

Ag Notes

Harford County Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

January 2019

Happy
New Year

The Extension Office will be closed on
January 1 for New Years and January 15
for Martin Luther King, Jr. 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
facebook.com/HarfordAg

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Hello, Harford County!

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe 2018 is already over, and maybe it didn't come soon enough for some of us! It's not breaking news that 2018 has been a challenge; many of us are looking forward to 2019 and leaving the record-breaking rain and depressed commodity prices in the past in hopes of a brighter future. Before we completely forget about 2018, let's have a quick review.

2018 will go down as the wettest year in recorded history for the State of Maryland. We typically receive somewhere around 41-45 inches of precipitation in a year—this year we are approaching 70 inches, and we still have a few days left (and guess what? There's rain in the forecast). This year I have been monitoring the rainfall we've been getting here at the Extension Office, and as of December 19 when writing this, we have gotten 66.73 inches of rain since January 1. That's a lot of rain. To put that in perspective, that is equivalent to the amount of rain that falls in some parts of the Congo rainforest in Africa. We also had many intense rain events that brought several inches of rain in only a few hours time. We had 24 storms that brought over one inch of rain, and one storm that dumped almost six inches, which is more rain than places like Las Vegas see in over a year and a half. We also had the wettest July on record, but ironically we did have a mini-drought in the beginning of July that was unfortunately timed with double crop soybean planting and some corn pollination, likely knocking off a lot of top-end yield. The rains returned towards the end of July through August and September, creating a harvest and cover crop/small grain planting nightmare. However you cut it, we received a lot of rain and it caused a lot of issues for farmers. A lot of the rain fell in late May-early June, which is when the majority of

our field crops are planted. Obviously, this significantly delayed planting and caused a host of problems related to saturated soils, such as damping off, poor emergence, diseases, and nutrient deficiencies.

Nitrogen fertilizer management was certainly a challenge this year, and our agronomist, Dr. Nichole Fiorellino, will be discussing nitrogen management at our Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting on February 12. Diseases were also a challenge, especially head scab in wheat, which we will also be discussing at the Mid-Winter Meeting. For more information on the Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting, see page 2.

On a final note, while this year may have been frustrating and we want to forget it as soon as possible, I'd encourage you to look at your records, yield data, etc. and learn from what happened. If you experimented with management practices or different products (eg fungicides, fertilizer, seed, etc.) take a look at them and see how they performed. Learning something from a year like this will help us deal with wet years in the future.

Here's to a better year in 2019! I'd like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Happy Holidays!

Until next time,
-Andy



Harford County Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting

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The Harford County Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting will be held on February 12, 2019 at the Deer Creek Overlook on 6 Cherry Hill Rd. in Street, MD. The meeting will satisfy the credit requirements for **private applicator pesticide re-certification** and **nutrient management voucher training**. Check-in begins at 9:00 and the program will begin at 9:30 a.m. This year's topics include: weed management in pastures and forages; head scab management in wheat; nitrogen management strategies & thoughts after a challenging year; and farm transfer planning options. Participants will also have an opportunity to meet with local agribusiness vendors and sponsors.

Registration is \$12 prior to February 5 and \$20 thereafter and at the door. Registration includes lunch. Please call the Harford County Extension Office at (410) 638-3255 or e-mail Andy at akness@umd.edu to register. Checks can be mailed made out to "HC EAC" and mailed to: 3525 Conowingo Rd., Suite 600, Street, MD 21154.

February 12

9-3 PM

Deer Creek Overlook
6 Cherry Hill Rd.
Street, MD

2019 Grain Marketing Workshop

This breakfast meeting will include speakers on various topics in grain marketing. Come have breakfast and discuss this year's strategies for marketing your grain. Speakers include marketing specialists, traders and more. Topics include local and national grain outlook for 2019, tax considerations, crop insurance and the farm bill. This is a workshop that will be live-streamed in the Harford County Extension Office from the Eastern Shore. No charge for the workshop and a light breakfast will be provided, but please register by January 7 by calling (410) 638-3255 or e-mail akness@umd.edu.

January 10

8:00-11:30 AM
Harford County
Extension Office
Street, MD



2019 Women In Agriculture Conference

Women across the region coming together to EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER. February 13, 2019 will mark our 18th Annual MidAtlantic Women In Agriculture Regional Conference. The conference goals are to provide women involved in agriculture an opportunity to come together to learn about current issues and topics so they can make informed decisions concerning their agribusinesses and family lives. Sessions will cover topics in marketing, financial, production and legal. Back by popular demand we will offer a preconference, February 12, 2019 with the option of two topics: ag communications and keeping the family in your farm.

Location: Dover Downs Hotel & Casino Dover, Delaware (room rates available). Registration is open: www.extension.umd.edu/womeninag. For more information, contact: Shannon Dill at sdill@umd.edu or (410) 822-1244.



UMD Releases New Apple Variety

University of Maryland [press release](#) (abridged)

UMD releases its first ever apple variety called Antietam Blush, with six more varieties coming soon, all adapted specifically to the climate and growing culture of the mid-Atlantic region.

Dr. Christopher Walsh, Professor in the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, received the University's first-ever apple patent for Antietam Blush. This and the six more varieties of elite dwarf apple trees forthcoming out of the Maryland Apple Tree Architecture Project represent the culmination of 27 years of research and breeding. These trees are resistant to disease, shorter (aka dwarf) with stronger tree architecture for easier maintenance and harvesting, and more cost effective with the ability to plant more trees in a small area. These advances create potential for broad adoption and use, while improving orchard and farm viability and strengthening the apple industry.

"In Maryland, we have a very good climate for apple production, but we also have a couple of limitations because of our hot summers and rainy weather," says Walsh. "One day they're green. The next day they fall on the ground. We needed [varieties] that were heat tolerant. We also needed things that fit into the climate and didn't require spraying for a particularly bad bacterial disease called fire blight. That did not exist when I started this program."

"The mid-Atlantic apple region has a need for new varieties," says Julia Harshman, a former student of Walsh's and co-inventor. "It's a fairly large region, and most apple varieties do not fit well for several reasons. It's my hope that our work here can fill that void."

But beyond being just adapted to this region, the tree architecture makes Antietam Blush and the upcoming new varieties highly marketable. Most people

think of apple trees as large and robust, where you would need ladders to harvest all the apples. But pick-your-own markets have become increasingly popular, with smaller trees that need trellis systems to support them like grape vines.

"We targeted the mid-October harvest season for Antietam blush because that's when the pick your own markets are really popular. That's when people want to take their kids to the farm, pick pumpkins, drink cider, have that full farm experience. And that includes apples," says Harshman.

But, Antietam Blush can also be grown as smaller trees planted closer together, and completely without tressiling. This not only means that more trees can be grown and more apples can be produced, but that expensive trellising and support systems don't have to be installed - the trees support themselves and need very little pruning. Not to mention, they are the perfect size to harvest every apple on a step ladder at best, perfect for pick-your-own.

"[Antietam Blush] will be very important, especially in October because the regular Pink Lady most times is not quite ready - it's an advantage for this apple to be ready when lot of folks are picking apples and pumpkins," explains Bob Black, owner of Catoctin Mountain Orchard who has been unofficially growing Antietam Blush for a few seasons solely for grower taste testing.

Interestingly, the entirety of this apple program came about completely naturally and without initial external funding. "It was serendipity I guess you'd call it," says Walsh. "No one else was doing it, and it just needed to be done. So WMREC gave me the land and the support, and we just started following a dream."



Image: Antietam Blush apple harvest. University Communications, UMD

But the Maryland Apple Tree Architecture Project really sprung forward in 2007 when Harshman came into the picture. She came across Walsh in the Plant Sciences building when she left her undergraduate biochemistry orientation. That interaction led to her enrollment in the horticulture program and involvement in the apple project.

Harshman saw the thousands of trees and immediately started taking inventory and getting rid of anything that wasn't fruiting and didn't have the desired disease resistance or tree architecture. "Most breeding programs, it's not what you keep, it's what you discard, and there's always a fear that you might have made the wrong decision. That's something that Dr. Walsh and I spent a lot of time being very deliberate about, what we got rid of," explains Harshman.

With some clear order and goals set for the

project, the apple program is now seeing the fruits of its labors with multiple apple patents. And growers are very excited by the new varieties, and love the taste of Antietam Blush.

"Consumers like it," says Walsh. "When Bob Black brings them to the winter horticulture society meetings, he gives away 10 or 20 bushels one apple at a time. The growers eat them. So that tells us that this is a good one. We expect to have a commercial nursery selling trees for commercial growers in two years."

"[Antietam Blush] was developed here, and I think it's going to go a long ways for a lot of folks. It just puts Maryland on a map as one of the states to watch and see what's next, because I know Chris has some other apples in the pipeline, and that's what it's all about - producing an apple that'll do well here in this region," says Black.

Click [here](#) to view a video about Antietam Blush!

Central Maryland Vegetable Growers' Day

Commercial vegetable growers are invited to the 2019 Central Maryland Vegetable Growers Meeting on Thursday, January 24, 2019.

Many topics will be covered in connection with vegetable growing in Maryland and include: downy mildew of cucurbits, hops production in Maryland, weed management in organic systems, alternative irrigation, soil salinity, Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), sulfur management, managing high tunnel problems, and MDA updates.

To register, go to <https://19cmvgm.eventbrite.com>, or call (410) 887-8090 or e-mail Erika Crowl at ecrowl@umd.edu. Registration is \$22 in advance and \$30 at the door and includes lunch.

This meeting will serve as recertification for Maryland Private Pesticide Applicators, as well as selected Pennsylvania applicator credits. In addition, growers who attend specified presentation sessions can renew or receive the required MDA Nutrient Applicator Voucher.

January 24

8:30-3:00 PM

*Friendly Farm Restaurant
Upperco, MD*

Additional Horticulture Meetings

Future Harvest CASA Conference

January 17-19, College Park Marriott, MD

Visit the [website](#) for details



Bay Area Fruit Meeting

February 22, Wye Research & Education Center, MD

Visit the [website](#) for details

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Planning For A Great 2019!

*Patricia Hoopes, Nutrient Management Advisor
University of Maryland Extension, Harford County*

Thanksgiving came quickly and now the Holiday Season is upon us, but don't forget your Nutrient Management Plan. A little planning now will help you to move smoothly into spring. A few folks have been able to get their soil sampling done and are requesting spring 2019 Nutrient Management Plans; most require more time.

For me, receiving a soil sample analysis is exciting. Taking samples early allows you the opportunity to question the lab and/or retake samples before proceeding with a formal Nutrient Management Plan based on a questionable analysis. If poor results are due to a lab error, talk with the lab, and if they agree they may retest the sample for free. If fields are high in phosphorus, you will need additional testing. A PSI (Phosphorus Site Index) and/or a UM-PMT (UM Phosphorus Management Tool) evaluation must be completed in order to write for any phosphorus application. This includes starter fertilizer and manure

applications. The additional test is the DPS or Dissolved Phosphorus Saturation. If the lab doesn't offer this you may opt to test for Al (aluminum) and Fe (iron) instead.

Manure sampling is necessary each year when the operation is collecting and spreading manure. However, this is no longer a requirement if you have fewer than 20 animal units. Call the office to see if you qualify for this exemption.

As you collect the required information to update your Nutrient Management Plan, call your advisor and arrange a meeting to make sure the planner will have time to develop a plan. The closer we get to spring, calendars become full and it may become necessary to refer clients to other advisors.

If you have questions concerning Nutrient Management Planning, call Tricia Hoopes at (410) 638-3255. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Written Contracts For Your Operation

*Paul Goeringer, Extension Legal Specialist
University of Maryland, College Park*

Article posted to Maryland Risk Management Education [Blog](#) (abridged)

A business resolution to consider for 2019 is using written contracts. Many of you may be providing services with custom operations, selling hay or leasing pasture. Each of these services will require some form of a contract.

Although contracts can either be oral or written, many involved in production agriculture often utilize oral contracts in transactions. Written contracts may not be the norm in agriculture but can provide a record of the agreement by both parties.

Contracts, oral or written, must meet certain legal requirements to be considered "valid." Valid contracts require competent parties, legal subject matter, an offer, an acceptance and consideration. Contracts typically require parties with the mental capacity to understand the significance of entering into a contract.

The subject matter of the contract, what you agree to do, must be legal to do.

There needs to be an offer by one party, called an offerer. The offer is something that creates the power to accept in another party. Acceptance is in the hands of the person the offer was made to, called an offeree. The offeree cannot make any changes to the offer when

accepting. If changes are made, the offer becomes a counter-offer.

Finally, the contract must be supported by consideration. Consideration is a value of exchange. The parties must be agreeing to give up something of value. For example, you agree to sell 20 bales of alfalfa to a neighbor for a good price. When the neighbor receives the hay, and you receive the money, we have a value of exchange.

In agriculture, handshake deals are often the norm but, in many cases, state law may want the contract to be in writing. In many states, contracts for the sale of goods over \$500, contracts for the sale of land and contracts for what cannot be performed in one year are required to be in writing.

States often require more types of contracts to be in writing, under what is known as the Statute of Frauds; I have only listed the most common ones to what you would typically see in your operation.

The writing requirement within the Statute of Frauds does not require any special document. In many cases, the writing requirement is pretty minimal. For example, with a custom service contract,

we would want to know the service agreed to (swathing or baling or both), the payment rate and potentially how long you will provide the service (one season or longer).

Even if state law does not require the contract to be in writing, having a written contract is a good business practice. Written contracts provide both parties with a receipt of the transaction and help both parties remember the terms agreed to. There are some common clauses you should consider adding in contracts.

One basic term to consider is an alternative dispute resolution clause. If a dispute does occur and you do get sued, do you want to go to court? Litigation in court is often a slow and expensive process. Including in an alternative dispute resolution can provide both parties with a quicker resolution process. This clause comes in two forms: arbitration and mediation.

With arbitration, the parties will agree on some arbitrators and present evidence to the arbitrators

who will decide on the dispute. With mediation,⁶ both parties will agree on a mediator who will work with the parties until both parties agree upon how to resolve the issue. Many states offer discounted mediation services through joint programs with the USDA for agricultural disputes.

If you do go to court, where do you want the dispute settled? If you are working with parties across county or state lines, having the dispute settled in a location convenient to you is something you want to consider. Forum selection clauses allow you to set a convenient location for disputes to be heard.

The final clause to consider is a choice of law clause. When parties are located in two different states, a choice of law clause tells those deciding the case which state's laws to use in settling the dispute.

In 2019, consider using more written contracts in your operation. A contract that includes just a minimum of terms will provide both parties with a reminder of what was agreed upon and help provide for smoother transactions in 2019.

Save the Date! "Food, Farmers and Community: Opening the Dialogue" at Harford Community College in March



p.m. at Harford Community College, Edgewood Hall, Room 132.

Keynote speaker Julie Oberg, deputy secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture, will discuss "As a Community of Food Consumers, We Are All Stakeholders in the Success of Our Farms: Overview of Harford County Farming and its Challenges."

Breakout sessions include "The Real Cost of Cheap Food: The Economic Challenges of Farming and Eating," "Buying Local for Our Community and Our Health," "What's Behind the Label? How to Understand the Meaning of Organic, GMOs and Antibiotic-Free Food," and "Why is Agricultural Land Preservation Important in Harford County?"

Harford County will also launch its new web-based GIS map enabling the public to buy local by easily

locating Harford's farms and their products.

Breakfast and lunch featuring local products will be served. At lunch, a wrap-up discussion about the sessions and follow-up action will take place. There will also be a display featuring local farmers and their products.

The day is intended for both the public and farmers to learn about and discuss issues facing food producers and consumers today. In addition, the planning team encourages county organizations, including nonprofits and religious institutions, to sponsor a member to attend the symposium as a "food ambassador" to educate their organization's membership on the information they learned from the sessions. Sponsors of the event include Harford Community College, Harford Community College Foundation's Grants for Innovation Program, Harford County Office of Community and Economic Development and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation.

The event is the centerpiece of "Gathering at the Community Table: Celebrating Harford's Farms and Food," the first Harford Community College Scholar-in-Residence program, which focuses on Harford County's rich food history and land stewardship. Tickets are \$10 per person and will be available at www.harford.edu after the first of the year. More information about the event may be found at www.harford.edu/gathering or by contacting Sharon Stowers, Ph.D., at ssowers@harford.edu.

Tire Recycling!

Location: Harford Waste Disposal Center, 3241 Scarboro Road, Street, MD 21154

Dates: Monday, January 28, 2019 thru Saturday, February 2, 2019 & Monday, February 4, 2019 thru Saturday, February 9, 2019

*Please note Saturdays are usually very congested at Harford Waste Disposal Center please plan accordingly.

Acceptance Hours: 7:00 am to 2:30 pm.

Open to all farmers of Harford County (do not need to be member of Maryland Farm Bureau).

Proof of Harford County residency required. All size farm tires accepted, on or off the rim. Farmers will be allowed multiple visits to dispose of tires during event. For more information please call: Wendy Doring (410) 638-3417 or (301) 832-8884.

MSHS Travel Fellowship

The Maryland State Horticulture Society (MSHS) is accepting Applications for Arthur H. Thompson Travel Fellowship.

The purpose of the Fellowship is to expose young people, working in the MD fruit industry, to learn ideas on fruit production in other areas of the world. This \$1,000 fellowship can be awarded annually to young people working in the fruit industry to promote leadership within the Society.

The recipient will be between 18-30, and expected to make a short presentation to the membership at the annual meeting. To apply, a brief explanation of the proposed trip should be submitted in writing by **January 18**. The application letter should include the name, age, and potential trip being considered by the applicant. Mail to: Lynn Moore, Secretary, c/o MSHS , Nominating and Awards Committee, 2415 Woodbine Road, Woodbine, MD 21797.

The Thompson Fellowship will be presented at the Awards Banquet held during the Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention in Hershey, PA.

Ag Conservation Leasing Workshops

This winter, the Agriculture Law Education Initiative (ALEI) and the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc. will be hosting workshops to teach agricultural service providers, landowners and farmers how to communicate about and draft a farm lease to incorporate conservation practices.

The interactive workshops will equip participants with: communication tools for discussing conservation values; leasing strategies; examples of lease language for commonly used practices; and educational materials for future use.

Upcoming dates and locations:

ATTN: Landowners & Farmers:

Deadline for application for the Harford County Agriculture Land Preservation Program is **January 15**. Please contact Bill Amoss at (410) 638-3235 for details.

- Mid-Shore: January 8, 2019, Chesapeake College-HPAC 127, 1000 College Circle Way, Wye Mills, MD
- Southern Maryland: January 17, 2019, Charles County Soil Conservation District, 4200 Gardiner Road, Waldorf, MD
- Western Maryland: January 23, 2019, Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Ln., Frederick, MD
- **Central Maryland: January 28, 2019 Baltimore County Ag Center, 1114 Shawan Rd, Cockeysville, MD**

All workshops will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Nutrient Management Voucher Credits are available! Lunch is provided to all participants free of charge. For more information and to register: <https://agresearch.umd.edu/agroecol>.

Great resources are just a click away!

Andrew Kness
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Harford County Newsletter

Dates to remember

8, 15, & 22 Jan. Diversifying Your Operation. 12-3PM.

Baltimore County Extension Office, Cockeysville, MD. \$5.

Register [online](#) or call (410) 887-8090.

10 Jan. Grain Marketing Update. Live webinar broadcasted at the Harford County Extension Office. 8:00-11:30AM. Free. Call (410) 638-3255 to register.

15 Jan. Harford County Ag Land Preservation signup deadline. Call Bill Amoss (410) 638-3235.

17 Jan. Carroll County Winter Agronomy Meeting. Call (410) 386-2760 or email plcoffey@umd.edu to register.

17 Jan. Farm Transfer Workshop. 8:30-3PM. Baltimore County Extension Office, Cockeysville, MD. Register [online](#).

18 Jan. Central MD Forage & Livestock Conference. 9-3:30PM. 4-H Camp & Activities Center, Frederick, MD. \$15 in advance, \$20 after 1/9/19. Call (301) 600-3576.

24 Jan. Central MD Vegetable Grower's Meeting. Friendly Farm Restaurant, Upperco, MD. \$22 in advance, \$30 at

door. Register by calling (410) 887-8090.

25-26 Jan. Beef Producer's Short Course. Baltimore County Extension Office, Cockeysville, MD. \$75. Register [online](#) or call Andy Kness, (410) 638-3255.

27 Jan. Urban Ag Winter Meeting. Great Kids Farm, Catonsville, MD. Contact Neith Little, (410) 856-1850.

28 Jan. Conservation Leasing Workshop. 8-3PM. Baltimore County Extension Office, Cockeysville, MD. Register [online](#).

29-31 Jan. Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention. Hershey Convention Center, Hershey, PA. Registration cost varies. Register [online](#) or call Susan Barnes for more info, (301) 432-2767.

12 Feb. Harford County Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting. Deer Creek Overlook, Street, MD. 9-3PM. \$12 in advance, \$20 at door. Call (410) 638-3255 or email akness@umd.edu.

12-13 Feb. Mid-Atlantic Women in Ag Conference. Dover Downs, Dover, DE. Register [online](#) or call Shannon Dill (410) 822-1244.

January 2019