

Ag Notes

Harford County Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

August 2023



The MARYLAND STATE FAIR



University of
Maryland Extension

Harford County
Agricultural Center

Suite 600
3525 Conowingo Rd.
Street, MD 21154
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M—F 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

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Hello, Harford County!

As I write this, many of us are in the middle of the Harford County Farm Fair; I hope to see you there and be sure to encourage your friends and family to attend. The fair is a bit different this year, with a renewed focus on livestock and the plethora of other agricultural 4-H and FFA projects.

We also cannot forget about all of the volunteers and families that donated their time to make everything possible; thank you!

Of course, fair season is not over yet; the Maryland State Fair is set to kick off this month on August 24. The schedule is the same as last year; the fair will be open for three consecutive weekends from August 24-27, August 31-September 4, and September 7-10. You can head over to marylandstatefair.com to check out the complete schedule and all of the attractions. Fairs are a fundamental and important part of 4-H, Extension, FFA, and educating the general public about all facets of agriculture, so we appreciate your support and contributions to this effort.

Finally, as many of you know, we are still working through the changes to the Nutrient Management Program. In summary, on June 1, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) in conjunction with the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UMD, made a joint decision and surprise

announcement to pull funding from UMD and redirect those funds to a cost-share program to incentivize private industry to write farmer's nutrient management plans. This meant that as of August 31, UMD would no longer have the funding to staff nutrient management advisors in county offices to write plans for farmers free of charge.

In a second surprise announcement, MDA and UMD reversed this decision during the MDA Nutrient Management Summit on July 17. The new plan is to restore funding to UMD to retain the nutrient management advisors. However, a new, formal agreement and the funding amount has yet to be finalized, so we are still uncertain how the nutrient management program will look or function after August 31. We have also already lost several advisors to other opportunities they pursued after the June 1 announcement that they were terminated; which further complicates the situation. Please stay tuned for details. More information regarding the July 17 announcement can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. Also if you are interested in becoming certified to write your own nutrient management plan, stay tuned for details regarding upcoming trainings and exams.

Until next time,
-Andy



Maryland Department of Agriculture and University of Maryland joint [press release](#)

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) held a much anticipated Nutrient Management plan writing summit on Monday, July 17 at Anne Arundel Community College to present the overview of the re-imagined and improved nutrient management program. Following a June 1st announcement by MDA of changes to the way plans are written as well as listening sessions held throughout the State in the weeks following, MDA and the University of Maryland (UMD) have made the joint decision to reevaluate and reframe how the program is managed. Farmer and industry input contributed greatly to this decision.

During the July 17 Summit, MDA shared goals and objectives including:

- Evolving the nutrient management plan model through industry input to adapt to modern farming practices and operations;
- Improving the plan writing process through cost-free plans available to farmers;
- Grow and support plan writers by increasing the emphasis on Farmer Training Certification (FTC) Program;
- Incentivize individuals and organizations to offer plan writing services throughout the state;
- UME will remain engaged in this program by continuing to offer free nutrient management plan support as in the past.

“Throughout this process tough decisions and conversations had to occur to get us to this point of creating a solid plan going forward,” said Maryland Department of Agriculture Secretary Kevin Atticks. “I thank our industry and their representatives for providing critical input throughout the listening sessions. In addition, I want to thank the University for stepping up and addressing our concerns. We look forward to further partnership as this process moves forward with renewed and enhanced engagement through University of Maryland Extension.”

Maryland law requires all farmers grossing \$2,500 a year or more or livestock producers with 8,000 pounds or more of live animal weight to follow nutrient management plans when fertilizing crops and managing animal manure. Nutrient management plans specify how much fertilizer, manure or other nutrient sources may be safely applied to crops to achieve yields and prevent excess nutrients from impacting waterways.

Because of their complexity, these plans must be prepared by a certified University of Maryland specialist, certified private consultant, or farmer who is trained and certified by the department to prepare his or her own plan.

“I want to thank the Maryland Department of Agriculture for working with us on priority changes to the statewide nutrient management program,” said University of Maryland’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Dean Craig Beyroudy. “We are very encouraged by the progress that has been made to re-introduce University of Maryland plan writers so that we may continue to offer the support our agricultural community has come to trust and rely upon. I’m thrilled that the University of Maryland Extension (UME) will administer this new program. They provide research-based education with a deep understanding of farmers’ operations and environmental needs and will be excellent stewards for this important work.”

Lastly, the Department announced a new 30-member Farmer Taskforce, convening in August to provide guidance to MDA and UMD regarding ways to improve the nutrient management plan to be more practical for farmers to implement. The Task Force’s recommendations will be considered by the Nutrient Management Advisory Committee.

For more information and full details about the changes, please visit www.mda.maryland.gov and click on Nutrient Management Plan Writing updates.

The following details were also presented at the Summit:

Framework of Tentative New Agreement:

- MDA and UMD will enter into a 3 year MOU to continue funding UMD Nutrient Management plan writers to be renewed annually, contingent upon funding;
- The new program will be administered day-to-day by UMD Extension.

Funding & Staffing:

- Both MDA and UMD will seek more permanent funding to sustain the program. Currently the program is funded primarily by the EPA;
- The UMD will seek ways to increase salaries and offer benefits for plan writers. Currently, UMD plan writers are hired on a contractual basis because of the uncertainty of continued annual funding by EPA.

Nutrient Management (NuMan) Software improvement:

3. Build a more modern software program that helps our industry meet its environmental stewardship roles by ensuring better inclusion of today's modern agricultural production systems, incorporation of the latest research and incorporating web-based accessibility on a variety of devices.

New Nutrient Management Oversight Committee:

- MDA and UMD, chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Dean of UMD College of Agriculture and Natural Resources will be created to:
 - Oversee the plan writers
 - Draft annual reports on the program that includes data such as number of engaged farms/farmers, number of plans developed, acres represented by plans, and reduction of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus entering

waterways as a result of the plans;

- Set goals for increasing the percentage of plans written through UMD.

Expanded Training Opportunities:

- MDA will hire a NM Training Coordinator;
- More training opportunities will be available for both Farmer Training Certification (FTC) and developing and delivering classes for consultants;
- Develop online training modules.

Education:

- UMD will work with MDA to develop educational programs directed to producers to encourage greater participation in the nutrient management program.

2023 Wheat and Barley Variety Trials

Results from the 2022/23 University of Maryland wheat and barley variety trials have been published. You can access the report at <https://blog.umd.edu/agronomynews/2023/07/24/2023-small-grain-variety-trials/>.

For questions/comments, please email Dr. Vijay Tiwari at vktiware@umd.edu. For more information on how to make the most of variety trial data, refer to our fact sheet: [What do the Numbers Really Mean? Interpreting Variety Trial Results \(FS-1119\)](#).

If you would like a hard copy of the report, please contact the Extension office at (410) 638-3255.

New Hay and Straw Directory

Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#)

The Maryland Department of Agriculture is encouraging farmers looking for markets for their hay and straw to provide their contact information for a new state Hay and Straw Directory.

"This directory will be a valuable tool for farmers marketing their hay and straw and for their potential customers," said MDA Secretary Kevin Atticks. "I encourage farmers to take advantage of this promotional tool."

To view the current directory list, please visit https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Pages/Hay-and-Straw-directory.aspx

To include hay and straw for sale in the directory, please contact Agricultural Marketing Specialist Audrey Broomfield at (410) 260-9349 or by email at audrey.broomfield@maryland.gov.



Nicole Cook, Legal Specialist
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

*This article is not a substitute for legal advice.
Reposted from the [Ag Risk Management Blog](#)*

On July 7, 2023, the USDA announced that it is now accepting applications from eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination by the USDA in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. Recall from my [March 1st post](#) that, in Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act, Congress directed the USDA to provide financial assistance to those who faced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. The law allows any farmer, of any race, to receive assistance up to \$500,000 “as determined to be appropriate based on any consequences experienced from the discrimination.” Information, including how to apply and where to get assistance in applying, is available in English and Spanish at <https://22007apply.gov>. Detailed information is available below. Here are the highlights about the USDA’s Discrimination Financial Assistance Program:

Applications will be accepted through 10/31/23

Applying is free

Assistance with applying is free

All applications will be reviewed after October 31st

Who is eligible for assistance?

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination by the USDA in its farm loan programs prior to January 1, 2021, and/or are currently debtors with assigned or assumed USDA farm loan debt that was the subject of USDA discrimination that occurred prior to January 1, 2021, are eligible for this program. Visit [Am I Eligible?](#) to determine if you are eligible to participate.

How do I apply for assistance?

The deadline for filing an application is October 31, 2023. You can apply online at <https://22007apply.gov> by using the e-filing portal. You can also download a paper copy of the application from the <https://22007apply.gov> website, and either mail it or hand deliver it to one of the program’s regional offices before the deadline. The application includes step-by-step directions and a list of documents that are either required or recommended at each step. Visit [Timeline and Program Deadlines](#) for deadline details associated

with filing an application.

If you apply for assistance, be sure to explain in your application materials how you personally experienced discrimination and also how that impacted your farm, your family, and you. This information is important because the amount of assistance you’ll receive will be based on your personal experience and the impacts that the discriminatory actions had on you.

How can I get assistance in applying?

If you would like assistance with completing the required application, you can go to any brick and mortar regional office and get help with applying. The help is free. You do not have to pay for assistance. You can find the regional office nearest to you by visiting <https://22007apply.gov/local-assistance.html>.

You can also get information and assistance by emailing or calling the Program Call Center. The email is info@22007apply.gov, and the phone number is 1-800-721-0970. Calls are answered from 8am Eastern Time to 8pm Pacific Time every day except holidays.

You do not need a lawyer to apply for assistance. No attorneys’ fees will be paid to applicants or their counsel by USDA or by any other U.S. agency or department. The amount of financial assistance will not be increased for those claimants who are represented by an attorney. For more information about possible scams, read the [USDA’s fact sheet about ways to protect against possible scams](#).

What happens after I apply?

Once all of the applications are submitted, they will be reviewed to determine the number of qualified applicants and how much each applicant will receive in assistance. The USDA has said that payments will be issued “soon” after all of the applications have been reviewed. This is not a first come, first serve process. All applications that are received or postmarked before the October 31st deadline will be reviewed and considered.

Remember, the available funding is capped at \$2.2 billion. So, if the total amount requested from eligible applicants is more than \$2.2 billion, then applicants might receive a prorated amount of assistance so that everyone can receive some assistance. Payments for approved applications will be delivered early next calendar year by check through the U.S. mail.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Tomato Pollination and Bumble Bee Visits

*Jerry Brust, Extension IPM Vegetable Specialist
University of Maryland Extension*



G. Brust, Univ. of Maryland

Figure 1. Bumble bee bruising of tomato flower showing buzz pollination has occurred.

While visiting a tomato field this week I saw the tell-tale signs on the flowers that this field was being visited by bumble bees that were pollinating the tomato flowers. In the field, wind movement is usually enough to cause pollination in a tomato flower, but at times there are very calm days and nights with very 'heavy' air and little wind movement. However, even with wind action it is always beneficial to have bumble bees perform buzz pollination, which can greatly increase fruit set.

Bumble bees perform buzz pollination by firmly biting the flower cone, then rapidly vibrating their wing muscles which dislodge the pollen from within the flower. The bumble bee leaves visible bite bruises on the flower cone, which can be used to verify that pollination has occurred (fig. 1).

Good pollination of the tomato flower is important because the final size and weight of fruit is largely determined by the number of seeds set, which is ultimately due to the quality of pollination and fertilization. In figure 2, flower 1 has been visited by a bumble bee approximately 4-6 times, while flower 2 has been visited just 2-3 times and flower 3 has not been visited. In the field the more visits the better. Not surprisingly this particular field of tomatoes I was in had a very heavy fruit set.



G. Brust, Univ. of Maryland

Figure 2. Tomato flowers showing various levels of bumble bee bruising (visits left to right: 1= many; 2= a few; 3= none).

Growers should try and look for this flower bruising from time to time to see if they are having sufficient bumble bee visits (>3-4 is good) in their tomato field which will increase fruit numbers, fruit size and fruit quality. Little or no visits may indicate a poor pollinator environment which could mean poor pollination and therefore poor fruit quality.

Don't forget!

The Mid-Atlantic Commercial Vegetable Production Guide is available for free online! This comprehensive guide is updated annually by regional Extension specialists.

[Download here](#) or contact the office for a print copy

Andrew Kling, Woodland Stewards Education Program
University of Maryland Extension

Registration for the fall 2023 session of our "The Woods in Your Backyard" online course is now open!

September 5—November 14, 2023
Online

Registration for the next session of our "The Woods in Your Backyard" online course is now open! Our self-directed, non-credit course runs 10 weeks from September 5th to November 14th. The online format lets you access the content when it's convenient for you, without worrying about attending evening classes or weekend workshops.

The course will help landowners convert lawn to natural areas and enhance stewardship of existing natural areas. Based on the guide of the same name, the course provides strategies to landowners of small parcels of land (1-10 acres) that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property. Activities include how to map habitat areas, understand basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choose and implement a few habitat management projects, and how to set a timetable and record your progress. Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

The course costs \$95.00 per person, which includes the 108-page "Woods In Your Backyard" guide, workbook, and a tree identification guide. The course is limited to 25 participants, so sign up now!

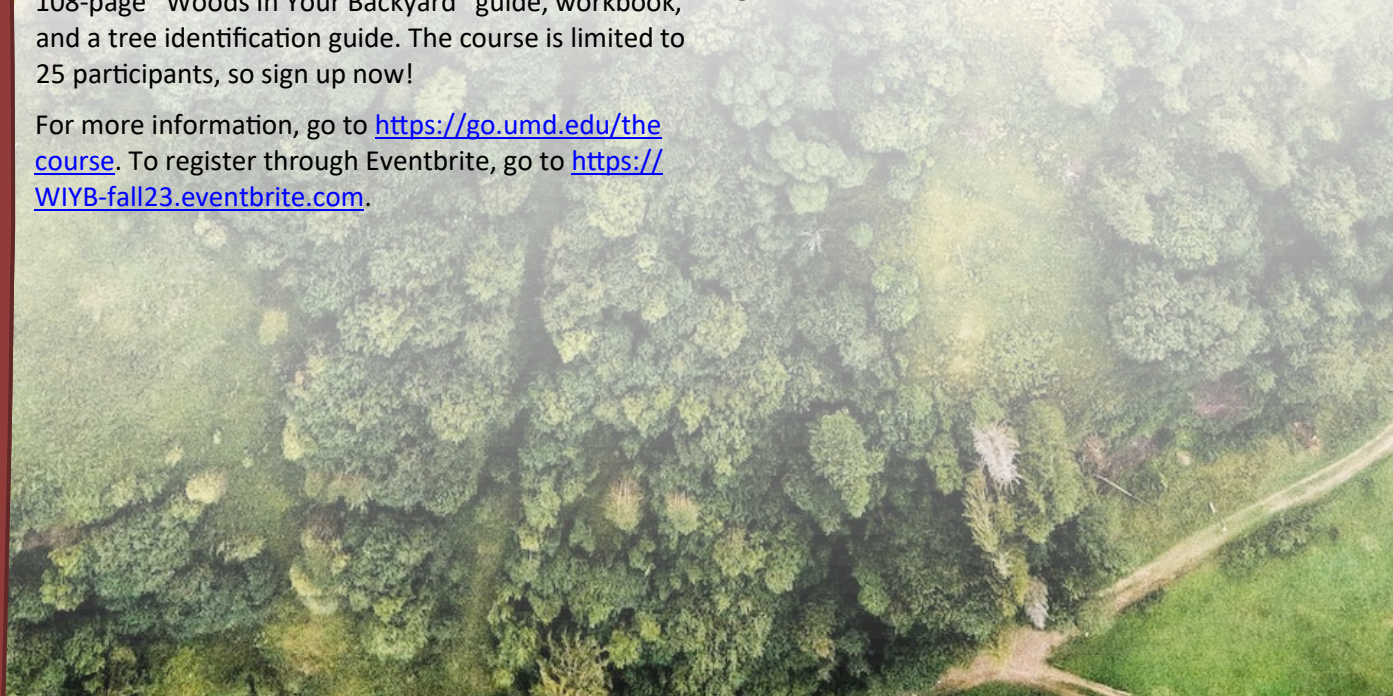
For more information, go to <https://go.umd.edu/the-course>. To register through Eventbrite, go to <https://WIYB-fall23.eventbrite.com>.

Register now for this year's session of "The General Forestry Course" online

August 28—December 11, 2023
Online

Our non-credit General Forestry Course is an online, self-directed course designed for individuals wishing to increase their understanding of forests and forest management. Specifically, the General Forestry Course targets Maryland forest landowners and other citizens with an interest in the principles and practices of forestry. The course covers ways to protect your trees from insects, diseases, and fire; how to, step by step, create a forest inventory and a stand analysis; and covers the details of the forestry business, including tax nuances and the sale and harvest of forest products. Ultimately, the course exercises help you develop the framework for a stewardship plan for your forest.

The cost for this forestry course is \$150.00. Included in the cost are copies of the supplemental readings: A Sand County Almanac, The Woodland Steward, American Forests: A History of Resiliency and Recovery, a small pamphlet entitled "What Tree Is That?" and Common Native Trees of Virginia Tree Identification Guide. Users receive a flash drive of the paper version of the text and appendices. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed. Registration is limited to 20 participants, so sign up now! Learn more at <https://extension.umd.edu/forestry-course> or go to our Eventbrite page at <https://go.umd.edu/gfc23> to register.



New Ag Coordinator for Harford County

*Alyssa Jeffries, Agricultural Economic Development Associate
Harford County Government*

My name is Alyssa Jeffries and I am excited to introduce myself as the Agricultural Economic Development Associate for Harford County, the county that I am so proud to call home! I grew up in Jarrettsville and graduated from North Harford High School. I then went on to graduate from Oregon State University with a Bachelor's of Science in Agricultural Science and I have been working as a Soil Conservation Technician for US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service out of York County, Pennsylvania.

I am currently working to meet with all farmers in our community to hear their story and better understand what opportunities would most benefit the agricultural community in Harford County. Please feel free to reach out at any time to share your story and help me to learn about all of the unique operations within the county. I am looking forward to working in partnership, and building strong relationships, with those that help to support all aspects of Agriculture within our county and state.

Harford County Agricultural Center
3525 Conowingo Road, Suite 700, Street, MD 21154
Office: (410) 638-3511
Email: arjeffries@harfordcountymd.gov



General Interest



7:30 am—1:00 pm | Includes lunch | Last wagon tour leaves 10:30 am | RSVP by 8/20/23 | Call 1-800-933-3300

Great resources are just a click away!

Andrew Kness

Andrew Kness
Senior Extension Agent,
Agriculture and
Food Systems

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Back-issues can be found at: <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/harford-county/agriculture-and-nutrient-management>

akness@umd.edu



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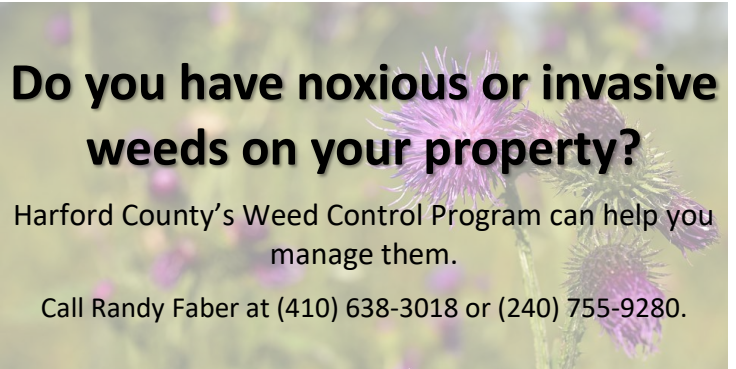
Harford County Newsletter

Dates to remember

- 03 Aug.** Craft Brewery Hop Yard Field Day. 10-12 PM.
Western MD Research & Education Center, Keedysville.
\$10 public, free for BAM members. Register by calling (410) 252-9463
- 09 Aug.** Pasture Walk. 5:30-8 PM. Berkley Farms, Darlington.
Free. Register [online](#) or call (410) 638-3255.
- 10 Aug.** Horticultural Twilight Tour. 5-8 PM. Western MD
Research & Education Center, Keedysville. Free. Register
[online](#) or call (410) 368-2760.
- 17 Aug.** Grow It, Eat It, Preserve It! Canning Pickles. 10-12:30
PM. Harford County Extension office, Street. \$20. Register
[online](#) or call (410) 638-3255.

24-27 Aug, Aug 31- 4 Sept, Sept 7-10. Maryland State Fair

01 Oct. LEAD Maryland applications due.



Do you have noxious or invasive weeds on your property?

Harford County's Weed Control Program can help you manage them.

Call Randy Faber at (410) 638-3018 or (240) 755-9280.

August 2023