Fall SMADC Workshop Series
Community Subscription Agriculture (CSA) - Tuesday, October 28 at 7 p.m.

As buying local becomes an increasingly popular trend throughout the country, a new market is beginning to open for farmers. Starting a program called a Community Subscription Agriculture (CSA) is an exciting way to reach this growing market. The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission is sponsoring a free workshop to help farmers learn how to start and manage a CSA.

Customers who participate in a CSA pay the farm up front for the season and in return receive a box of fruits and/or vegetables once a week. When buying a share of the CSA the buyer is making a commitment to support the farmer regardless of the season’s growing conditions. The farm commits to packing the best of their harvest for these retail customers.

On October 28, 2008 local farmer Brett Grohsgal of Even’ Star Organic Farm will give a lecture geared towards farmers interested in starting a CSA. Grohsgal’s farm was originally whole-sale driven. When asked about the change from wholesale to CSA farming Grohgal said “Our CSA has radically changed our farm business prospects. We’ve gone from living hand to mouth, suffering through wholesale produce price fluctuations, to setting and getting retail prices ourselves. Our CSA customers have made us substantially more liquid and profitable”. Currently in it’s fifth year as a CSA farm, Even’ Star is one of the largest CSAs in the state of Maryland with 286 summer subscribers and 200 winter.

Cynthia Chan, a local subscriber to the Even’ Star CSA, describes the consumer benefits of the CSA. “For our family we know where our food is coming from. We know this farmer personally, having met him through the CSA. We know our food is local, we’re supporting our local economy, and we’re being responsible in our environment. It also allows us to try things that we might not have otherwise tried, as well as different varieties of foods. Who knew there were so many varieties of tomatoes?” Chan expressed her excitement at the prospect of more CSAs starting in the area. “Different farmers grow different things, with more variety we could belong to more than one CSA.”

The workshop will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday October 28, 2008 in the SMECO Auditorium located at 15045 Burnt Store Road in Hughesville, Maryland. For more information please contact SMADC at (301) 274-1922.

4th Annual Horse Conference
On Saturday, November 8, 2008 the University of Maryland and the University of Delaware will be presenting the 4th Annual Horse Conference at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills, MD. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Sue McDonnell from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine’s New Boulton Center. As one of the leading experts in the field of horse behavior, she will be discussing simple methods of behavior modification that can benefit both horse
and rider. Other exciting seminar topics include: equine dentistry, pasture weed management, marketing your equine business, trailer safety, managing pastures to decrease feed costs, therapeutic shoeing, farm landscaping, equine careers, parasites and deworming, managing pasture nutrients, correct saddle fitting, and the realities of starting an equine business.

Please join us for this excellent opportunity to come out, meet your colleagues, and increase your knowledge about horses! For a registration form or visit our website at www.equinestudies.umd.edu to learn more about the various speakers and their topics. For further information, please contact Kelly Brannan at kbrannan@umd.edu or 301-405-8746.

Check Out Our Updated County Website
Anne Arundel County Extension website:
http://annearundel.umd.edu/

The current and past agricultural newsletter additions are available for viewing or copy at:
http://annearundel.umd.edu/AGNR/agnews.cfm

An agricultural bulletin page is also available for viewing or copy under our hot topics section at:
http://annearundel.umd.edu/AGNR/agnews.cfm

New on the website 2008: Anne Arundel County Agricultural Program Teaching Modules - Streaming Video: http://annearundel.umd.edu/Agriculture.cfm

Also relive the history of Extension and University of Maryland College of Agriculture Land Grant Mission by viewing the 150 Years Anniversary PowerPoint:
http://annearundel.umd.edu/files/University%20of%20Maryland%20150%20Year%20Anniversary.pps

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Thanks for partnering with Maryland Cooperative Extension, and supporting our programs.

R. David Myers, Extension Educator
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Anne Arundel & Prince George’s Counties