January:

- **15**—Tri State Hay & Pasture Conference, Garrett College, McHenry, MD, Continuing Education Building
- **15 to 17**—Future Harvest CASA Annual Conference Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, College Park, Maryland. Information: [www.futureharvestcasa.org/conference](http://www.futureharvestcasa.org/conference)
- **16 to 18**—2015 World Horse Expo & 4-H Horse Art Contest, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium, MD
- **20**—Training for private pesticide applicator examination, UME-Garrett County, 7pm to 9pm.

February:

- **23 to 24**—Appalachia Grows: Beginning & Small Farms Conference for Ag-Entrepreneurs January 23 & 24, 2015 Frostburg State University, Lane Center Frostburg, MD

Topics will be Cool Season Grasses, Nutrient Needs & Deficiencies of Forage Crops, Fertilizing Hay & Pastures, Making Fence & Fencing Equipment Work, New Development in Alfalfa Crops. Certified Crop Advisor and Nutrient Management certification credits will be offered for MD, PA and WV. Contact the UME Garrett County Office at 301-334-6960 to pre-register by January 9. For an agenda, visit: [http://extension.umd.edu/allegany-county/agriculture](http://extension.umd.edu/allegany-county/agriculture)

Friday afternoon and evening sessions will focus on new and beginning farmer success. Saturday’s sessions will feature topics for all types of agricultural enterprises. Participants may choose classes from the following tracks: livestock, natural resources, farm management, small fruits and vegetable production, marketing, and high tunnels. Some classes offered include: Small Ruminant Production 101, The Do’s and Don’ts of Selling Meat, Small Scale Livestock Production: Which Business Model is for You?, Shiitake Mushroom Production, Native Tree Production, Day Neutral Strawberries and Production in Low Tunnels, just to name a few.

Registration information will be coming soon. Call the UME-Allegany office at 301-724-3320 for more information or visit: [http://www.appgrows.com/](http://www.appgrows.com/)
UPCOMING EVENTS

Introduction to Beekeeping (C/S205)
March 16, 2015 – April 20, 2015
 Allegany College, Cumberland, MD

Join us for an educational, informative and exciting course that explores the exciting world of beekeeping. The class will focus on the history and types of Honey Bees, colony structure, bee biology and development, and keeping a healthy hive. Participants will also learn about proper protective gear, tools of the trade and hive location. As the class progresses, other discussion topics will include trapping methods, packages, swarms, establishing colonies, invasive extractions, transporting hives and avoiding threats from humans and animals. A field trip to an active beeyard will be part of the class. The required text book for this course is "Beekeeping Basics" by Penn State Press and is included in the course cost. Class time is Mondays, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. For more information, contact Allegany College of Maryland Continuing Education at 301-784-5338.

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

2015 Webinar Series – Pasture Management for Small Ruminant Producers

A five-part webinar series will be held on consecutive Wednesday evenings in February and March 2015. All webinars will start at 7:00 p.m. EST and last for one hour. Each webinar will be followed by a question-and-answer period. The instructors will be Jeff Semler and Susan Schoenian. A webinar is a seminar or short course conducted over the internet. Interaction is via a chat box. All webinars will be conducted via Adobe Connect. Anyone (anywhere) with an Internet connection may participate. A high speed connection is recommended. The webinars are open to the first 100 people who log in to https://connect-test.moo.umd.edu/sschoen/. Please visit the following web page for more information: http://www.sheepandgoat.com/programs/2015webinars.html.

2015 World Horse Expo & 4-H Horse Art Contest
January 16-18, 2015

The ninth annual Maryland 4-H Horse Art Contest will take place this year during The Maryland Horse World Expo to be held at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium, MD. Entry forms are available at: http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_docs/Horse%20World%20Expo%204-H%20Art%20Contest%20Entry%20Form%202015.pdf

Please contact Brittany Hoffman at bhoffma2@umd.edu or 301-314-7826 if you have any questions.
There is an app for just about anything, even on the farm! I recently went to the 2014 Crop Management School in Ocean City and attended a class entitled, “Using Apps on your Smart Phone or Tablet in the office and in the Field,” by Dr. Ignacio Ciampitti, associate professor of agronomy at Kansas State University. Ciampitti noted that universities, commercial companies and organizations are making apps for farmers to use that cover a range of topics from weed identification to estimating corn yields. I have downloaded a few of these on my android phone and find them helpful and even fun (yes, I am a science geek). And even better, they are free! I encourage you to check them out. Make sure you are choosing the app that is compatible with your device (either apple or android) when you try to download them.

Here’s an abbreviated list of useful apps that Ciampitti mentioned in his class. I found a nice description of each in The Hutchinson News:

- **ID Weeds** – The University of Missouri is a good one for weed ID purposes. This app allows farmers to search weeds by their common or Latin name, view a list of weeds, and identify weeds based upon a number of different characteristics. The app provides details along with photographs.

- **Weedalert.com** – This app features detailed color photos of more than 100 weeds, allowing users to search for and identify weeds by name, appearance or region. There is detailed information about each weed, including how to control it and the recommended control products.

- **Aphid Speed Scout** – Speed scouting is a different way to determine if soybean aphids have reached the 250 aphids per plant threshold, according to the University of Nebraska, which developed the app. It relies on the number of infested plants and recommends treatment options.

- **Soy Diseases App** – This app from South Dakota University provides easy to use and handy diagnostic information for several problematic soybean diseases.

- **Crop Diseases App** – This provides information for wheat, barley, oats, triticale and canola, plus several other crops.

- **Extreme Beans** – This University of Minnesota developed this app to calculate the number of soybeans to plant per acre in order to generate the highest yield.

- **Corn Advisor** – From the University of Arkansas, this app has different features such as calculating lime and nutrient rates and identifying nutrient deficiencies, diseases, and insects.

- **Pioneer Plantability** – This app works as a planter settings calculator to give farmers precise planter settings for corn and sunflower seeds of all sizes and shapes.

- **Ag PhD Planting Population** – the calculator has two functions. First, during planting season the app can determine optimum in-row spacing between seeds based on row width and the desired planting population per acre. Second, after crop emergence, it allows farmers to determine a stand count by helping them count the number of plants that have emerged in a specific row length.

- **ConnectedFarm Scout App** – This app is useful for preparing maps, scouting and geopositioning points within your field.

- **eCropScout** – This easy to use app allows farmers and agricultural professionals to save all their information about field scouting, insect and disease scouting, chemical application, fertilizer/manure applications, planting data and harvesting data.

- **YieldCheck** – This provides a simple way to calculate, store, and map corn yield estimates. Users can organize estimates based on farm and field. Also, growers can use the field report feature to see how much of a difference additional ears of corn per acre can mean to their operation.
A Note from Helena D. Lewis, Nutrient Manager

With the holidays behind us and the weather so cold outside, now is a great time to update your 2015 Nutrient Management Plan. Before you know it, spring will be upon us and you will be busy out in your fields. If you have any manure collected, bring it in so I have plenty of time to write your plan in time for you to spread this spring. Call 301-724-3320 to make an appointment. I look forward to seeing you! The office will closed on December 24, 2014 and reopen on January 5, 2015.

Updates from the Allegany Soil Conservation District (ASCD)

Jessica Aronhalt

The ASCD would like to welcome Tucker Mullan, program technician for the Farm Service Agency. Tucker has replaced Claire DeFusco upon her retirement, and is now in the office Monday through Thursday 8:00am. – 4:30pm. Tucker is happy to assist you with your FSA needs, feel free to stop in introduce yourself and say “Hi”. Also, we would like to welcome Keith Potter, of Maryland Department of Agriculture’s Nutrient Management. Keith, whose office was formerly in downtown Cumberland moved into our office in late November. We look forward to working with both Tucker and Keith, having them in our office will be a great asset to our customers.

ASCD would also like to announce the launch of their new website: www.alleganyscd.com. Information is provided on the services we offer, links to information on some of our cost-share programs, and the email address of our staff. Under the “More” tab, you will find information on recent events, upcoming dates to remember, and any district news. Important events and information to look for include cover crop sign-up dates, annual tree sale information, dates of the Tri-State Hay and Pasture Conference, and rental information for our newly purchased Lime Spreader.

NRCS would like to welcome Matt Rowley to our team. Matt is a grant funded project forester here to assist us with awareness and implementation of habitat development for the Golden-winged Warbler. The Golden-winged warbler is a small song bird that is in danger of being listed in the state of Maryland as threatened. NRCS is providing cost-share opportunities for landowners to create or enhance early successional habitat that benefits a large range of wildlife species and that the golden-winged warbler is dependent on. Early successional habitat provides a structurally diverse stand of trees, snags, saplings, shrubs, grasses and forbs. For more information on this program please contact Matt or Jessica.

The staff of ACSD is here to help please don’t hesitate to call us. We look forward to seeing you at our booth at the Small Farm Conference January 24, 2015.
College Park, Md. – The Maryland Department of Environment and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene released a report in August by the University of Maryland School of Public Health, which assesses the potential public health effects of allowing unconventional natural gas development and production (UNGDP), commonly known as “fracking” (a name derived from one part of the process), in western Maryland’s Marcellus Shale region. You can read the full report “Potential Public Health Impacts of Natural Gas Development and Production in the Marcellus Shale in Western Maryland” at: http://www.marcellushealth.org/. The School of Public Health’s environmental and occupational health and environmental justice experts produced the report, with input from residents of Garrett and Allegany counties and a variety of other stakeholders. The report is a part of Governor O’Malley’s Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Initiative, designed to “assist State policymakers and regulators in determining whether and how gas production from the Marcellus shale in Maryland can be accomplished without unacceptable risks of adverse impacts to public health, safety, the environment and natural resources.” The study will be used to set Maryland public policy.

**BIOSOLIDS AND THEIR USAGE**
Ryan Coolbaugh, Synagro

Biosolids are the final product created through multiple processes and the scientifically-advanced treatment of sewage sludge. These materials are typically lime-stabilized as part of the treatment process, and are rich in plant available nutrients. Over the past few decades, biosolids have resulted in the cleansing and restoration of America’s rivers and streams. For agricultural and horticultural usage, biosolids can be safely applied to soil as a fertilizer and/or soil conditioner to improve and maintain agricultural and forest lands, as well as to restore damaged acreage. Biosolids help build and enrich soils, as well as help crops and vegetation grow more vigorously, which may increase yields.

**TIMBER MARKET**
The University of Maryland Extension no longer tracks stumpage prices. However, other states currently track the timber market; those links are provided below. Please look at the stumpage report nearest your area.

**Pennsylvania Woodlands Timber Market Report** (http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/forests/timber-market-report) provided by Penn State School of Forest Resources Cooperative Extension. These reports provide market stumpage and mill prices by species for four regions of Pennsylvania.

**West Virginia Timber Market Report** (http://ahc.caf.wvu.edu/ahc-resources-mainmenu-45/timber-market-report-mainmenu-62) provided by the WVU Appalachian Hardwood Center and the West Virginia Division of Forestry. These reports provide market prices by species using the International Scale and Doyle Scale for five regions of West Virginia as well as a state average.
The Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) is a risk assessment tool that only applies on farms where soil phosphorus has a Fertility Index Value (FIV) of 150 or more. The FIV is a measurement, determined by a soil test, of how much phosphorus is in the soil compared to how much is needed to grow crops. According to University of Maryland Extension Bulletin EB-405, the overall objective of the Phosphorus Management Tool is to update the phosphorus site index (PSI) by incorporating site specific calculations that identify critical areas within a farm where there is a high phosphorus (P) loss potential due to both a high transport potential and a large source of P. Such conditions can result in phosphorus loaded drainage water that may negatively impact nearby surface waters. Once the critical source areas are identified using the PMT, more accurately targeted management practices can be developed that will reduce phosphorus losses from the agricultural landscape, and thus protect water quality.

Many stakeholders in the agriculture sector have raised their voices in concern about the economic ramifications of replacing the PSI with the PMT. An economic analysis of the potential costs of implementing the Phosphorus Management Tool was ordered by the Maryland General Assembly. The PMT is estimated to have the greatest impact on the Eastern Shore because its soils contain high levels of phosphorus. MDA contracted with the Business, Economic and Community Network (BEACON) at the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University under the direction of Dr. Memo Diriker to conduct this economic evaluation. The results, released in November, show that implementation of the PMT could cost Eastern Shore farmers somewhere between $21 and $24 million over six years. It would cost the state another $27 million in subsidies to help transport poultry litter, create temporary storage, and reimburse some of the cost of commercial fertilizer replacement.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s report entitled, The Economic Benefits of Cleaning Up the Chesapeake, provides evidence of the economic benefit of clean water. Some of the projected benefits of PMT implementation include enhanced natural benefits which include air and water filtering, recreation, seafood and farming production, aesthetic (including enhanced property values), clean drinking water, flood control, and pollution reduction. Unfortunately, it is difficult to isolate the portion of those benefits and their resulting economic value that can be directly attributed to the implementation of the PMT. It can be assumed that, at a minimum, the removal of the extra phosphorus will help maintain the overall economic value of the Bay. However, one cannot directly compare the value of improved Bay quality that may occur as a result of the PMT with the actual expense borne by farmers.

According to an Associated Press article by Brian Witte, Governor-elect, Larry Hogan, speaking at the Maryland Farm Bureau’s annual convention in Ocean City, said he would make the proposed regulations his first fight when he enters office January 21. Hogan was quoted as saying, “We won’t allow them to put you out of business, destroy your way of life, or decimate your entire industry.”

Meanwhile, MDA reports that it is currently reviewing the study and will consider the findings and issues raised. MDA will use the study to determine what new and existing financial and technical assistance would be needed to implement the PMT, including potential programmatic and policy changes.
THE MARKETING CORNER
How Do Customers Find You?
By: Ginger S. Myers, UME

Word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising is important for every business. It's one of the most credible forms of advertising because a person puts their reputation on the line every time they make a recommendation since that person has nothing to gain but the appreciation of those who are listening.

Prior to the advent of smart phones and social media, word-of-mouth advertising happened directly between customers; for example, if a client liked your product they might recommend it to seven other friends. Social media provides a digital WOM advertising platform. If a client likes your product and endorses it in their social media outreach, there is the potential for that post to reach hundreds or even thousands of that client’s “friends” or “followers". Other digital marketing tools such as email, electronic newsletters, and Internet searches all contribute to customers finding your products.

But, according to a recent survey for Verizon, direct customer word-of-mouth is still the number one avenue for attracting new customers.

(Source: Small Business Trends-smallbiztrends.com)

Ways to Boost Word-of-Mouth Advertising:

1. Use Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube Videos.
2. Ask for testimonials and use them.
3. Deliver what you promise every time; quality matters.
4. Work on product branding; customers are more likely to promote you to others if they always associate your product name or product line for certain purchases.
5. Make great customer service a priority and customers will more readily give you referrals.
6. Get customer feedback to be sure they're satisfied.
7. Getting feedback will uncover any problems, so that you can prevent bad word of mouth.
8. Provide referral cards. Have a preprinted card your customer can leave with a friend. It helps even to leave behind several business cards so they can hand one to a neighbor who may need your landscaping services.
9. Thank people for their business. Once the transaction is complete, be sure to show some gratitude for the customer's business and remember to invite them back.