Greetings!

My name is Sherry Frick and it is my pleasure to introduce myself to you as the Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator for Allegany County and your new Master Gardener Coordinator. Previously, I was the Garrett County Master Gardener Coordinator from 2007 to 2009. I then left UME to work at Five Aces Breeding as an assistant plant breeder and greenhouse and nursery manager. In addition, I served as the Market Coordinator for Garrett Growers, a farmer’s co-op, in 2011 and 2012.

As your new AGNR educator and Master Gardener coordinator, I am excited to start planning new programming, volunteer opportunities for Master Gardeners, and continuing education workshops. I am truly looking forward to getting to know each of you in our local agricultural community. Most of my agricultural experience is in growing small fruits and vegetables in plasticulture, nursery and greenhouse management, integrated pest management, as well as sales and marketing of local produce. If there is anything that I can do for you, please feel free to stop by the office for a visit or give me a call at 301-724-3320.

Sincerely,

Sherry L Frick

The University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources programs are open to all and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, or national origin, marital status, genetic information, or political affiliation, or gender identity and expression.
100th Anniversary Celebration of University of Maryland Extension
October 21, 2014, 5:00 to 8:00 pm
Allegany County Fairgrounds, Cumberland, MD

Timely tips for fall lawn and garden care, 6:30 to 7:00 pm—Join us for a review of timely fall lawn and garden care activities. We will discuss tasks related to priming your lawn and gardens for a productive growing season next spring as well as methods to protect your trees and ornamental shrubs from winter’s harsh effects.

Maryland fertilizer law, 7:15 to 7:45 pm—Maryland’s Lawn Fertilizer Law which prohibits lawn fertilizer products from containing phosphorus went into effect October 1, 2013. Helena Lewis, Nutrient Management Advisor, will give an overview of this law and homeowner requirements.

Nutrition and youth programs will also be available.
Call 301-724-3320 to register for any or all of these free educational programs.

Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification

December 8—Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training at the Grantsville Library. Contact the UME-Garrett County at 301-334-6960 for more information

December 9—Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training at the Allegany County Fairgrounds, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Contact the UME-Allegany County at 301-724-3320 for more information and to register.

December 11—Training for Private Pesticide Applicator Examination, 1 to 3:00 pm, UME-Washington County. Call 301-791-1304 for more information.

December 18—Private Pesticide Applicator Examination, Washington County UME. Call 301-791-1304 for more information.

Write Your Own Nutrient Management Plan
February 10 & 23, 2015
University of Maryland Extension, Washington County, Boonsboro, MD

The Farmer Training and Certification course provides an opportunity for farmers to learn how to write nutrient management plans for their own operations. You will receive a comprehensive training binder and voucher training credits. Producers who pass the exam will be certified by MDA to write their own nutrient management plans.

Registration is required and accepted on a first-come basis. Paid registrations must be received 10 days before the first class. For a registration form visit: http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/counties/FTC_Ancmt_winter_2014-2015.pdf
Natural Resources and Nutrient Management Corner

From Allegany County Extension Nutrient Advisor, Helena D. Lewis:

It is never too early to start thinking about your 2015 Nutrient Management Plan. Many of you have probably already received a postcard stating that you need new samples, as they are only good for three years. Fall is a great time to collect your new soil samples for the upcoming year. It should be easier to take soil samples within the next month or two (if we get some rain!) instead of waiting until March or April when the ground may be either frozen or too wet. We have soil bags and probes here at the Extension office if needed. If you need to borrow a probe, there is a $10.00 deposit which will be returned to you once you bring the probe back. If you would like, while you are here, we can update the information for your 2015 nutrient management plan or you can wait until next year, whatever you prefer. For those of you who spread manure, January and February are the best times to bring me a sample. Call the office and speak to Sherry Frick, our Ag educator, or visit www.extension.umd.edu/anmp for dates on upcoming winter webinars that will count towards voucher credits. In the meantime, have a happy Fall!

From the Allegany County USDA NRCS office and Maryland Department of Agriculture:

The USDA NRCS office and Maryland Department of Agriculture can take applications for agricultural cost share requests at any time. Fall is a great time to stop in and see what opportunities are available. Through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share (MACS) program, they can help you make water quality improvements on your farm. For a quick list of the types of Best Management Practices they offer, check out the following website: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/md/programs and click on the EQIP link. You can also stop by the USDA NRCS and MDA office located on Naves Cross Road.

From the Agricultural Nutrient Management Program, University of Maryland Extension:

Want to learn more about nutrient management in Maryland? Visit our website at www.extension.umd.edu/anmp. On this website you will find information on upcoming events, nutrient management regulations, farmer training and certification opportunities, plan writing tools, resources, available publications and software, webinars for voucher credits and much more!

Have you heard about Maryland’s Lawn Fertilizer Law?

Maryland’s Lawn Fertilizer Law which prohibits lawn fertilizer products from containing phosphorus went into effect October 1, 2013. Lawn fertilizer accounts for approximately 44% of the fertilizer sold in Maryland. All lawn fertilizer products are now labeled to ensure that no more than 0.9 pound of total nitrogen is applied per 1,000 square feet, per application. At least 20% of the nitrogen must be slow release to help minimize losses to the environment. The law also prohibits the application of fertilizer to sidewalks, driveways or other impervious surfaces and therefore fertilizers must be cleaned up or swept off of these surfaces into the lawn and may not be used as a de-icing agent. Fertilizers also may not be applied within 15 feet of waterways. This setback is reduced to 10 feet if a drop spreader, rotary spreader with deflector or targeted spray liquid is used to apply the fertilizer. Fertilizers also may not be applied between November 15 and March 1 (unless you are a lawn care professional). More information on the law can be found here: http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Documents/fertilizerwebpage.pdf
USDA Announces New Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

As part of a measure to support next generation farmers and ranchers, USDA has created a new website, www.usda.gov/newfarmers, that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can get information on various USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed and improve their financial security.

According to U.S. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden, “New and beginning farmers are the future of American agriculture. The average age of an American farmer is 58 and rising, so we must help new farmers get started if America is going to continue feeding the world and maintain a strong agriculture economy. The new policies [announced today] will help give beginning farmers the financial security they need to succeed. Our new online tool will provide one-stop shopping for beginning farmers to learn more about accessing USDA services that can help their operations thrive.”

USDA’s New Farmers website has information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.

Other 2014 Farm Bill and USDA policies in support of new farmers and ranchers include:

Lending opportunities are expanded for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Better crop insurance coverage for beginning farmers and ranchers (those who have farmed less than five years).

The changes include: exempting beginning farmers from administrative fees associated with catastrophic policies; accessing premium assistance for insurance programs; allowing beginning farmers to use production history of entities they were working for or with as part of their loan assessment in certain circumstances; and adjusting requirement for yield failure in beginning farmer operations.

The 2014 Farm Bill also strengthens the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for new producers by reducing the premium on buy-up level coverage by 50% for new farmers and waiving their application fee.

Payment Reductions are eliminated under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans. Previously, farmers and ranchers grazing on CRP land were subject to a reduction in CRP payments of up to 25%. Waiving these reductions for new and beginning farmers will provide extra financial support during times of emergency like drought and other natural disasters.

Payment rates are increased to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP) (PDF, 288KB). Under this provision, beginning ranchers and farmers can claim up to 90% of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a 50% increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

Information for this article was gathered from USDA New Release No. 0131.14 (June 23, 2014) and the USDA web page:
Kudzu Bug, a Potential Soybean Pest, Survives the Harsh Winter
By Jessica Grant, Alan Leslie, and Dr. Bill Lamp, Department of Entomology, University of Maryland

The kudzu bug (*Megacopta cribraria*) is a soybean pest that was introduced to the U.S. from Asia in 2009, and has rapidly spread across southeastern states. The bug was first found in Maryland in 2013. The harsh winter in 2014 largely stopped the spread of the bug everywhere, but future spread of the insect is uncertain. In the summer of 2013, kudzu bugs were detected in eight counties in Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore, as well as the District of Columbia. These populations have largely persisted into this summer, although the population sizes this year are relatively small. Soybean producers should still be concerned that this invasive species could become an economic pest, and thus we will continue to monitor the future growth and spread of the kudzu bug in Maryland.

The Asian kudzu bug is named after the Asian kudzu vine (*Pueraria montana*), but the bug feeds on a variety of plants, especially soybeans. Kudzu bugs feed as both nymphs and adults by piercing and sucking on stem and leaf tissue of plants with their pointed mouthparts. This differs from the more familiar soybean pest, the brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*), which feeds on developing soybean pods. Feeding injury from kudzu bugs causes reduced photosynthesis and stunted growth. Kudzu bugs have become a major soybean pest in the southern U.S., and it has the potential to become a major pest in Maryland as well.

**Identification**
Kudzu bug adults are brown to greenish brown, measure between 1/8th and 1/4th inch in length and are rounded making them easily mistaken for beetles. The adults are further characterized by a hard plate that completely covers the wings on the abdomen and is squared off at the end. Eggs are laid in two parallel rows usually on the underside of a leaf. Nymphs hatch from eggs and develop through five stages before becoming adults. Young nymphs often resemble the kudzu stem with a green and fuzzy appearance. Similar to stink bugs such as the brown marmorated stink bug, kudzu bugs release a chemical that is very pungent when disturbed.

**Current Research**
Given that the kudzu bug is a significant agricultural pest in the southeastern U.S., much of what we know about the insect is based on research from those states (i.e., Georgia and South Carolina). Maryland’s agriculture and climate need to be assessed to better understand how the kudzu bug responds at the northern edge of its distribution. Therefore, with funding from the Maryland Soybean Board, we sampled throughout the summer to determine how many generations the kudzu bug has in Maryland and when adults, nymphs, and eggs are present. We expected to find that adults emerge from overwintering sites in late May to early June. This overwintering generation invades kudzu vines where they lay eggs for a first generation. The adults emerge in late July to August. These adults will most likely produce offspring that overwinter as adults. Both generations of adults may disperse to soybeans. The timing of kudzu bug movement into soybeans contrasts with that of the brown marmorated stink bug, which invades crops in the late summer to feed on seedpods. Through our sampling this year, we found that kudzu bug populations are reduced from those of the previous year. Such low numbers at our sample sites have made it difficult to assess life history characteristics in Maryland. We will continue to monitor at our sites through the fall until the kudzu vines senesce and die back. In addition, given the low numbers found this summer, we have not yet seen the bug produce high enough numbers to become a pest to Maryland soybeans. Future studies will include work on the impact of kudzu bug injury on soybean crops.

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Management and Resources
Kudzu bug populations can be difficult to suppress because of their highly mobile nature, even though most insecticides are effective. Finding an effective pest management system for Maryland soybeans still needs further research. Many educational resources are available to the agricultural community and general public for kudzu bugs. For general information and distribution across the southeast United States visit “The Megacopta Working Group” at www.kudzubug.org. For the status of the kudzu bug in Maryland, we post updates of our findings at http://mdkudzubug.org. A Maryland fact sheet on the bug is available from our website, and we provide an opportunity for residents to report their discovery of kudzu bugs. Reporting possible locations of kudzu bugs will help inform us of the potential spread of the bugs.

Future of Kudzu Bug in Maryland
Although the kudzu bug numbers were low this summer, the bugs were able to survive the harsh winter. Given their persistence, we cannot rule out kudzu bugs as a potential threat to soybean producers in Maryland. The exact seasonal timing and generations of the bugs is still unknown for Maryland; however, we do still expect that they first emerge in late May to early June with two generations during the summer. From their first emergence through the fall they have potential to stunt soybean growth by feeding on the stem and leaf tissue with their piercing/sucking mouthparts. Based on current evidence, the potential of the invasive kudzu bug as a soybean pest in Maryland remains unclear.

Adult Kudzu Bug
Local Farmer Focus: Organarchy
By Sherry Frick

Nestled among rolling hills along the southern border of Allegany County near Oldtown, lies a young farm budding with innovation and future promise, known as Organarchy. Owner, Solomon Rose, a native Allegany County resident and alternative ag entrepreneur, operates the first USDA Certified Organic hops farm in Maryland. This certified organic, 450 acre farm, produces and retails twelve varieties of hops, and seasonal vegetables, in addition to raising cattle, hens and hogs. Organarchy’s hops are available to home brewers and commercial breweries alike. They also offer individual hop yard consultation, management, and design. Organarchy is proud to call the hop yards at Flying Dog Brewery and at Key’s Stadium in Fredrick, MD their own. Organarchy’s presence on social media and the web (organarchy.co) is part of their marketing strategy to raise awareness about their farm, philosophy, products for sale, local retailers and sponsored events.

The average age of farmers in our country is 58 and rising. It is imperative for the agricultural community to get the word out about exciting, new and innovative opportunities in agriculture to help attract the next generation of farmers who will keep America’s agricultural industry strong and competitive for the future. Organarchy strives to develop creative farming solutions that exceed organic farming standards and minimize negative ecosystem impacts while delivering a superior product. This philosophy speaks to our nation’s growing concerns about food security and environmental stewardship. After visiting Organarchy, I was quite impressed with their entrepreneurial spirit, organic innovations, determination, and apparent success. I felt that Solomon had a great story that needed to be told. Solomon, who is quite busy with his own farm operation in addition to providing consultations to other farmers seeking his hops growing expertise, graciously granted me an interview. I’d like to let you in on our conversation. I think you will find it inspiring and insightful.

How did your idea to start an organically certified hops farm originate? Or to put it another way, why did you choose to become an organic producer and to focus on hops specifically?

I have long been a fan of craft beer and the localism it supports. So when the opportunity arose to start up a farm I knew that it needed to be a product I was passionate about. My vision for Organarchy came from seeing Hop Farms in Colorado and some on the East Coast springing up and the quality a locally sourced beer product can bring to the table. Hops were in! Now I had a harder challenge, standing out from the pack, this is where the idea to become the first USDA Certified hop farm in Maryland came into play.

What was the process that you went through from the initial idea to its implementation and current success? I’m sure there was a lot of planning and research that went into getting your business idea off the ground and running.

Our process began with a small test plot of about 3/4 of an acre that we planted in the fall of 2011. From here we began to see that our soil and climate really got along with these plants. Now it was time to boost the scale of the farm. Expansion is not cheap for hops because of the expansive trellis set-up as well as irrigation lines, etc. Because we couldn’t afford extra help, my business partner, Dylan, and I had to make it work on our own. The idea came to life through hard work and a will to see it through that neither one of us gave up on.

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You are currently running a successful and profitable alternative agriculture business. What has been the key to your success?

A few things pushed us along to get where we are today. I think the most important was finding someone with a separate skill set than mine to partner up with. Dylan and I are two different people with different backgrounds and skill sets and this enables us to complete so much more in the time we have. I cannot express the advantages of having a wide variety of backgrounds when going into any business scenario. From the people we bring in as interns, to the ones we employ, everyone brings a separate skill set and background. The real key is tapping into that and finding a way to incorporate it into your business so everyone can feel the satisfaction of doing something for the company rather than just showing up to work every day.

What was your greatest challenge in trying to get your business started?

Our greatest obstacle has been making it work during the first years of farming hops. While investing in trellis, equipment, and rootstock, you also are waiting for the plants to mature. So for your first few harvests, numbers are low as the perennial plants begin to take root and you may not see full production for 3-4 years. This lack of farm income these first few years can be devastating if you are not properly prepared for it.

What challenges do you anticipate for the future of your business and how do you plan to meet them?

Quality control is the main challenge that we welcome with open arms. At Organarchy we want to be the best organic hop producers on the East Coast, period. Staying ahead of the game with our growing techniques as well as our processing and handling will constantly change and need to be pushed to new levels. Craft beer is about good American competition, whether it’s a one off home brew or a mass produced widely distributed beer, brewers far and wide buy for quality, not for a name.

What has been your greatest reward in this journey?

Our biggest reward has been the support of the community around us. From the people of Allegany County seeing value in a company that is the first of its kind in this area, to the brew community, we have been welcomed with open arms. Getting a handshake from anyone that appreciates and realizes our dream is far bigger than any check you could sign over to me.

Do you have any advice to give to people who are considering venturing into an alternative agriculture business?

Believe in what you do, not just for recognition or because it’s the “in” thing at that time or place. I believe that there is still money to be made on small farms in this country. Finding that niche for your product can be difficult and making it work out monetarily can be an even bigger challenge. Nevertheless, with so many great resources we have at our fingertips these days, a thirst for knowledge will overcome any obstacle in your way.

Is there anything else that you would like people to know about yourself, your staff, or your business?

My staff, and especially my business partner Dylan, are my family. We all gather at night and eat together and there is no one else I would rather have close to me than like-minded people who are thirsty for the same goals. Having all of these great people around us has also opened up our fields in so many more avenues like organic veggie production, which will be in full swing this spring!

Thanks for your heartfelt answers and words of wisdom, Solomon. Cheers!
Maryland Agriculture at a Glance
Statistics below from USDA Agricultural Census 2012 & MDA

- Number of Farms in Maryland — 12,256
- Average Farm Size — 166 acres
- Land in farms — 2,030,745 acres
- Number of Organic Farms — 101
- Average age of a Maryland farmer — 59 years old
- Full time farmers (principal operators) — 5,996
- Number of Organic Acres Certified by MDA — 8,389
- Market Value of Ag Products — $2.27 billion

Maryland’s Top Commodity Sectors
Statistics below from USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service

- Poultry (Broilers) – Maryland is the 8th largest state in the nation in broiler and meat-type chicken production, raising 305 million broilers in 2013. Broilers accounted for $805.6 million or 35% of total farm cash receipts.
- Greenhouse and Nursery – The Horticultural sector accounted for $314 million or 13% of the total farm cash receipts in 2012. According to the 2007 MD Horticulture Survey, there were 20,879 acres dedicated to nursery production, with most acreage in the Central and Eastern Shore regions.
- Corn – Corn accounted for $287 million or 12% of total farm cash receipts in 2012. Corn is planted on about 500,000 acres each year, and most of it is harvested for grain and used as chicken feed on the Eastern Shore.
- Milk and Dairy – The dairy sector accounted for $188 million or 8% of total farm cash receipts in 2012. There were 51,000 dairy cows in Maryland that produced an average of 19,200 pounds of milk. Frederick, Washington, and Carol counties produce most of the state’s milk.

Farmers & Farmers Market Nutrition Program
Statistics below from MDA AgBrief
Maryland Agriculture-A Quick Look at Maryland Agriculture, July 2014.

Maryland has at least one farmers market in every county and Baltimore City, and some 145 markets across the state. About 340 farmers participate in USDA’s Farmers Market Nutrition Program which provides fresh fruit and vegetables for at-risk populations. Last year this program benefited 28,475 women, infants, and children and 8,545 seniors.

Turf Grass, Home Owners and Fertilizer
Statistics below from MDA AgBrief
Maryland Agriculture-A Quick Look at Maryland Agriculture, July 2014

Maryland has about 1.1 million acres of turf grass, most of it in single family residences. That represents 18% of the state’s total land area and more than any single agricultural crop. Lawn fertilizer accounts for 44% of all fertilizer sold in Maryland.
On October 21 from 5 to 8:00 p.m. at the Allegany County Fairgrounds, University of Maryland Extension will hold a showcase to celebrate the 100th Anniversary. There will be free educational programs, activity stations, historical displays, and more.

For more information, call 301-724-3320 or visit: http://extension.umd.edu/allegany-county