

Ag Notes

Harford County Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

February 2022

The Extension office will be closed on
February 21 for Presidents' Day



University of
Maryland Extension

Harford County
Agricultural Center

Suite 600
3525 Conowingo Rd.
Street, MD 21154
(410) 638-3255

M—F 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Extension.umd.edu/harford-county

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Soil Carbon Contracts	2
Conservation Buffer Cost-Share	3
Dairy Margin Coverage Program	4
Beginning Farmer Success Course	4
Cultivating Conservation Program	5
Pesticide and Nutrient Management Training	6
Farm-to-School Training	6
Annie's Project	7

Hello, Harford County!

I hope everyone is dealing with the unusually cold temperatures as best they can! According to my weather data, January 2022 has been colder than our 5-year average for this time of year. However, it will be spring before we know it, so make sure you're ready for 2022 planting! This includes getting your nutrient management plans up to date and all of your certifications.

We have received several phone calls over the last month regarding some issues with nutrient management voucher and pesticide applicator license renewals. Here is what I understand from MDA:

If your nutrient management voucher expired in December of 2021 or 2020, you should be receiving a new card in the mail soon; however, due to position vacancies within nutrient management at MDA, some names may have fallen through the "cracks." If your voucher is expired and you have taken a class for nutrient management credits, then you should be getting a new card. If you need clarification or have concerns regarding this, it is best to contact MDA Nutrient Management at (410) 841-5957 or email kendra.mcafee@maryland.gov.

For pesticide applicator renewals, you must renew your license online at <https://egov.maryland.gov/MDA/Pesticides/>. You should have received an email and/or a postcard from MDA that has the necessary information you need to log into this site to renew your license. If you do not have this information, or if the

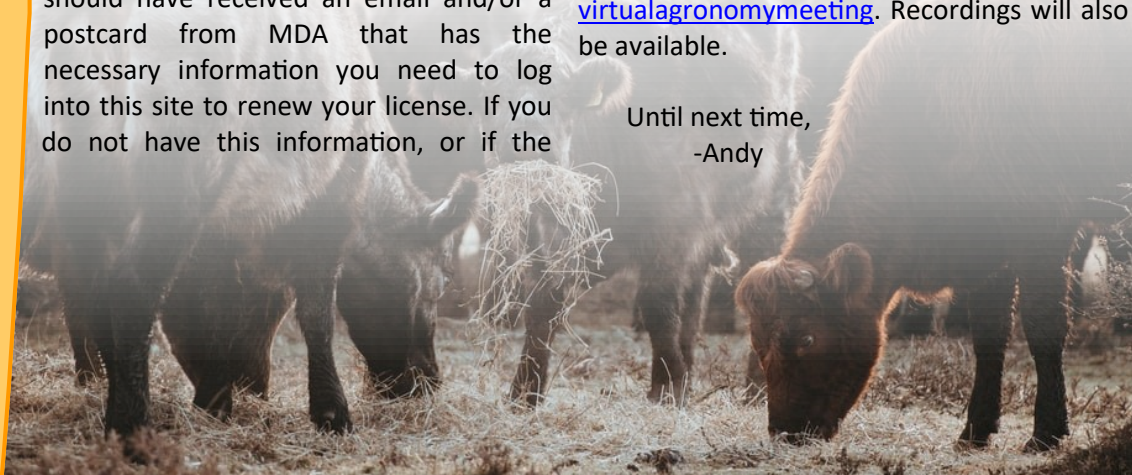
system cannot find your record, call MDA Pesticide Regulation at (410) 841-5710. As a reminder, all private applicator licenses are valid for 3 years (commercial licenses must be renewed annually) and you must take a class for credit in order to renew. MDA will not automatically mail you a renewal form or a new card; you must log on to the website listed above to pay your \$7 renewal fee and print your new license. If you do not have internet access, you may request a paper renewal form from MDA at the number listed above.

If you have any questions about pesticide renewals or vouchers, I am happy to help the best I can.

Also, this is a last call reminder to register for the **Harford County Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting** for February 15 at Deer Creek Overlook. The meeting starts promptly at 9:30 and ends at 3:00. A hot lunch will be served and this meeting satisfies all credit requirements to renew your Maryland private applicator license and nutrient management voucher. The cost is \$12 if you register in advance and \$20 at the door. Call the Extension office to register.

For those that prefer a virtual agronomy meeting, you may attend the live Zoom meeting on February 3, 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Register online at <https://go.umd.edu/virtualagronomymeeting>. Recordings will also be available.

Until next time,
-Andy



Paul Goeringer, Agriculture Legal Specialist
University of Maryland, Agriculture Law Education Initiative

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

Carbon contracts are becoming a topic again for many agricultural producers around the country. As we will discuss, there are several legal considerations when deciding if such an agreement fits your needs. At the same time, please keep in mind that this is a developing area with several unknowns regarding how these agreements work. Producers should seek qualified legal advice before signing any contract.

Basic Terminology

Before discussing contracts, let's look at some basic terms. **Carbon credits** are produced when a business or person reduces carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gas (GHGs). **Carbon offsets** occur when a person purchases carbon credits to offset their carbon emissions. An airline may buy carbon credits, for example, to offset carbon emissions from the airline's planes.

Other terms to keep in mind related to carbon credits would be the difference between an aggregator and data manager. An **aggregator** is an individual or company pooling together agricultural operations utilizing carbon-sequestering practices. A producer sells carbon credits to the aggregator based on the terms in the contract. A **data manager** is an individual a producer may work with to enter the marketplace to sell carbon credits. Working with a data manager allows the producer to control when to sell carbon credits.

The other definition to keep in mind is **verification**. Verification is the process of evaluating the amount of greenhouse gas emissions sequestered or reduced based on implementing the new practices. In many contracts, a third-party verifier will conduct this process.

Contract Considerations

Keep in mind that currently, there are very few rules and regulations in place to protect either party in this developing market. It is, in many cases, the wild west; producers should pay attention to contract terms, ask questions when a term does not make sense, and seek legal advice from an attorney. Before entering into a contract, make sure you understand the key terms and get it reviewed, if possible, by your own attorney.

You must also understand what such a contract will be

paying for; it only pays for adopting new conservation practices that would sequester carbon, and it will not pay for continuing existing practices on the agricultural land. If you are already utilizing no-till on your farm, for example, other practices would need to be added in order to qualify for the carbon credits. If you are looking to be paid for existing practices, then you would need to work with the company to get paid for those practices.

Carbon contracts also typically prevent you from double-enrolling acres in other programs. This usually means that the practices you are adopting are not already required under the terms of another program or contract. For example, if you have enrolled cropland in the Conservation Reserve Program, you potentially would be ineligible for a carbon contract. Again, this is something to make the company aware of early in the negotiations.

Payments will be based on a dollar amount per the CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) per metric ton sequestered. Companies may withhold a portion of the payment representing a natural buffer for carbon that could potentially be lost from the soil based on a natural loss rate. For example, if the contract includes a withholding amount of 20 percent, then any payment would be reduced by 20 percent for that withholding factor. If the company is offering \$15/metric ton of CO₂e, then the payment per metric ton would be \$12/metric ton after considering the withholding factor.

Keep in mind that the contract may specify additional fees to reduce the payment rate further. For example, producers may have to pay a fee for third-party verification costs or soil sampling, although in some cases, these might be covered by the company. Producers should pay attention to additional costs which could further reduce the payment rate. For more information on how payments flow through these carbon programs, please see, Plastina, Alejandro, [How do Data and Payments Flow through Ag Carbon Programs](#) (A1-77, 2021).

Some contracts may provide an annual payment, while others only provide payments at the end of each verification period. If the contract is for ten years with a verification period every five years, for example, the producer would be paid after each of the two verification periods.

Keep in mind the contract will contain provisions laying out penalties when practices cannot be implemented. For example, if the weather prevents planting cover

3 crops on the farmland, the contract's penalties may apply. The contract may also contain penalties if carbon is released during the contract. This release may be the fault of the producer or by accident, but it is essential to understand what the penalties are and how they would be applied depending on the situation.

Another issue to be clear on is what currency you will be paid in. From looking at sources, these contracts may specify that you get paid in U.S. dollars, cryptocurrency, or credits towards future purchases. Make sure the form of payment will work for you.

Also, keep in mind data ownership issues. Carbon contracts require the producer to provide data at various intervals. This data could include soil samples and production records to help verify that the producer is adopting the practices needed. The producer needs to understand who will access the data provided and how the data will be maintained securely. Verifiers will utilize the data in the verification

process to determine if the amount of carbon sequestered is based on the agreed practices being employed.

Understand how the contract will impact your land title and any ability to sell the property. In some cases, these contracts place restrictive covenants or liens on the property to make a future buyer aware of the carbon contract on the property. It's worth paying attention to what restrictions might be placed on the property which could impact its sale.

Wrap Up

As we see more and more interest in these carbon contracts, it's worth paying attention to the terms, asking questions of the companies presenting contracts, and seeking independent legal advice. Understanding the terms of the contract can help limit future disputes and allow you to negotiate a better agreement.

Conservation Buffer Initiative

Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#)

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced that the signup period for its Conservation Buffer Initiative will run from January 10 to February 18, 2022. Now in its second year, this popular conservation program offers attractive incentives, easy signup, and more management options for farmers who want to plant streamside buffers on their farms to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

New this year, farmers can receive up to \$4,500/acre to install riparian forest buffers with pasture fencing. Financial assistance is also available to install deer fencing along grass buffers. Other features include a buffer option for field ditches, flexible site management, and shorter contract terms.

"The Conservation Buffer Initiative saw great interest from farmers in its inaugural year, and we are excited to bring it back for 2022 with added incentives," said Agriculture Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. "Conservation buffers are an important tool in our efforts to protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed. I encourage all farmers with streamside property to contact their local soil conservation district and take advantage of this great opportunity."

Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plan includes a goal to plant 63,980 acres of buffers by 2025. As of June 30, 2021, Maryland farmers have planted 52,405 acres of buffers, and this grant program aims to help close the gap. Three types of buffers are eligible for funding and free technical assistance from local soil conservation districts: forest buffers planted next to waterways, grass

buffers planted next to waterways or field ditches, and watercourse access control areas adjacent to pastures.

Here are program highlights:

- Payment rates range from \$500/acre for an existing grass buffer to a maximum of \$4,500/acre to install a riparian forest buffer with pasture fencing.
- Financial assistance is offered to install deer fencing next to grass buffers.
- Mowing and hay harvesting are allowed; nutrient applications are not.
- Farmers receive a one-time payment for enrolled land.
- Contracts are for five or 10 years.
- All work must be completed by June 30, 2023.

Farmers who want to install new buffers on land adjacent to waterways or improve existing buffers are encouraged to sign up for these grants through MDA's [website](#) by **February 18, 2022**. For help with applications or questions, please contact your local soil conservation district office.

Funding for Maryland's Conservation Buffer Initiative is provided by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#)

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced it will continue its popular cost-share program to cover premiums for dairy farmers participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) program. Enrollment for 2022 is open now and runs through **Feb. 18, 2022**, at local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices.

"Dairy farmers across the country have been struggling with low milk prices and high feed costs for years," said Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. "The state cost-share program gives Maryland producers an opportunity to receive much needed protection from the program at no cost. I encourage all of our dairy farmers to visit their local FSA office and enroll today."

The state cost-share program will cover premiums for participating Maryland dairy farmers' Tier I production in 2022 (up to 5 million pounds of milk produced) at the \$9.50 margin coverage level. MDA has worked closely with USDA FSA to issue direct payments, relieving the administrative burden on farmers.

Governor Larry Hogan first announced the state cost-share program in 2019. Now in its third year, the program remains popular with more than 80% of Maryland dairy farmers enrolling in the program.

For more information about the DMC program, please visit the [USDA website](#) or contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, please visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Maryland Beginning Farmer Success Course

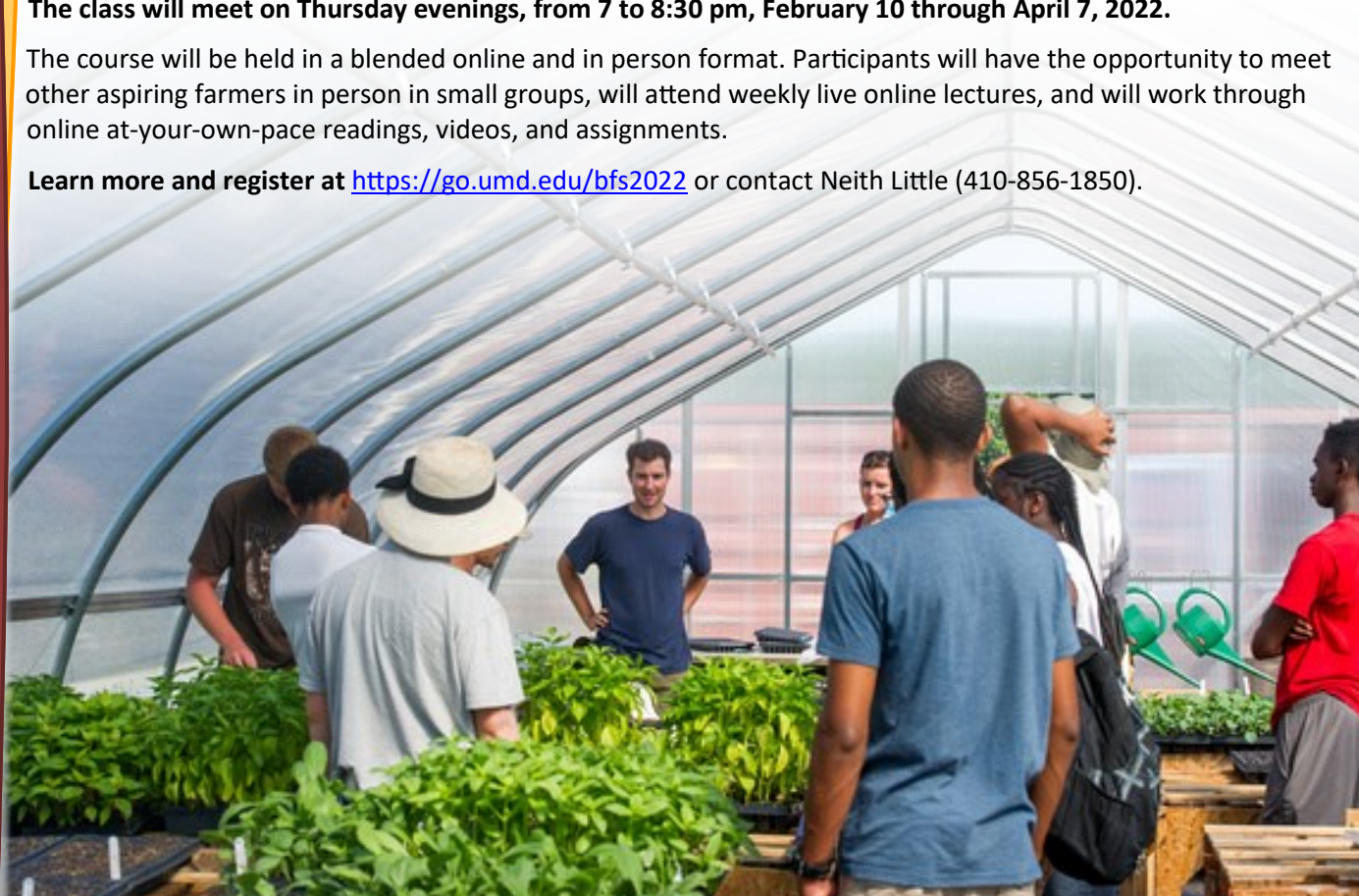
This course is designed for people in Maryland who are considering or in the beginning stages of starting a farm as a business.

Topics covered will include business planning, marketing, crop production, livestock husbandry, soil health, pest management, food safety, and regulations and certifications. Additional elective resources will cover more specialized topics.

The class will meet on Thursday evenings, from 7 to 8:30 pm, February 10 through April 7, 2022.

The course will be held in a blended online and in person format. Participants will have the opportunity to meet other aspiring farmers in person in small groups, will attend weekly live online lectures, and will work through online at-your-own-pace readings, videos, and assignments.

Learn more and register at <https://go.umd.edu/bfs2022> or contact Neith Little (410-856-1850).



Cultivating Conservation Program

Shannon Dill, Principal Agriculture Agent
University of Maryland Extension, Talbot County

Check out the Cultivating Conservation Workshop Series. Offered in-person from January to June in 2022 around the State of MD and DE. They are FREE and open to all!

Federal programs can be complex to navigate, especially for beginning farmers or individuals who have not established a relationship with the sponsoring agency. "Cultivating Conservation for Maryland and Delaware's Small and Historically Underserved Farmers" will target historically underserved groups to increase their knowledge of conservation practices and programs. The course will cover an overview of conservation practices, available conservation programs provided by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and other agencies, understanding of application processes, eligibility, and contractual agreements, and how conservation projects can fit into an overall farm plan.

The University of Maryland Extension and Agriculture Law Education Initiative team, in cooperation with University of Delaware Extension, Maryland and Delaware NRCS, and Soil Conservation District field offices, will deliver education and outreach through classroom and hands-on experiences and tours of conservation offices.

The program will provide six hours of classroom instruction and will occur during evenings or weekends. It is free and open to anyone interested in adopting conservation practices on their farm. Meals and handouts are included. To register visit <https://go.umd.edu/bfsconservation>.

Locations

Lower Eastern Shore Maryland

January 18, 25 and February 1, 2022

6:00pm - 8:00pm

Somerset Extension Office, 30730 Park Dr,
Princess Anne, MD 21853

Children welcome, activities for ages 5+

Baltimore City

March 12, 2022

9:00am - 3:00pm

Baltimore City Extension Office, 6615
Reisterstown Road, Suite 201, Baltimore, MD
21215

New Castle County, Delaware

March 22 and 24, 2022

5:30pm - 8:30pm

New Castle County Extension Office, 461
Wyoming Road, Newark, DE 19716

Southern Maryland

June 9 and 23, 2022

6:00pm - 9:00pm

Charles Soil Conservation District Office, 4200
Gardiner Rd, Waldorf, MD 20601

This project is funded through the NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant. The program is open to all.



Private Applicator Training

6

Recertification training for private pesticide applicators will take place on **March 8 from 1-3 p.m.** at the Harford County Extension office. This class is free but please sign up by calling (410) 638-3255 or email akness@umd.edu.

March 1 & 8
Harford County
Extension Office

Private applicator exam for new applicators will be administered at the Harford County Extension Office on **March 8 from 9-11 a.m.** Core manuals (training materials) are available for \$20. An optional preparation training course for the exam will be offered on **March 1 from 9-11 a.m.** at the Extension office. Please call or email to sign up.



Nutrient Management Voucher Training

Nutrient management vouchers are required for anyone applying fertilizer (synthetic or organic) or manure on their farm. Vouchers are valid for three years. In order to renew, you must attend a two-hour training course. A two-hour training course for nutrient management vouchers will be offered at the Extension office on February 23 from 9-11 a.m. This class is free, but please register ahead by calling (410) 638-3255 or email akness@umd.edu.

February 23
9-11:00 AM
Harford County
Extension Office

AIR Help Day

If you would like help with completing your annual implementation report (AIR) from MDA, we are hosting a help session from **1-3 p.m. on February 23** at the Extension office. **Please sign up ahead of time** by calling (410) 638-3255 or email akness@umd.edu. Please bring your current nutrient management plan and any 2021 fertilizer receipts/records (including manure and manure analysis) in order to complete the AIR.

Farm to School: A Training for Ag Producers

The Maryland Department of Agriculture in partnership with the University of Maryland Extension (UME) Agriculture and Food Systems (AgFS) and the Maryland State Department of Education will be conducting an USDA Farm to School Producer Training for Maryland producers interested in selling local food to Maryland's school districts and eligible providers.

The intent of the workshop is to give agricultural producers training and tools to build their capacity to launch or grow efforts to market to schools, therefore increasing sales to schools for farmers while expanding farm to school activities for students in schools and communities across the nation.

We have two upcoming Workshops:

Hyatt Regency-Cambridge Workshop

Date: February 25, 2022

Time: 10:00am- 2:30pm

Register: <https://f2straining.eventbrite.com/>

Virtual Workshop

Date: March 1, 2022

Time: 1:00pm- 4:30pm

Register: <https://go.umd.edu/farm2schooltraining>



2022 Annie's Project

Annie's Project is designed to empower women in agriculture to manage information and learn about agriculture in a relaxed local network. The target audience is women with a passion for agriculture. Annie's Project is a six-week online experience designed especially for women to help them develop their management and decision-making skills. Annie's Project will help develop an understanding, interpretation, and opportunities in agriculture

Project Topics cover the five areas of Risk Management – Production, Market, Financial, Legal Risk, Human Resources.

Offered virtually through Zoom on Wednesdays. Class dates are February 16, 23, March 2, 9 (no class), 16, 23, and 30 from 6:30pm - 8:30pm.



ANNIE'S PROJECT
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

*There will also be some reading and project assignments outside of the class time - 1 hour per week.

Annie's Project is approved for USDA FSA Borrower training. This includes class time and a workbook that will need to be completed. There is an additional \$100 charge for the FSA portion. More information about this is located at <https://go.umd.edu/anniesprojectfsa>.

Register online: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-annies-project-tickets-243823501657>.

General Interest

North Harford FFA Alumni Association Dance



The North Harford FFA Alumni & Friends Association is hosting their 3rd annual barn dance on March 12 from 6:30-10:00 p.m. at Pond View Farm. This fundraiser helps support the Alumni Association's efforts towards supporting the North Harford High School FFA chapter and other local agriculture-related efforts. Anyone is welcome to attend! Tickets are on sale at <https://www.nhffaalumni.com/meetings-events>.

The Alumni Association is also soliciting sponsorships and donated items for the silent auction. If

you are interested in supporting, please send an email to northharfordffaalum@gmail.com. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

The North Harford FFA Alumni & Friends Association is a 501 (c)(3) organization open to any and all who want to support local agriculture and the North Harford FFA (you don't have to be an alumni!) and meets during the first Wednesday of each month. Next meeting is February 2 at Slate Farm Brewery at 7 p.m.

LET YOUR GARDEN GROW!

FREE Mulch for Harford County residents loaded onto your vehicle

Every Wednesday in March
8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Daily limit 100 cubic yards while supplies last




Contact us to learn more:
Harford Mulch & Compost Facility
410.638.3417 | 3139 Scarboro Road, Street
www.harfordcountymd.gov/2223/Mulch-and-Compost-Facility

Andrew Kness

Andrew Kness
Extension Agent,
Agriculture and
Food Systems



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facebook.com/HarfordAg

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

akness@umd.edu



Great resources are just a click away!

Suite 600
3525 Conowingo Rd.
Street, MD 21154

UNIVERSITY OF
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Dates to remember

01-03 Feb. Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention.

Hershey, PA. <https://www.mafvc.org/>.

03 Feb. Virtual Agronomy Meeting. 10-2:30 PM. Online via Zoom. Free. Register: go.umd.edu/virtualagronomymeeting

08 Feb. Virtual Vegetable Grower Meeting. 4-8:30 PM. Online via Zoom. Free. Register: go.umd.edu/virtualvegetablemeeting.

10 Feb-7 Apr. Beginning Farmer Course. Hybrid virtual and in-person. Register online: <https://go.umd.edu/bfs2022>.

15 Feb. Harford County Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting. Deer Creek Overlook, Street. \$12. Call (410) 638-3255.

16 Feb-Mar 30. Virtual Annie's Project. Online via Zoom. Price varies. Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-annies-project-tickets-243823501657>.

23 Feb. Nutrient Management Voucher Training. 9-11 AM. Harford County Extension Office, Street. Free. Call (410) 638-3255 to register.

23 Feb. AIR Help Day. 1-3 PM. Harford County Extension office, Street. Free. Call (410) 638-3255 to register.

01 Mar. Virtual Fruit Grower Meeting. 8:30-1:00 PM. Online via Zoom. Free. Register: go.umd.edu/virtualfruitmeeting.

01 Mar. Optional New Pesticide Applicator Training. 9-11 AM. Harford County Extension Office, Street. Free. Call (410) 638-3255 to register.

08 Mar. Private Pesticide Applicator Exam. 9-11 AM. Harford County Extension Office, Street. Call (410) 638-3255 to register.

08 Mar. Private Pesticide Recertification Training. 1-3 PM. Harford County Extension Office, Street. Call (410) 638-3255 to register.

February 2022