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Annie's Project Newsletter is a quarterly update on all areas of farming, families and women involved in agriculture.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and keep the network of women in agriculture strong. Please send us updates on your farm, business and anything you would like to share.

A Message from Shannon Dill

It is hard to believe that we are only weeks away from our 12th Annual Women In Agriculture Conference! This year our Keynote speaker will be Julie DeYoung, spokeswoman for Perdue Farms. She will be talking about "Putting the Family Back in Farming." We are also lucky enough to have Laurie DeYoung join us for our Luncheon Address. Many of us start each day with Laurie, WPOC's morning personality. Laurie will share with us lessons she has learned through life on "Staying Sane as a Working Mom" To end our first day of the conference, Edwin Remsberg will present some of his amazing agricultural photos, and give us tips on capturing those timeless memories for ourselves. To think, this along with many break out sessions is only the first day! To view the entire conference schedule and registration information, please see page 2.

Even though planning the Women In Agriculture conference is keeping us busy, we have also started Annie's Classes across Maryland and Delaware. Four locations in Maryland (Washington County, Harford County, Baltimore County and Prince George's County) are offering Annie's Project Class, and new this year MidShore and Delaware are offering Annie's Project II, Managing for Today and Tomorrow. Stay tuned for more updates about these classes, and to see the newest group of graduates!

Have a safe winter, and see you at WIA!

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Dover Downs Hotel & Casino

Dover, Delaware

February 25-26

2013 Regional Women In Agriculture Conference Schedule

Registration & Breakfast- 7:30am

Introductions- 8:30am-9am

Keynote Address- Monday, February 25- 9am-10am

Putting the Family Back into Farming- A Case Study in Reshaping the Image of Modern Agriculture- When the Waterkeeper Alliance filed a lawsuit against a Maryland farm family and the poultry company they grow for, it was framed as an environmental group fighting factory farming. But then farmers stood up and began telling the story of the real family that was under attack and how the lawsuit could impact farm families everywhere. Showing that the "factory farm" is actually a farm family - real people whose livelihood and way of life was at risk - revealed that the lawsuit was in reality an attack by a radical group with an anti-modern agriculture agenda. Joining Julie on this panel will be Lee Richardson, Alan Hudson & James Adkins

Julie DeYoung, Lee Richardson, Alan Hudson & James Adkins

Breakout Session 1- Monday, February 25- 10:15am-11:30am

Grain Marketing Tools- Learn about various cash marketing tools, as well as futures and options and how to incorporate them into today's markets in any easy to understand manner.

Why use Social Media- You've heard the buzz about social media, but are you still wondering WHY you should use it? This session is a double-dip into WHY you should use social media from an individual perspective to advocate and "tell your story", as well as from a business standpoint for promotion and customer engagement.

Talking with the Media- Building relationships with media outlets goes a long way in generating positive press and telling our agricultural story. We will discuss how and when to write media advisories and releases; explore all forms of communication with the press; share ideas on becoming a good story teller; generate positive press story ideas; and give interview tips. This will be an interactive session so come ready to participate!

Urban Agriculture and Food Systems- Urban agriculture and food systems developments are springing up across the country. University of Maryland Extension will talk about what's happening in Maryland and how these changes are having an impact on larger agricultural arena. Presented by Elizabeth Hill & Christie Bach

General Session- Monday, February 25- 11:30am-12pm

Do you have a Social Media Marketing Plan? Every business needs a marketing plan for its goods or services. But today, marketing plans must include the communication tools that social media now provides. Learn how to use social media as a marketing tool and how to gauge if it's working in your business.

Entrepreneurial Coaching Sessions- Entrepreneurs are made, not born. They benefit from having a sounding board for their ideas and dreams and a trustworthy "reality check" in their business planning process to help them avoid wasting time and resources throughout the development and launch of their enterprise.

An Entrepreneurial Coaching session provide meeting with an impartial, one-on-one, trained professional who will listen to your ideas, provide guidance on next steps for your business's development, and provide you with valuable business resources that can help you clarify your pathway to business success. Coaching Sessions will be available throughout the day, please visit the registration table to sign up.

Luncheon Address- Monday February 25- 12:15pm-1:15pm

Staying "Sane" as a Working Mom- Years ago I heard Joan Lunden say that the phrase, "working mother" was redundant. It's true, if you're a mom, you're already working. I started the "working" phase of my life at 15 and had my first job in radio when I was 19, at 26 I officially became a working mom, the rest is history. I've come up with a list of things that have helped me stay just this side of sane throughout my career. Let's talk about those when we get together! Presented by WPOC Morning Personality, Laurie DeYoung.

Breakout Session 2- Monday February 25- 1:15pm-2:30pm

Social Media Tools- Susan Schoenian makes extensive use of the Internet in her Small Ruminant Extension Program. In this session, she will share her experiences using various social media (e.g. blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr™, and SlideShare) to extend the reach of her program. Presented by Susan Schoenian

Lease Agreements- Do you currently lease farmland in your operation? Does my lease need to be in writing? What happens when my lease terminates? Can the new tenant start tillage operations before my lease expires? This program will discuss these issues and other issues that should be considered when drafting a lease.

Finding Your Place on the Farm- Hear first-hand about one family's experience of returning to the farm. From learning to work together, navigating through diversification, and planning for the future, the Layton's have kept a very open line of communication with one another throughout. Over these ever changing years, they have strived to keep both family and business strong yet they have been faced with many challenges that they have had to work through. Learn some of the unique ways that they have dealt with these ups and downs to prepare their business for the future.

Choosing the Best Crop and Marketing Options for your Business- How I Match the Decision Making Puzzle in the Real World- Wenfei will share the decision making process of the development of their farm. Seaberry Farm operates year-round and grows more than 100 types of trees and shrubs for cut floral use, 200 + kinds of cut flower varieties, they also grows peaches, plums and other specialty fruits. It markets their products in a diverse channels. Wenfei will share why and how they select their crops, the marketing channels and how you can make the best decision for your farm.

Sudeep will share some crops that might be the next winning profit center for your farm.

WIA Conference Scheduled cont.

Breakout Session 3- Monday, February 25- 2:45pm-4:00pm

Computer Technology Update- According to one technology blogger, the year 2013 is the year that “tech” as we know it changes. These changes have actually been brewing for a while. This session will be a rundown of some of the new technology such as Windows 8, mobile computing, cloud computing and of course, security. We will take a brief look at how some of this new technology can help at home, on the road, on the farm, and at work.

Creative Business Panel- What does a farm stand, a traveling barnyard petting zoo and hand-dyed yarn have in common? Each is a business started by a woman on her family farm. Come listen to the story of how these businesses were started, and what lessons these women have learned along the way

Ag Solar Workshop- This presentation will focus on solar technology for farm operations. This will cover equipment needed, design of systems and profitability of solar power.

Your Credit, Your Identity, Your Life- This session will provide you with an understanding of credit and how credit scores are calculated, as well as how to build your credit or improve your score, and how to monitor your credit for free.

Featured Speaker- Monday February 25- 4:15pm-5pm

Edwin Remsberg, Freeland Photographer

Edwin will show pictures he has taken that have been successful. He will describe how to make great pictures from the camera side and how to use the language of images to communicate ideas. Tips and tricks will then be shared with the audience allowing them to better share their own story of agriculture.

Reception and Harness Racing- Monday, February 25- 6pm-8pm

Dover Downs is a harness racing track located within the city limits of Dover, Delaware. The harness racing events are actually held on the infield of the Dover International Speedway, a one-mile concrete, banked oval track that NASCAR fans have nicknamed “The Monster Mile”. Dover Downs has hosted harness racing events since its inception in 1969. Live harness races are simulcast to tracks and other off-track betting locations across North America on each of the company’s more than 140 live race dates.

The reception will begin at 6pm in the Diamond Lounge, our own private room overlooking the race track. Enjoy plenty of food while socializing with friends, new and old. Cash bar is available.

Breakout Session 4- Tuesday, February 26- 8:30am-9:45am

So You Want a Loan? - Are all the acronyms and financial lingo making it difficult to get a loan? Talking to a lender shouldn't be more agonizing than visiting the dentist. Find out some simple steps you can take to walk away with the loan you need to keep your farm growing.

Tapping into the Water Cycle--What's in Your Well Water- If you are using a private well system for your home drinking water, you know there are no regulations for periodic monitoring and water testing. When was the last time you had your private well water tested? What's the big deal? In this session, learn why periodically testing your well water for family health is recommended, and how a few simple behavior changes can help conserve and protect local groundwater resources.

The Affordable Care Act: Making Decisions for You and Your Family- Women are likely to be the primary health care decision makers for themselves and their families. In addition, women may be the primary health care decision maker for their family's agricultural business. The Affordable Care Act (or what some call Obamacare) will present individuals, families, and businesses with decisions and choices—whether or not they currently do or do not have health insurance coverage. In this session, we will talk about the major changes that are taking place, including the individual mandate. The Educators will then present a newly developed tool to help guide you through the insurance purchasing process and make you an informed, savvy health-insurance consumer.

Food Safety GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices)- This GAPs food safety session will focus on Good Agricultural farm Practices that effectively reduce the risk of produce contamination. The basics of a farm food safety plan will be discussed as well as the recently released Food Safety Modernization Act proposed rule focusing on standards for produce safety.

Breakout Session 5- Tuesday, February 26- 10:00am-11:30am

Do You Want to Work Forever? - Are you looking forward to the day you can retire? Or do you dread the thought? Being able to retire when you want and how you want is important to many of us. What are you doing to plan for and prepare for your retirement? This class is designed to help you plan and project your retirement options. Objectives for the class include: reviewing your retirement goals; determining sources of retirement income; estimating your financial needs in retirement and determining what steps you will need to take to meet your retirement goals. Presented by Lynn Little

Attracting Songbirds and Other Wildlife Using Native Plants- Songbird populations have been declining for years because they are losing habitat. Home gardeners can help by adding native plants to their yards and gardens. Unlike the non-native plants many of us have in our gardens, native plants provide the food for insects that then become the food for baby songbirds. Native plants are attractive and interesting additions to the garden.

Farm Bill Update- This session will provide an overview of how the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial and technical conservation assistance to agricultural producers through the Farm Bill authorized Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Estate Planning- Are you concerned about how to keep a family farm going on the death of the owner? This presentation is designed to introduce the fundamentals of estate planning. We'll discuss taxes, gifts, liquidity, titling, advanced directives and succession so that you understand the tools an attorney, accountant and financial planner will employ to help your farm succeed for generations.

General Closing Session- Tuesday, February 26- 11:30am-12:30pm

The cost of this two day conference is \$45.

Register Online: www.womeninag.eventbrite.com

visit our website www.extension.umd.edu/womeninag

\$5 off

Bring a Friend to WIA!

*When you and a friend register
take \$5 off the registration fee*

By entering “friend” in the Promotion code box

The Triumph of the Family Farm

WE BURIED MY grandfather last spring. He had died in his sleep in his own bed at 95, so, as funerals go, it wasn't a grim occasion. But it was a historic one for our small rural community. My great-grandparents were early settlers, arriving in 1913 and farming the land throughout their lives. My grandfather continued that tradition, and now rests next to them on a hillside overlooking the family homestead.

If you're a part of the roughly 99 percent of the North American population that doesn't work on a farm, you might guess at what comes next—many a lament has been written about the passing of the good old days in rural areas, the family farm's decline, and the inevitable loss of the homestead. But in many respects, that narrative itself is obsolete. That's certainly true in my family's case: The Free-land farm is still being cultivated by my father. And it is bigger and more prosperous than ever.

My dad farms 3,200 acres of his own, and rents another 2,400—all told, a territory seven times the size of Central Park. Last year, he produced 3,900 tonnes (or metric tons) of wheat, 2,500 tonnes of canola, and 1,400 tonnes of barley. (That's enough to produce 13 million loaves of bread, 1.2 million liters of vegetable oil, and 40,000 barrels of beer.) His revenue last year was more than \$2 million, and he admits to having made "a good profit," but won't reveal more than that. The farm has just three workers, my dad and his two hired men, who farm with him nine months of the year. For the two or three weeks of seeding and harvest, my dad usually hires a few friends to help out, too.

My father farms in northern Alberta, but his story is typical of large-scale family farmers across North America. Urbanites may picture farmers as hip heritage-pig breeders returning to the land, or a struggling rural underclass waging a doomed battle to hang on to their patrimony as agribusiness moves in. But these stereotypes are misleading. In 2010, of all the farms in the United States with at least \$1 million in revenues, 88 percent were family farms, and they accounted for 79 percent of production. Large-scale farmers today are sophisticated businesspeople who use GPS equipment to guide their combines, biotechnology to boost their yields, and futures contracts to hedge their risk. They are also pretty rich.

"It definitely is not just your father," Jason Henderson, the vice president and branch executive of the Omaha branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, told me. Henderson is essentially the Fed's top analyst of the agricultural economy. "In the U.S. and Canada in 2010 and 2011," he said, "farm incomes have been booming. U.S. net farming incomes rose more than 20 percent in each of those years. Farmers are flush with cash."

Evidence of the boom is visible throughout the Farm Belt. "Tractor and combine sales have doubled, compared with 2003," Henderson told me. "Pivot-irrigation-system sales are up. I've been driving across Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and I have not seen so many shiny new grain bins, ever."

Troy Houlder, my father's local farm-machinery dealer, told me that in the 22 years he's been in the business, "supply has never been this tight." The vehicles in highest demand, he said, are midrange-horsepower tractors, which run from \$70,000 to \$110,000. If a farmer walked into his store in early May wanting to buy that kind of tractor, "he's not getting one until probably November or December, even if he had a fistful of hundreds."

Big Money has noticed these trends, and is beginning to pile in. "We are seeing a tremendous uptick in allocations and interest in farmland," says Chris Erickson of HighQuest Partners, an agricultural consultancy and investor. Erickson told me that big institutional investors—pension funds, insurance companies—have recently been making investments in farmland ranging from "the several hundred millions to the billions." Erickson said this broad interest is new, and is driven by the fact that "the fundamentals are changing dramatically."

Jim Rogers, who co-founded the legendary hedge fund Quantum with George Soros, told me he believes farming is "one of the most exciting professions" in the world—and that the recent boom is likely to continue for a long time. "Throughout history, we've had long periods when the financial sectors were in charge," he said, "but we've also had long periods when the people who have produced real goods were in charge—the farmers, the miners ... All of you people who got M.B.A.s made mistakes, because the City of London and Wall Street are not going to be great places to be in the next two or three decades. It's going to be the people who produce real goods."

The rural renaissance isn't just a curiosity: it's an important new chapter in the story of America's ability to thrive in the global economy, and in eras of disruptive technological change. As America struggles to adapt to a new wave of creative destruction that is shaking up the manufacturing and service sectors as profoundly as industrialization transformed the agrarian age, the resurgence of the family farm offers some lessons on how we might survive this wave of change, too.

The entire article can be found at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/the-triumph-of-the-family-farm/308998/#>



Upcoming Events



2013 Conference February 25-26 Dover Downs, Dover Delaware

GAP Certification Plan writing

February 26

Dorchester County

For more information call 410-228-8800

Marketing Farm-Raised Meats in Maryland -

Workshop will provide resources and information to help improve your profitability.

March 6, 2013

Time: 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Location: UME - Baltimore Co Office, 1114 Shawan Road, Cockeyville, MD

Grow It, Eat It, Sell It! -

Expert gardeners and specialists from across the state are teaming up to teach you proven ways to successfully grow your own food and sell it too! 6 weekly classes on Thursdays, running 3/14 to 4/18. Produce sales course to be held Fall 2013, dates TBA.

March 14, 2013

Time: 6:30pm

Location: John Eager Howard Rec Center. 2100 Brookfield Avenue Baltimore, MD 21217

Contact: Elizabeth Hill 410-989-1324

UME Tractor Safety Training for Youth -

New format to the traditional 24 hour safe tractor certification program. Instead of holding classes over several weeks the entire certification program will be conducted in a weekend.

March 15, 2013 thru March 17, 2013

Location: Queen Anne's County 4-H Park in Centreville, MD

Contact: Chris Johnston 410 758-0166

Internship Opportunity for 4-Hers in College and Recent Grads

[Project Y.E.S \(Youth Extension Service\) funded through the USDA/DOD Military Family Partnership is helping to develop our next generation of professionals for public serving careers, including, but not limited to: extension, state agencies, military family programs, non-profits, etc. Now going into their second year, our college interns receive incredible leadership and facilitation training as they prepare to serve as facilitators for youth development programs we conduct for military youth on weekends as one or more of their parents prepare for deployment.](#)

We annually hire 20-24 college interns from across the United States. Encourage some of our very talented youth in undergraduate and graduate programs who would enjoy this exciting learning experience as a compliment to the educational experiences they are getting at their institution. It is a great learning/work experience, an opportunity to travel on weekends and a chance to earn some extra money.

Please direct your questions regarding this program to J.C. Johnson (james_johnson@ncsu.edu). J.C. serves as our Project Director and does an incredible job of mentoring and guiding our interns through their internship. You can also go to the web site at: <http://militaryfamilies.extension.org/yes-intern-program/>

Queen Anne's County Agronomy Meeting

March 1

8:00am – 1:30pm, Queen Anne's County 4-H Park, Centreville

For more information call 410-758-0166

** nutrient management and private applicator credits available

Organic Crop Meeting

March 12

8:30am, Chesapeake College, Economic Development Center, Wye Mills

For more information call 410-758-0166

** nutrient management credits available

Delmarva Chicken Festival

June 21 -22

Snow Hill, MD

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