

Ag Notes

Harford County Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF
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EXTENSION

University of
Maryland Extension

Harford County
Agricultural Center

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M—F 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

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Hello, Harford County!



I want to congratulate all the 4-H and FFA members, as well as volunteers, who made our 2025 Harford County Farm Fair a success! We were fortunate to have very comfortable weather for the majority of the fair until the heatwave hit towards the end of the week. Indoor exhibits, as well as livestock, were up across the board and our youth did a great job educating the public about all things agriculture.

The week culminated with the annual Harford County Livestock Sale. Harford County businesses and individuals showed up with strong support yet again, with another record-breaking sale topping \$830,000, smashing last year's record of \$600,000. We thank everyone for supporting the 4-H and FFA youth!

Now that County Fair is over, many of us will shift our attention to the Maryland State Fair. The State Fair returns in 2025 with its three-weekend format once again; August 21-24, August 28-September 1, and September 4-7. A full schedule of events can be found at marylandstatefair.com. I look forward to seeing some of you there!

Regarding a couple of office updates: Patricia Hoopes and Lynne DiBastiani both retired on July 31. We wish them both all the best in their well-earned retirements and we will miss them! The University

August 2025

The Extension office will be closed
on September 1 for Labor Day

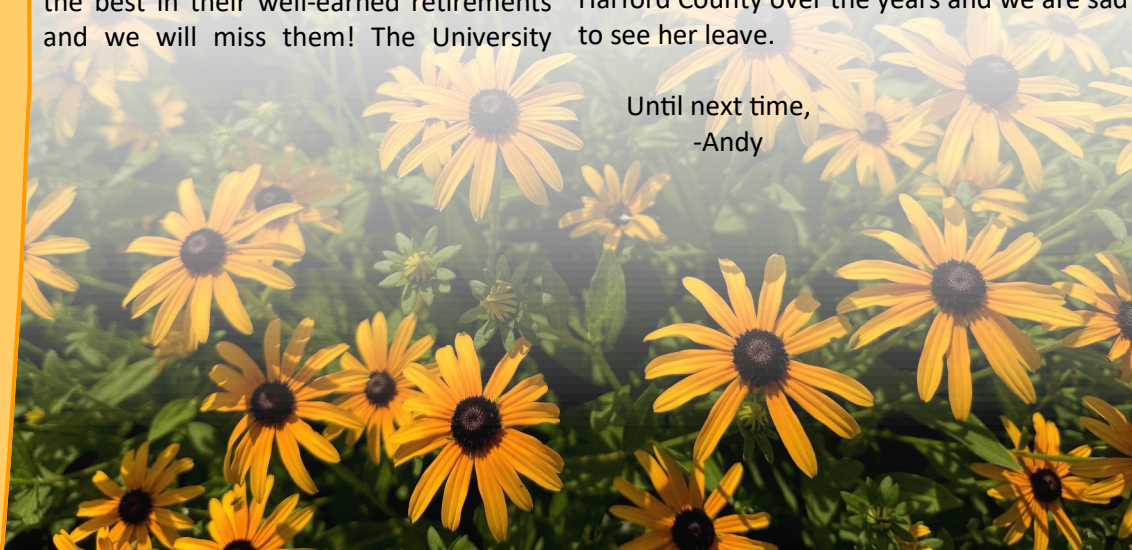
intends to rehire both positions and I have submitted all the paperwork to initiate the rehire of Lynne's position and I anticipate that we will be able to advertise soon. I will share the posting once it is available. Once open, you can find it on our jobs website umd.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/UMCP.

Additional information regarding an interim plan for nutrient management plan writing in Harford County is found inside this newsletter.

We will also be wishing a farewell and best wishes to Charae Harris, our SNAP-Ed educator. SNAP-Ed is a nutrition education program funded entirely through the federal government. The program is implemented by University Extension SNAP-Ed educators from across the US. Funding for the SNAP-Ed program was eliminated in the *Big Beautiful Bill* that was signed into law on July 4. This program will be unsetting at the end of the federal fiscal year on September 30, 2025.

The SNAP-Ed program has made significant and meaningful impacts in youth and senior nutrition education, promoting healthy eating and curbing the detrimental health impacts of a poor diet. I would like to thank Charae for all of her hard work in Harford County over the years and we are sad to see her leave.

Until next time,
-Andy



Harford SCD Supervisor to be Appointed

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The Harford Soil Conservation District (SCD) is seeking individuals with knowledge and sincere interest in proper land use and conservation of natural resources to be considered for appointment to its Board of Supervisors. Supervisors must be residents of Harford County and are expected to attend monthly meetings of the Board. The appointment will be for a term to expire on October 17, 2030 and will fill the expired term of Frank S. Richardson. All appointments to the Board of Supervisors are made by the Maryland State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC). More information (including Facts Supervisors Should Know) and the application form can be downloaded at the website below:

https://mda.maryland.gov/about_mda/Pages/md-soil-conservation-committee.aspx

Completed forms should be emailed to loretta.collins@maryland.gov (preferable) or mailed to: State Soil Conservation Committee, c/o Loretta Collins, Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Room 306, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.



August 27 at 6:00 PM
Interseeding Annuals; Grass Finishing

Twin Cedar Farm - Cordova, MD
<https://go.umd.edu/pasture-august>

September 9 at 5:00 PM
Silvopasture; Building Soil Health

Porch View Farm - Woodbine, MD
<https://go.umd.edu/pasture-september>

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PASTURE WALKS

SUMMER/FALL 2025

In collaboration with NRCS and
Maryland Farm Cooperators;
supported by NE SARE

November 13 at 3:00 PM
Winter Annuals; Multi-Species Grazing

UMD WMREC - Keedysville, MD
<https://go.umd.edu/pasture-november>

October 15 at 4:00 PM
Maximizing Grazing Days

Wilson Dowell Farms - Owings, MD
<https://go.umd.edu/pasture-october>

University of Maryland is an equal opportunity provider

Save the Date August 27: Agronomy Field Day

Farmers, ag professionals, and researchers are invited to attend the Agronomic Crops Field Day on Tuesday, **August 27, 2025, at the Wye Research and Education Center** in Queenstown, Maryland.

Hosted by the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Soybean Board, and Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board, this event will highlight check-off funded agronomic research with direct relevance to crop production in Maryland. Attendees will gain insight into current studies and practices designed to improve yield, sustainability, and profitability in grain and soybean farming.

This event is an excellent opportunity for networking, continuing education (pesticide and nutrient management credits offered), and seeing firsthand the results of ongoing university-led research on Maryland farms.

More details and a full agenda will be released soon. Contact Nicole Fiorellino at nfiorell@umd.edu if you have any questions.

Agronomy

Drones in Agriculture

Learn about the use of drones in agronomic production systems and what you will need to operate legally.

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Dates:

August 21, 2025- Street, MD

August 26, 2025- Waldorf, MD

Topics to Include:

- ✓ Intro to drones in agriculture
- ✓ Equipment overview
- ✓ What you need to operate legally
- ✓ Using drones for spraying and cover crop seeding
- ✓ Drone demonstrations

For more details and registration, visit
go.umd.edu/dronesinag

This program is funded by:



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

NHHS Places 2nd in International Competition

Harford County Public Schools [press release](#)

North Harford High School's Envirothon team achieved an extraordinary second-place finish at the 2025 NCF-Envirothon international competition, held July 20–26, 2025, at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Representing the state of Maryland, the team narrowly missed the international title by just one point.

Competing against more than 50 of the top teams from across the United States, Canada, and China, the students from North Harford High School demonstrated outstanding knowledge in environmental science, collaboration, and real-world problem solving. The team included Frank DeLucia, Jacob Jestel, Jonathan VanBuskirk, Ryan Layman, and Samantha Hawk. They qualified for the international competition after securing their third consecutive Maryland state Envirothon title earlier this year.

Throughout the international event, the team participated in a rigorous series of tests covering five core topics: aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and a current issue topic, Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change. North Harford earned a final score of 619.67, placing just behind Lexington High School from Massachusetts, which finished with 620.67 points.

The top three teams, including North Harford, presented a final oral presentation to a panel of judges. These scores, combined with results from the field tests, determined the final standings.

In addition to earning second place overall and a \$10,000 scholarship award, North Harford was named the Aquatic Ecology station winner and received a \$1,500 scholarship sponsored by Canon USA.

The 2025 current issue challenged students to address forest health and sustainability in Alberta, a region where forests cover approximately 60% of the land. Teams developed science-based solutions that integrated Indigenous knowledge, climate modeling, and ecological research—skills essential to today's environmental science fields.

This international success builds on North Harford's



strong legacy in Envirothon competition. Team member Frank DeLucia has participated in all three of the school's state championship teams, while Jonathan VanBuskirk returned for his second consecutive international competition. Their achievement reflects years of preparation and the program's emphasis on leadership and environmental literacy.

The 2025 season also marked another strong year for Harford County's broader Envirothon program, which included Harford County Public Schools student teams from: Aberdeen High School – Advisor: Heather Runkle-Smith; Bel Air High School – Advisors: Jordan Long & Tyler Hamilton; C. Milton Wright High School – Advisors: Ashley Alexander & Rebecca Streett; Edgewood High School – Advisors: Amy Blizzard & Rebecca Scarborough; Fallston High School – Advisor: Craig McLeod; Harford Technical High School – Advisor: Helen Cullinan; Patterson Mill High School – Advisor: Jennifer Walker; North Harford High School – Advisor: Laura O'Leary

This success is supported by more than 30 years of partnership with the Harford Soil Conservation District, which continues to provide guidance and opportunities for students across the county. The Envirothon program prepares students for future careers in environmental science, agriculture, and sustainability, while inspiring a deeper understanding of the natural world.

North Harford's international achievement highlights the power of student dedication, educator mentorship, and community support in creating meaningful educational experiences and global impact.

Assessing Pastures for Fall Renovation

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

With the current warm temperatures it may feel like fall is still far away, but the end of summer will be here before we know it and now is the time to be thinking ahead about plans for pasture renovation this fall. Despite our best managerial efforts, many of our hay or pasture stands will eventually require some form of renovation. Whether we have simply let our fertility slip, lapsed a little in our harvest management, allowed some fields to become overgrazed, or weeds have taken over and outcompeted the desirable forages, an unproductive pasture is often the result. Couple this with the severe drought and volatile weather conditions that Mother Nature has all too often thrown our way in recent years and we may find ourselves scratching our heads and wondering how we got here and what to do about it.

The first step is to recognize that poor forage stands are often a symptom of an underlying cause. More often than not the major causes of poor pasture productivity include a lack of adequate fertilization and/or poor grazing or harvest management. If this is the case, keep in mind that if a stand is thin as a result of poor soil fertility or overgrazing, the problem will not correct itself just because you've added more seed. To achieve real success, these underlying issues will need to be corrected. If environmental conditions such as flooding or drought are at fault, we can work to overcome those by selecting species or varieties that will be more resilient to those conditions moving forward.

It is also important to recognize that renovation does not always require completely starting over with a full reseeding. Renovation can also occur in the form of improvements in grazing or harvest management, better fertilization and weed control, the addition of legumes into grass pastures, or overseeding thinner areas.

When deciding whether or not renovation is needed, take some time to assess the current condition of your pastures. Are they performing as well as you would like? Has there been excess damage from environmental conditions? How well have you been managing the stand? Are there a lot of undesirable species or weeds present? In addition to asking yourself these questions, an objective assessment of the pasture stand can be helpful. One such assessment is the step-point method, which involves walking through each pasture in a random pattern and noting the forage species (or lack thereof) at various locations throughout the pasture (specific steps for this are outlined below). Recording these observations allows you to objectively calculate the vegetative cover, plant diversity, and percent desirable forages for a given field. In addition, take note of other key indicators such as forage diversity, plant vigor, presence of insect or disease damage, signs of erosion, or other observations as you walk.

Once you determine the amount of pasture vegetative cover and presence/absence of desirable species, you can use that information to make management decisions. If damage is light and there is a high proportion of desirable species and a low proportion of bare ground or undesirable weeds, then some rest, fertility, and weed control might be all you really need. If the damage is more moderate, perhaps frost seeding in some clovers or overseeding the worst areas would also help. If you have a low proportion of desirable species and a higher proportion of bare ground or undesirable weeds, you may want to consider terminating the existing stand and reestablishing the field with a suitable forage species based on your farm, your system, and your needs.

The Step-Point Method for Pasture Vegetative Cover Assessment

Step 1. Bring along a notebook and something to write with.

Step 2. Based on the major species present in your pasture, determine which forage species to include as categories. As an example, you could include tall fescue, orchardgrass, Kentucky bluegrass, white clover, red clover, other legume, other grass, undesirable species (weeds), and bare ground as potential categories. If you are not sure how to identify specific species, invite someone who can to join you or you can also be less specific and simply use grass, legume, weed, or bare soil as categories.

Step 3. Denote or mark a specific spot on the tip or edge of a shoe or boot.

Step 4. Walk through the pasture in a random zig-zag pattern stretching from one end of the field to the other. Avoid walking near gates, waterers, laneways, or other heavily used areas. Every 10 to 30 steps (depending on pasture size), stop and take note of what is directly under the designated spot on your shoe. The spot will fall directly on top of a specific plant species, make a mark for or write down which forage species (or bare ground) is present based on your pre-determined categories.

Step 5. After recording 50-100 stops, add up the number of marks for each forage species or category to get the total number for each and calculate the percentage of each species or category. For example, if you recorded 50 stops and 34 of them were a grass species, then the percentage of grass in that pasture is $34 \times 2 = 68\%$.

Step 6. Repeat the above steps for each pasture.

Percent Vegetative Cover Management Recommendations

Less than 50%; few desirable. Eliminate existing forage and reestablish pasture with desirable grass or grass/legume species.

50 to 70%; some desirable. Renovate pasture through weed control, reseeding, and improved pasture management practices.

More than 70%; mostly desirable. Maintain current level of pasture management practices; make minor improvements as needed.

If you do decide to fully renovate, you have several options. The renovation process is a chance to upgrade your forage system and to capitalize on new and improved forage genetics. You may decide to do a rotation or two with an annual forage as a smother crop to help suppress weed populations, prevent soil erosion, build soil fertility, mitigate soil compaction, and provide a high quality forage source during the renovation process prior to planting the field back into a perennial stand. Either way, there are several steps you should follow to make sure the reseeding process goes smoothly, so start thinking ahead on some of the necessary steps moving forward. Think about forage options that will work for you and look for good quality seed to purchase. If you don't have a recent soil test, take some soil samples and begin correcting any soil pH or fertility deficiencies. If weeds are a problem, be sure to allow adequate time to achieve good weed control and still be able to plant in a timely manner. Recognize that in some situations a single herbicide application may not always be enough, and be mindful of any herbicide carryover that might affect seeding.

No matter how you decide to proceed, now is the time to be thinking ahead and making plans for this fall. Stay tuned next month for an overview of the key steps for optimum forage establishment and some common establishment mistakes to avoid.

Harford Nutrient Management Update

*Andrew Kness, Senior Agriculture Agent
University of Maryland Extension, Harford County*

As many of you know, our long-time nutrient management plan writer, Patricia Hoopes, retired on July 31. The University intends to rehire her position, but I would not expect someone in the position for several months (remember that our mascot is a turtle and we move at such pace when hiring).

In the meantime, our neighboring plan writer in Cecil and Kent County, Sam Covington, will be the main point of contact for Harford County farmers seeking Nutrient Management Plans. Sam's email is scoving2@umd.edu. His office number in Kent County is (301) 226-7461 (Monday and Tuesday) and Cecil is (410) 996-8138 (Wednesday and Thursday); Sam teleworks on Fridays.

Do not hesitate to reach out to Sam for your nutrient

management plan needs. He has access to all of Tricia's files, so the transition in coverage should be relatively smooth. However, since Sam is also writing plans for two additional counties, he will get busy fast, especially as the season winds down and we get into the winter months. Therefore, I stress to you that you should get in contact with Sam sooner rather than later and get all your information to him in a timely manner so that you can have a plan in-hand for the 2026 growing season. I know in the past many of you have waited until January or February (or even April) to get all your information to Tricia for your plan—if you wait that long this time you may not get a plan in time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me.



Farmers on the Rise

Horizon Farm Credit press release



**FARMERS
ON THE RISE** ♦

This program awards \$10,000 to beginning farmers based on their efforts in agriculture, financial character, leadership and community involvement, and environmental stewardship.

Eligible applicants must be at least 18 years of age or older, must be a beginning farmer with at least three years, but no more than 10 years of farming experience, and reside in Horizon Farm Credit's [territory](#). Those meeting program requirements are encouraged to apply at horizonfc.com/rise. Applications will be accepted August 5 through September 2 at 4 p.m. There is no cost to apply.

If you have any questions about the Farmers on the Rise program, please contact learning@horizonfc.com.

2025 UMD Small Grain Trials

Preliminary yield results have been posted for the 2025 University of Maryland Small Grain Trials. The summary report includes data for several commercial and experimental varieties. The report will be finalized once the DON vomitoxin data is received from the lab. The final report will be posted on the UMD Crops page at <https://psla.umd.edu/extension/md-crops/> or request a hard copy from the Extension office.

[Download the Report Here](#)

Box Tree Moth Detected in Maryland

Paula Shrewsbury, Professor and Extension Specialist, Ornamental and Turf IPM
University of Maryland, College Park

Box tree moth (BTM), *Cydalima perspectalis* was detected in Washington County, MD in late July. An established population of box tree moth was found in Fort Frederick State Park causing damage to boxwood. This was the first detection in MD. Box tree moth is a federally regulated insect and causes significant damage to boxwood (*Buxus* spp.). Please read the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) [press release](#) on BTM. Also review the BTM article that was in the [July 18th IPM Alert](#) that contains information on BTM. If boxwood plants are part of your life, you should be closely monitoring them for BTM and its damage.

If you see BTM and/or BTM damage to boxwoods please let me know (pshrewsbury@umd.edu and click@umd.edu). Be sure to include the date found, location, and pictures. MDA should be contacted at



Adult box tree moth and caterpillar

ppwm.MDA@MD.gov with the same information and pictures.

Additional pictures and information can be found at <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/box-tree-moth/>.

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>

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If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any event or activity, please contact the University of Maryland Extension office at least two weeks prior to the event.

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Dates to remember

- 20 Aug.** Webinar: Common Issues with Ponds and Management Tips. 12 Noon. Fee. Register [online](#) or contact Andy Lazur at lazur@umd.edu.
- 21 Aug.** Agronomic Drone School. 9 AM—1:30 PM. Harford County Extension office. Free. Register [online](#) or call (410) 638-3255.
- 21 Aug.** Ag IPM Webinar Series: Corn Earworm. 12 noon. Free. Register [online](#) or contact Emily Zobel at ezobel@umd.edu.
- 21-24 Aug, 28 Aug-1 Sept, 4-7 Sept.** Maryland State Fair.
- 27 Aug.** Agronomy Field Day. Wye Research & Education Center, Queenstown, MD. Details to come.
- 27 Aug.** The Mill Crop Showcase. Clear Meadow Farm, White Hall, MD.

August 2025