioned above, they have some helpful educational articles and guides. They also publish [a list of companies who offer farm-related insurance in Maryland](#).

Cover Crop Sign-Up Period Ends July 17

Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#), abridged

The annual sign-up period for the Maryland Department of Agriculture's cover crop program will take place **June 21 – July 17** at soil conservation district offices statewide. This popular grant program provides farmers with cost-share assistance to offset seed, labor, and equipment costs associated with planting fall cover crops.

This year's program includes two new incentives for farmers. The first is the Extended Season option which pays \$15/acre to farmers who agree to terminate their cover crops after May 1. There is also a \$10/acre incentive for farmers who hire an airplane or helicopter to aerial seed cover crops into standing corn by September 1.

Cover crops are important to the health of the Chesapeake Bay and the vitality of Maryland's valuable soil resources. As they grow, cover crops recycle unused plant nutrients remaining in the soil from the preceding summer crop. Once established, they work all winter to protect fields against erosion spurred by wind, rain, snow, and ice. In addition to their water quality benefits, cover crops increase organic matter in the soil, reduce weeds and pests, provide habitat for beneficial insects and help protect fields from too much or too little rain.

The department's program provides grants to farmers who plant a variety of small grains, brassicas, and forage radish on their fields following the fall

harvest. To help create diversity, eligible cover crop species may be mixed with radish and legumes including clover, Austrian winter peas and hairy vetch using a variety of two and three-species mixes.

Eligible farmers can receive up to \$90/acre in cost-share grants to plant traditional cover crops in their fields this fall. This includes a \$45/acre base rate and up to an additional \$45/acre in incentives. A field inspection is required to qualify for the Extended Season incentive. Maximum payment for aerial seeding with incentives is \$85/acre.

Applicants are required to include a completed *Current Nutrient Management Plan Certification* when applying for cover crop grants. This form must be signed by both the farm operator and the person who prepared the farm's nutrient management plan. Applicants can [download the form](#) from the department's website.

Maryland's Cover Crop Program is administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the state's 24 soil conservation districts through the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program. Applicants must be in good standing with MACS and in compliance with Maryland's nutrient management regulations. Other restrictions and conditions apply. Funding for the 2019-2020 Cover Crop program is provided by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund.

Ag Night at Ripken Stadium

August 2

6:00 PM

Aberdeen Ironbirds Stadium
873 Long Dr., Aberdeen, MD

Come enjoy Harford County Agriculture Night!

The Harford County Agricultural Center invites you and your guests to join us at Leidos Field at Ripken Stadium for a night to celebrate agriculture in Harford County and raise funds to support FFA and 4-H.

Tickets are \$15 each and a portion of each ticket sold will be donated to: Harford County 4-H, Harford Technical High School FFA, and North Harford High School FFA. Activities and displays will feature and highlight Harford County agriculture! Farm Fun begins at 6:00 PM. **Fireworks** to follow at the end of the game! Plan to arrive early!

Purchase your tickets online at: <https://groupmatics.events/event/Harfordcounty50>. See you at the ballpark!

Webinar: Hiring & Training Farm Employees

Agricultural operations may not always take the time to do simple background checks or provide employees with the proper initial training that can cause huge issues down the road. Recent news has highlighted what can go wrong when agricultural operations hire employees with limited knowledge of agricultural practices. The University of Maryland will host a webinar focused on proper hiring and training techniques for agricultural operations on **July 12** starting at noon (EST).

The webinar will show that taking the time to properly screen potential candidates, properly train those new employees, and provide continuing training for new practices to existing employees, the agricultural

operation can limit potential hiring and training issues. This webinar will feature Paul Goeringer, Extension legal specialist, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, who will discuss proper screening and training techniques that agricultural operations should consider.

The webinar will take place on **July 12, at 12 pm (EST)**. The webinar is free to participants but does require registration prior to the event. Register at <https://go.umd.edu/UMHiringWebinar>. For more information, contact Paul Goeringer at (301) 405-3541 or lgoering@umd.edu.

FSA Job Opening

The Harford County Farm Service Agency currently has an opening for a Temporary Program Technician Position. It is an entry-level general office position assisting with the administration of USDA farm programs. Primary duties would include greeting farmers and answering general questions, answer the telephone, prepare correspondences, and make appointments with farmers and other customers. You would assist in preparing applications and eligibility forms with farmers, load application data in the computer for payment processing, and perform other duties as assigned. Computer skills a must and farm knowledge helpful.

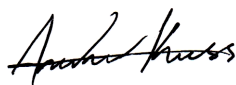
Call the office at (410) 838-3950x2 for additional details. Interested candidates can send resumes or a completed FSA-675 via drop off, mail, e-mail or fax to:

*Farm Service Agency- Attn: Jessica Edge
2205 Commerce Road- Suite C
Forest Hill, MD 21050
email: jessica.edge@usda.gov
fax: 855-305-7144*

Please apply by July 7, 2019

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Great resources are just a click away!



Andrew Kness
Extension Agent,
Agriculture and
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Back-issues of this publication can be found at: <https://extension.umd.edu/news/newsletters/657>

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Dates to remember

- 10 Jul.** Women in Ag Webinar: [Water and Water Reuse in Agriculture](#). 12pm. Free. Register [online](#).
- 12 Jul.** [Webinar: Hiring and Training Farm Employees](#). 12pm. Free. Register [online](#).
- 15 Jul.** [Grow It Eat It Preserve It: Sour Pickles Workshop](#). 11-1:30pm. Harford County Extension Office, Street. Register [online](#) or call (410) 887-8090.
- 17 Jul.** [Hops Farm Tour & Field Day](#). 8-6pm. Western MD Research & Education Center, Keedysville. \$15. Register [online](#).
- 24 Jul.** Women in Ag Webinar: [Introduction to Integrated Pest Management](#). 12pm. Free. Register [online](#).
- 22-27 Jul.** [Harford County Farm Fair](#). Harford County Fairgrounds, Bel Air.
- 2 Aug.** [Ag Night at Ripken Stadium](#). 6pm. Ripken Stadium, Aberdeen. \$15. Tickets available [online](#).
- 9 Aug.** Dairy Field Day. 10-2:15pm. Central MD Research & Education Center, Ellicott City. \$10. Register [online](#) or call (301) 405-1392.
- 12 Aug.** [Grow It Eat It Preserve It: Peach Salsa Workshop](#). 11-1:30pm. Harford County Extension Office, Street. Register [online](#) or call (410) 887-8090.
- 15 Aug.** [Horticulture Twilight Tour](#). 5-8pm. Western MD Research & Education Center, Keedysville. Free. Register [online](#) or call (301) 432-2767.

July 2019