

Ag Notes

Harford County Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

May 2021



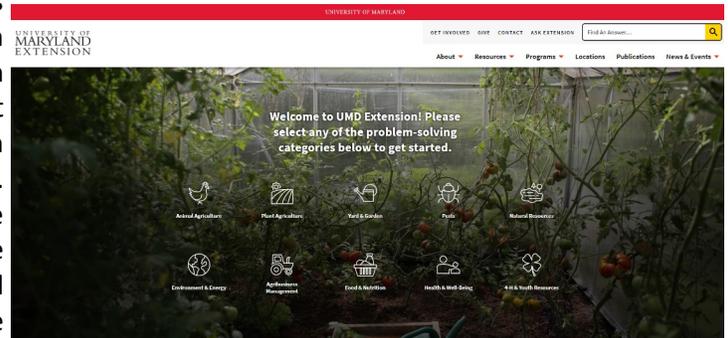
The Extension office will be closed on May 31 for Memorial Day. Please continue to call ahead to schedule an appointment before visiting the office.

Hello, Harford County!

Happy May! Field conditions have been fit for work over the past few weeks and plenty of field work has been conducted. As we continue with the 2021 growing season, don't forget about MDA's FieldWatch program for pesticide applicators. This is a free program where growers can enter their sensitive crops (i.e. hops, grapes, etc.) and honeybee colonies. Pesticide applicators can then log into FieldWatch.com prior to applying certain pesticides in order to be aware of these sensitive areas.

Also, we have had several questions from pesticide applicators concerning the status of their license renewals; remember that these are handled online now. Please see page 3 of this newsletter for details.

If you've logged on to the UMD Extension website at extension.umd.edu, you'll notice a brand new look! That's right, we finally have a new website! I encourage you to check back in the future for more online content on this website that will hopefully be very useful to you and easy to access. Right now there are still a few hiccups that will hopefully be worked out soon. For those of you interested in agronomic crops, be sure to



New UMD Extension website: extension.umd.edu.

check out our [Agronomy News newsletter](#) and [Agronomy News blog](http://blog.umd.edu/agronomynews/).

Finally, a final note on the office: The Harford County Extension Office is open; however, we still ask that you call ahead to schedule an appointment to visit. This is because the Harford County Agricultural Center is still locked due to our partners at MDA that require the building to be locked for COVID precautions. Hopefully in the near future all the organizations in the building will be fully reopened and we can unlock the doors to the Ag Center!

Stay safe and happy planting!

Until next time,
-Andy

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Maryland Extension

Harford County
Agricultural Center

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(410) 638-3255

M—F 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Extension.umd.edu/harford-county

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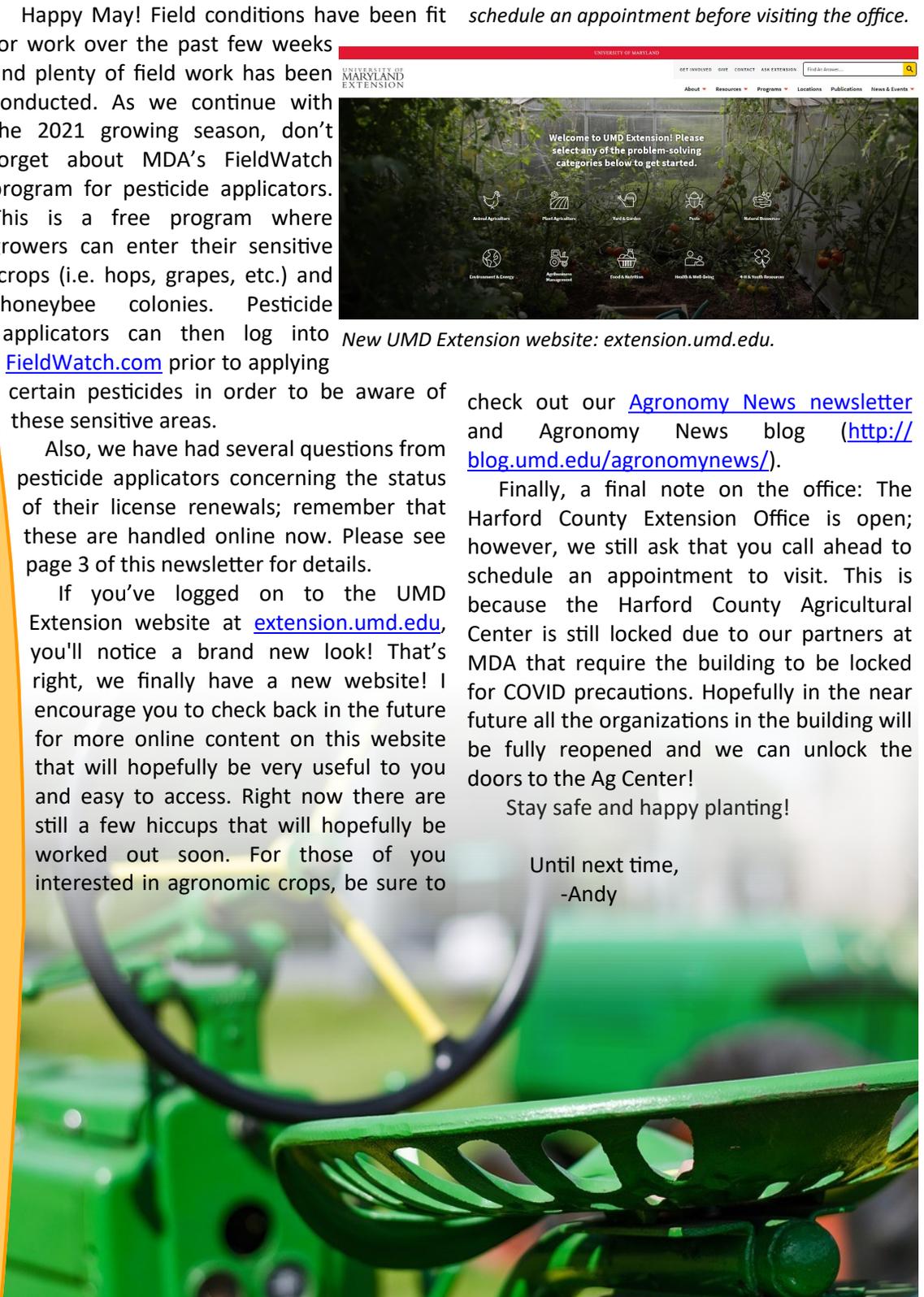
Andrew Kness

Ag Extension Educator

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*Amanda Grev, Pasture and Forage Specialist
University of Maryland Extension*

Fortunately or unfortunately, people are creatures of habit. Over the years, we've developed behaviors and habits that will stick with us for a lifetime. This applies to our daily routines and the choices we make, both good and bad. Unfortunately, this same phenomenon also holds true when it comes to grazing livestock. As you make plans for the upcoming growing season, here are a few of the more common grazing mistakes that we often fall prey to. Let's do our best to break that habit and avoid these mistakes moving forward.

1. Not understanding the plant's needs

There is a reason grazing heights and rest periods are so frequently discussed when it comes to forage management. Plants need to maintain enough stored energy to regrow following grazing. Removing too much of the photosynthetic factory (i.e. the leaves) severely limits the plant's ability to recover and regrow. That being said, it is important to recognize that not all plants store their energy reserves in the same place. For example, while legumes like alfalfa store their energy in below ground structures, grasses like orchardgrass store their energy reserves in the base of the stem. Removing these storage structures by grazing too closely limits the plant's capacity not only to regrow after grazing, but also to generate new tillers and persist long term. This is the basis behind recommendations on beginning and ending grazing heights and the reason a field of alfalfa will persist at a lower grazing or cutting height compared to orchardgrass or other cool-season grasses, most of which need at least 3 to 4 inches of post-grazing residual to maintain sufficient energy reserves.

2. Not managing for even forage utilization

Pastures often develop areas with heavy usage and low forage availability, while other areas have less grazing pressure and abundant forage. As a result, the areas that are heavily grazed become more overgrazed while the areas that are left alone are understocked and the forage becomes mature and declines nutritionally. Several management strategies exist to promote more even forage utilization across the field. Making water and shade available in other areas of the field to attract livestock to less desirable areas, mowing or clipping low use or overgrown areas to keep forages vegetative, and subdividing the field into smaller sections for rotational grazing can all help alleviate this issue and result in greater forage utilization and long-term productivity.

3. Not investing below the soil surface

Practices like soil sampling and maintaining appropriate soil fertility are an investment that cannot be overlooked. Soil tests are a critical component in pasture management because they are the only way to determine nutrient requirements and soil pH. Soils will naturally become more acidic over time, and if the pH is too low, certain nutrients will become less available to plants. Liming as-needed and keeping up with soil nutrient fertility are essential investments to the health and productivity of a forage stand. Although it is true that under a pasture setting a large portion of nutrients are retained and recycled through the deposition of manure and urine, consider where those nutrients are being spread. They may not always be deposited evenly across the pasture and are likely more concentrated around water and shade sources or in laneways and other highly trafficked areas. Implementing some form of rotational grazing can help achieve a more even distribution of manure and can be used together with any necessary lime or fertilizer to maintain soil fertility.

4. Not maintaining flexibility in your operation

Flexibility is key when environmental and growing conditions vary from year-to-year and season-to-season. Good managers have to allow for flexibility and adaptive management in grazing systems to achieve desired outcomes. Examples of flexibility include adjusting stocking rates, changing rotational frequency and/or order of rotation, and potentially supplementing pastures with other forage sources as needed. For example, hotter and drier weather during the summer means grass growth rates will slow down and the amount of rest required may be much longer than that required during the spring when rapid growth is occurring; adjust your complete a grazing plan and maintain records on things like forage production and the timing of graze/rest periods will allow you to more accurately evaluate how things went, assess your goals and limitations, and make plans to adjust for the coming year. A successful grazing plan can also help you be better prepared and make sure you have enough forage to get you through the grazing season. There are an abundance of planning and monitoring tools available to help you accomplish this, including everything from paper charts to web-based tools to smart phone apps or technologies. If you're interested and looking for something to get you started, check out one of the free grazing charts available at <https://onpasture.com/2021/03/08/get-your-free-2021-grazing-planning-chart-and-instructions-here/>.

Livestock Producer Tick Survey

The University of Maryland is conducting a statewide survey of ticks in livestock in Maryland in order to gauge the spread of the invasive Longhorned tick, as this tick can be a real issue for livestock producers.

If you are interested in having your livestock checked, please complete this very short, three-question

survey : <https://go.umd.edu/tick-survey>.

For more information about this program, please feel free to contact Racheal Slattery (rslatt@umd.edu, 301-405-1392) or Dr. Megan Fritz (mfritz13@umd.edu, 301-405-3911).

Pesticide License Renewals: Reminder

Recently we have gotten a lot of phone calls and emails from farmers concerned where their pesticide license renewals; mainly, why they haven't received a new card in the mail. **MDA no longer prints and mails your cards.** In order to get a new copy of your license you must have first attended an approved recertification course. After that you must visit <https://www.egov.maryland.gov/mda/pesticides> and log in using your **license number** (not found on your license) and **code**. These numbers are given to you from MDA in

an email back in November. If you never received this email or lost it, contact MDA and ask for your license number and code by calling (410) 841-5710.

Once you have your login information, go to the website above and pay your \$7 renewal fee. Once processed (takes between 24-48 hours), you can log back in to print your new license. If you do not have access to the internet, you may request a paper renewal form by calling (410) 841-5710.

Getting Ready for Pick-Your-Own

May 4

4—5:00 PM

Online via Zoom

Join growers and ag service providers from the Northeast for an interactive discussion about what is working and what is not as we prepare to

open our farms to visitors for the upcoming pick-your-own (PYO) season. The berries are ripening and the COVID-19 pandemic is evolving – what does that mean for PYO visitor management this season? What did you do last year that you'll continue and what will be different this season?

Featuring:

- Deb Colitas from Valley Fruits & Veggies in the Lehigh Valley of PA
- Claudia Schmidt from Penn State Extension
- Lisa Chase from University of Vermont Extension
- And YOU! Come ready to share your PYO questions and experiences managing visitors.

This is the first agritourism zoom café in a series that will cover several topics for farms open to visitors through the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. To request a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Christi Sherlock at (802) 476-2003 or Christi.Sherlock@uvm.edu so we may assist you.

Register for the webinar [here](#).

Interested in having a safety expert visit your farm? A team of ag service providers in the Northeast is providing personalized safety assessments that will take place either virtually or on your farm. Sign up [HERE](#).

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/ NIFA under Award Number 2018-70027-28588.

For more information please contact Lisa Chase, Ph.D., the University of Vermont Extension at (802) 257-7967 x311 or by email Lisa.Chase@uvm.edu.



Bird Problems in Sweet Corn?

Researchers at the University of Rhode Island are currently distributing an online survey about fresh market sweet corn. If you grow fresh market sweet corn you are eligible to take this short 5 minute online survey. Your participation and feedback are extremely valuable to the success of this research.

The survey will gather information on growers bird damage levels to sweet corn and prevention methods used to deter bird damage. To take this survey, please [click here](https://uri.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8qBBE2HAIwckYI) or paste the following link into your URL, https://uri.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8qBBE2HAIwckYI.

We thank you in advance for taking our survey. If you have further questions or interested in this study please see the contact information below.

For More Information contact:

Dr. Rebecca Brown at brownreb@uri.edu, Department of Plant Science and Entomology

Natalie Meyer at natalie_meyer@uri.edu. Department of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

Asparagus Beetle IPM

Emily Zobel, Senior Agriculture Agent Associate
University of Maryland Extension, Dorchester County

There are two beetle pests that feed on asparagus; the common or striped asparagus beetle (*Crioceris asparagi*) and the spotted asparagus beetle (*Crioceris duodecimpunctata*). Feeding on the spears results in scarring, browning, and hooked tips render the crop unmarketable. While both beetles can damage the emerging spears, the common asparagus beetle larvae and adults will also feed on the ferns, which can reduce the plant's ability to build resources for a strong crop the following spring.

Adults: Adult beetles are about ⅓ inch in length. The adult common asparagus beetle is blue-blackish with six cream-colored square-shaped spots on its back (Fig 1). Adult spotted asparagus beetles are reddish-orange with twelve black spots on their back (Fig 2). Both the beetles overwinter as adults.



Figure 1. Adult Asparagus Beetle. Image: Clemson University – USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org.



Figure 2. Adult spotted asparagus beetle. Image: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org.

Eggs: Eggs take about a week to hatch. They are small, cylindrical, and dark-colored. The asparagus beetle lays eggs on the spear at a 90-degree angle in rows of 3 to 8 eggs (Fig 3.), while the spotted asparagus beetle oviposits eggs singularly on the fern.

Larvae: The larvae of both species are light gray with visible heads and legs. The common asparagus beetle larvae have blackheads (Fig 4.), while the spotted asparagus beetle larvae have an orange head. Larval feeding lasts for 10-14 days. Asparagus beetle larvae feed on the

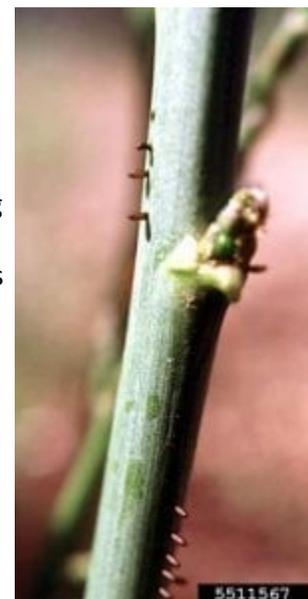


Figure 3. Asparagus beetle eggs. Image: Upham, Kansas State University, Bugwood.org.

5 spear, while spotted asparagus beetles will burrow into the berry. Mature larvae crawl to the ground and burrow within the soil to pupate.



Figure 4. Common Asparagus beetle larvae. Image: Clemson University – USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org.

Scouting: Scouting should start at the end of April-early May or just after asparagus plants emerge and continue for the rest of the growing season. Check 10 plants in 5-10 different locations in a field, best on a warm, sunny afternoon when beetles will be most active. Treatment may be justified if 10% of spears are infested with beetles or 1-2% have eggs.

Cultural Controls & Prevention: During harvest, harvest all spears every day to reduce the number of stems where eggs will survive for long enough to hatch. Allow plants in one area to develop ferns so as to act as a trap crop. These plants can then be sprayed selectively.

Maintain a clean environment in asparagus fields in the fall to force adults to overwinter in field edges where natural predators reside. Destruction of crop residues will eliminate overwintering sites for asparagus beetles.

The most important natural enemy of the common asparagus beetle is a tiny parasitic wasp (*Tetrastichus asparagi*) that attacks the eggs. These parasitoids lay their own eggs inside the beetle eggs. The immature wasps grow inside the beetle larvae, killing them when they pupate. Studies have found >50% of eggs were killed by parasitoid feeding, and half of the surviving larvae were parasitized. Providing a nearby nectar source such as umbelliferous flowers may enhance wasp populations.

Chemical Control: Organic options on spears include Surround WP as a repellent, EC5.0, or products containing capsaicin (check for certification status).

If possible, spot spray along edges of planting where overwintering adults colonize the field and/or band insecticide over the row to help spare natural enemies. Use selective insecticides on ferns.

Daily harvest of asparagus makes chemical treatment difficult. 1 dh products are available and can be used immediately after picking to allow harvest the following day (see the [Mid-Atlantic Commercial Vegetable Production Recommendations](#) for current recommendations).

Updated Cottage Food Law

If you operate a cottage food business, you will want to take time to review the updated Cottage Food Documents released by the Maryland Health Department regarding [non-permitted cottage foods](#). There are also several other documents worth reviewing:

Maryland Department of Health

- [Maryland Cottage Food Businesses](#)
- [Guidelines for Cottage Food Businesses-02/2021 \(pdf\)](#)

- [Allowable Foods-2/23/2021 \(pdf\)](#)
- [Foods NOT Allowed-2/23/2021 \(pdf\)](#)
- [Cottage Food Business Checklist for Retail Food Sales-2/2021 \(pdf\)](#)

Click the links to read more, or contact the Extension office for hard copies. If you have specific questions regarding cottage foods, contact Ginger Myers, Extension Marketing Specialist: (410) 432-2767 x338.



Healthy Soils Program

Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#)

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for farmers interested in enrolling their fields in the Farming for Healthy Soils program. Participating farmers will receive free technical assistance and financial incentives to help install the following soil health practices:

- Conservation tillage;
- Multi-species cover crops;
- Extended season cover crops;
- Prescribed grazing; and
- Precision nutrient management.

Cost-share funding of \$10 to \$55 per acre is available to help farmers adopt these key practices. Free technical assistance will be provided by [local soil conservation districts](#) or [University of Maryland Extension](#), and will include field evaluations to measure changes in soil health. Financial assistance will also be offered for soils data sampling.

Maryland's [Farming for Healthy Soils program](#) is

funded by a three-year, \$1 million grant awarded by the [Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund](#). In its second year, the grant promotes the use of on-farm soil health practices that increase carbon sequestration, improve soil productivity, and protect water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund is a partnership between the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program and the Small Watershed Grants Program. Additional support is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Altria Group Restoring America's Resources partnership.

Farmers who want to enroll study fields in this program should contact MDA's Healthy Soils Program Coordinator Kevin Antoszewski at kevin.antoszewski@maryland.gov. For more information about Maryland's Farming for Healthy Soils program, please visit MDA's [website](#).

Head Scab Fungicide Recommendations

Andrew Kness, Agriculture Agent

University of Maryland Extension, Harford County

Wheat will soon be heading and flowering, which means we need to be ready for fungicide applications to help manage head scab/ Fusarium head blight (FHB). The fungus that causes FHB can only infect wheat through an open and viable flower; therefore, the flowers are what we need to protect with a fungicide. Fungicides are protectant products and

approximately **5 days** to apply a fungicide. Some products on the market claim efficacy at earlier applications prior to flowering; however, **these applications are not as effective as an application made at flowering or up to 5 days after flowering**. All products labeled for FHB are rainfast in about 20 minutes.

Ground applications should be made with at least 10 gallons/acre volume and spray nozzles should be **angled forward 30-45°** down from horizontal (30 degrees is best) or dual nozzles angled both forward and backward give better contact with the head and increase fungicide efficacy; flat-fan nozzles angled down at 90° **do not** do a good job of covering the wheat heads, which is where the fungicide needs to be applied.

Proline (Prothioconazole), Prosaro (Prothioconazole + Tebuconazole), and Miravis Ace (Pydiflumetofen + Propiconazole) work very well for managing FHB and reducing DON vomitoxin levels in the grain. Folicur (Tebuconazole) performs fair but not as well as the above listed. Tilt and multiple generics of propiconazole are labeled for FHB but do not provide effective control.



Figure 1. Wheat at the start of flowering (anthesis), Feekes 10.5.1.

are only locally systemic, so applications need to be made to the parts we want to protect (i.e. the flowers). In order to do this, apply a labeled fungicide to flowering wheat, which is Feekes growth stage 10.5.1. This growth stage is easy to determine because you will see the yellow anthers emerging from the middle of the spike (Fig 1). Once the anthers emerge you have

MDA Manure Transport Program

Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#)



The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced the Manure Transport Program will increase the cost-share rate for farmers and manure brokers hauling poultry manure to qualifying farms to \$28 per ton. This new assistance will further support Maryland farmers with making the switch to using poultry manure as a crop fertilizer and help reduce excess phosphorus from entering local waterways.

“The department is excited to offer additional support to farmers who want to make the switch to using poultry litter as an all-natural fertilizer and soil amendment,” said Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. “By moving poultry litter away from farms with high phosphorus levels and applying it to fields in other parts of the state that need it, we can recycle manure, improve our soil health, and help reduce nutrient runoff into the Chesapeake Bay.”

Maryland’s Manure Transport Program plays an integral role in helping the state meet its Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) Phase III goals to restore the health of local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

Reducing phosphorus levels is a major component of the state’s WIP goals. The department’s Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) was adopted in 2015 to help identify areas where there is a high risk for phosphorus runoff and guide the use of effective management practices in soils that are already saturated. The PMT will be fully implemented on July 1, 2021.

To help farmers meet this deadline, the department’s Manure Transport Program continues to connect poultry farms operating under the PMT with nearby farms with low soil phosphorus levels that can safely use the manure as a nutrient source for their crops.

Farmers that would like to expedite manure transportation this spring, should consider the program’s FastTrack grant option, which allows them to haul manure now and apply for cost-share reimbursement later. More details about FastTrack grants can be found on MDA’s [website](#).

To participate in the Manure Transport Program, farmers must be in good standing with the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program and in compliance with Maryland’s nutrient management regulations. Other restrictions may apply. Interested farmers with qualifying fields should visit the department’s [website](#) to learn how to apply.

For additional details, please contact the department’s Manure Transport Program at (410) 841-5864 or visit the program’s [website](#).

Pesticide Disposal Program



If you have outdated or unwanted pesticides, you can contact the Maryland Department of Agriculture for free disposal. To inquire, visit <https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/Pesticide-Disposal-Program.aspx> and complete the form. MDA will then come to your farm to pickup and dispose of the products. Signup ends **September 15, 2021**. For more information, call (410) 841-5888.

Great resources are just a click away!

Andrew Kness

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Extension Agent,
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[Extension.umd.edu/Harford-county](https://extension.umd.edu/Harford-county)



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Dates to remember

- 04 May.** Getting Ready for Pick-Your-Own. 4-5 PM. Online via Zoom. Free. Register [online](#).
- 12 May.** [Women in Ag Webinar: Estate Planning](#). 12 noon. Free. Register [online](#).
- 26 May.** [Women in Ag Webinar: Health Insurance Options for Farmers](#). 12 noon. Free. Register [online](#).

Check out these additional online resources from

	Maryland Grain		Ag Law Initiative
	Agronomy News Blog		Women in Ag
	Nutrient Management		Plant Diagnostic Lab
		Extension Website	

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