Hello, Harford County!

April is here, meaning planting season is just around the corner. After a winter hiatus, tractors and other farm equipment will be making their debuts back onto roadways soon. Whether you’re driving a car or driving that slow-moving tractor, remember that safety should be everyone’s priority while behind the wheel. Here are some tips to keep in mind.

**Slow down!** When you see a tractor driving on the road, your first instinct should be to slow down. Motorists should take extra care on curvy or hilly roads where sight distance is limited. You never know whether there will be a slow-moving tractor around the bend or over the hill.

Tractor operators should assist this effort by ensuring utilizing an SMV (slow-moving vehicle) emblem. Be sure that it’s in good condition: replace old SMV emblems that are faded, bent up, or no longer reflective.

**Increase visibility.** Tractor drivers should do what they can to alert motorists they’re there. Aside from SMV signs, be sure the edges of your equipment are marked with reflective tape, especially on wide machinery that doesn’t fit within the lane. Avoid driving on the road at night, but if you must, always use your headlights but turn off any rear spotlights. (In the dark, a motorist may confuse these for headlights of an oncoming vehicle.)

Using pilot vehicles is a good idea if you’re driving a long distance or especially if your equipment doesn’t fit in your lane. Have a vehicle drive behind you and, if possible, another vehicle drive in front of you. These pilot vehicles should be marked in some way, such as with orange flags and/or a yellow or amber light.

Use turn signals, or if your tractor doesn’t have them, use hand signals when making turns. One common collision occurs when a car tries to pass a tractor that has slowed down to make a left turn, thinking the tractor slowed to allow them to pass. Communicating with vehicles behind you can prevent this type of accident.

**Pass with care.** Tractor drivers should be courteous and allow vehicles behind them to pass, but only if and when it’s safe to do so. If you can, pull your tractor off the road so cars can pass in their lane. If there is no place to pull off the road, stop and allow passing in an area where cars will be able to pass you safely. Passing is not advised within 100 feet of an intersection or bridge, where visibility is reduced due to hills or curves in the road, or in designated “no passing” zones. Use a hand signal so that cars behind you know you have stopped to allow passing.

Motorists should also use caution when passing. If the tractor is pulled off the road, ensure that you can clearly see the edges of all the equipment. Even if the tractor is out of the roadway, wide equipment that the tractor is towing may still stick out into the lane. If you think a tractor has stopped to allow you to pass, wait for a hand signal. Just because a tractor has slowed down or has pulled off to the right doesn’t mean it is allowing you to pass. The tractor driver may be preparing to make a left turn.

**Be patient and respect each other.** Regardless of whether you’re driving a tractor or a car, you’re probably trying to get somewhere to get something done. Even if you have to slow down when following a tractor or pull off the road to allow cars to pass, keep in mind that on average you wait at a red light for three minutes.

It can be frustrating when your trip is delayed, but the safety and well-being of our neighbors is more important than saving time. A little extra caution and courtesy on the roadway can go a long way toward making our community safer.

Sincerely,

Sara Bhaduri Hauck
Ag Extension Educator
sbh@umd.edu
2014 Junior Sheep and Goat Skillathon

The Junior Sheep and Wool Skillathon, held annually in conjunction with the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, has been changed to the Junior Sheep and Goat Skillathon. All skillathon stations will pertain to both sheep and goats, including meat, fiber, and dairy production. The skillathon is open to any youth between the ages of 8 and 18. Individuals and teams (of 3 or 4) from any county or state may compete. Youth compete according to their age as of January 1 of the current year. The pre-registration deadline for individuals (requested) and teams (required) is April 28. Pre-register by sending names, ages, and team affiliations via e-mail to Susan Schoenian at sschoen@umd.edu (or via fax at 301-432-4089). For more information, visit sheepandgoat.com/programs/skillathon/skillathon.html.

May 4, 2014

Harford County Farm Bureau Scholarship

Harford County Farm Bureau announces the availability of scholarships to help fund the education of a candidate whose family are members of Harford County Farm Bureau. The candidate’s chosen curriculum must be in an approved program in agriculture or in an agriculturally-related field. A maximum of $1,000 is available for each scholarship. All applications must be delivered or postmarked no later than April 24. For more information or for an application, contact the Farm Bureau at 410-836-7773 or harford@mdfarmbureau.com.

Upper Chesapeake Dairy Princess Program

Ladies between the ages of 16-21 with an interest in the dairy industry are now being recruited to participate in this amazing program! Candidates must be residents of Maryland and be associated with the dairy industry. Upper Chesapeake Dairy Princesses travel across Harford, Cecil, and Baltimore Counties, as well as the state of Maryland, representing dairy farmers and promoting the dairy industry. Girls 13 and older may also participate as Dairy Maids. For more information or to find out how to get involved, contact Mary Archer Stewart, Program Coordinator, at 443-604-4095 or maryarcher@mindspring.com.

Harford County 4-H Memorial Scholarship

The Harford County 4-H Memorial Scholarship is replacing the Ben Keyes Scholarship. This name change is to memorialize several Harford County 4-H members who have lost their lives because of accidents or health issues before completing their 4-H careers. Applications must be postmarked by May 1 and are available at the Harford County Extension Office and Harford Farm Bureau Office. For more information, contact Alice Archer at 410-836-7773 or harford@mdfarmbureau.com.
Towing a livestock trailer is a common practice on most farms and ranches. Livestock trailers, also referred to as stock trailers, are used to move livestock between locations, haul show animals to county fairs, and transport animals to processing plants.

To safely tow a livestock trailer, your truck must be capable of towing the weight of the trailer plus the added weight of the livestock. Check with the manufacturer to determine the Gross Combined Vehicle Weight (GCVW), which includes the tow vehicle's weight plus the loaded trailer weight. The GCVW rating can be located in the vehicle's serial number or in the operator's manual. When calculating the weight, remember to include the weight for fuel, passengers, and cargo.

The manual for the trailer should specify a maximum tongue weight—the amount of the trailer's weight that presses down on the truck's trailer hitch when using a bumper pull trailer or the truck's bed when using a gooseneck trailer. The majority of the weight (85% to 90%) should be carried over the axles so that only 10% to 15% of the weight is carried on the tongue.

Before using a livestock trailer, check both the truck and the trailer to ensure that they are in good working condition. In addition, take the following actions:

- **Latches and safety chains**: Double check the latches and the safety chains and cables between the truck and trailer to make sure they are fastened securely. Make sure you are using a ball that is the correct size for the trailer.
- **Trailer brakes**: Inspect the breakaway cable or brake system. Livestock trailers should have their own braking systems.
- **Wheel bearings**: Repack the wheel bearings on a regular basis and replace as necessary.
- **Electric wiring and connections**: Make sure all wiring is in good condition. Trailer connectors should match the truck connectors. Check to make sure that all the lights (brake light, turn signals, and tail lights) on both the truck and the trailer are working. Make sure the electrical connection is securely plugged into the truck.
- **Tires**: Examine the tires for signs of dry rot, wear, or damage, and make sure that all tires, including the spare and inside dual tires, have the correct air pressure. Consider replacing tires at least every five years, regardless of use.
- **Lug nuts**: Inspect the lug nuts regularly to ensure they are properly tightened.
- **Trailer**: Inspect the trailer floor to make sure it is sturdy and clean. If more traction is needed, install rubber matting. Consider replacing floor boards that are showing signs of wear or rot.
- **Battery**: If you use battery-powered accessories, ensure that your emergency battery is charged and ready for use.
- **Brake controllers**: Test your brake controllers and make adjustments as needed depending on the weight of your trailer.

The first step in testing your electric brakes is to locate the controller or adjuster, which is typically located beneath the instrument panel on the tow vehicle. The controller has an adjustment button (+ or -) and sliding lever. You may need to use the controller to increase braking power (+) for heavier loads or decrease braking power (-) for lighter loads.

Once you have located the controller, slowly move forward on a level surface and shift the tow vehicle transmission to neutral. Use the slide lever on the brake controller to bring the load to a stop using the trailer brakes.

If the trailer brakes cause the truck to jerk, your trailer brakes are adjusted too high. Lower the braking power on the trailer until the trailer comes to a smooth stop. If the truck and loaded trailer do not slow to a stop, the brake controller must be adjusted to a higher level.

Loading animals into a trailer can sometimes be a frustrating task, but there are steps you can take to make the task safer and, ideally, easier. For example,
lower the back of the trailer as much as possible so that animals may step into the trailer without having to step up. Remember to be patient and calm during the loading process so that you do not scare or stress the animals. Additional recommendations include the following:

- **Weight distribution**: When using a bumper pull trailer, place the heaviest animals in the front of the axles. Load older and larger animals first, followed by younger and smaller animals.
- **Ties**: When tying animals in the trailer, use slip knots and tie securely at head height in the trailer.
- **Visibility**: Make sure animals can see you when you enter and exit the trailer, when you are in the trailer, and when you tie or untie them.
- **Squeeze and pinch points**: Remain alert to the danger of being pinned between animals and trailer sides and being pinched by the trailer gate.
- **Gates**: Once the animals are loaded into the trailer, quickly close the gates and ensure that they are secure.
- **Protrusions**: Inspect the trailer for broken or sharp objects protruding into the trailer. These items should be repaired immediately to prevent an injury to an animal or operator.

When driving on any roadway, always maintain a safe speed, keep your headlights on, and stay alert. Your braking time increases when you are towing a full trailer, so maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you and leave adequate room to stop. Plan your travel time carefully, and be aware that weather can cause delays by impacting road conditions and animal comfort.

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**Food Safety Training Workshop for Fruits and Vegetables**

**April 23, 2014**  
9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.  
MDA Headquarters  
Annapolis, MD

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the University of Maryland will conduct an advanced food safety training workshop focused on fruit and vegetable production and packing practices. This workshop is intended for growers who have previously attended a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training or who are currently GAP-certified. Emphasis will be placed on Good Handling Practices (harvest and packing), sanitation, proper record keeping, environmental pathogen testing, and traceability. An optional afternoon session will help producers write their own food safety plans. Growers who have started a plan may bring a paper or electronic version for assistance. Producers are encouraged to bring their own laptops; laptops will be provided to those who cannot bring them. The training fee is $25 and includes lunch and materials. To obtain a registration form, follow the “Hot Topics” link on MDA’s website at www.mda.maryland.gov. For more information, contact Sherry Weygant at 410-841-5769 or e-mail sherry.weygant@maryland.gov.

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**Respondents Sought for Custom Rate Survey**

Every two years, University of Maryland Extension conducts a Custom Rate Survey to determine the average rates for practices conducted on the farm such as planting, management, and harvesting. The information generated by this survey is widely used by farmers, landowners, and contractors across the state. We are seeking assistance from all custom rate operators in securing up-to-date information about farm custom work rates, machinery rental, and hired labor costs in Maryland. We are collecting information on actual rates – either what you paid to hire work or what you charge if you perform custom work. To request the Custom Rate Survey form, please contact Shannon Dill at 410-822-1244 or sdill@umd.edu or Sara BhaduriHauck at 410-638-3255 or sbh@umd.edu. Past survey data is posted at www.extension.umd.edu/grainmarketing.
First Foal Born on Campus Farm This Year

By Kaylee Hillard

On a frigid February night, as a snowstorm descended upon the College Park campus, students gathered inside the horse barn on the University of Maryland Campus Farm to witness the birth of a Thoroughbred foal. They watched in wonder as the healthy baby colt, the first born on campus this year, arrived just before 11 p.m. on February 12. Students appropriately nicknamed the colt “Pax,” the name given to the snowstorm occurring the night of his birth.

Pax’s mother, The Best Sister (known as “Bess” in the stable), came to campus about two weeks before her due date. Led by equine reproduction instructor Dr. Charlie Apter, students monitored her udder’s milk production to determine when the mare was ready to foal. When Bess seemed ready, students went on “foal watch” and watched her closely for signs of labor.

In the past, students have spent the night in the farm’s tack room, but this year, frigid temperatures and the impending storm kept students inside the animal science building to monitor Bess’ progress through a webcam. The mare gave birth on the second night of foal watch in what Apter described as a “textbook” foaling.

“At 10 p.m. Wednesday, Bess appeared restless, pawed at her bedding, looked frequently at her belly and laid down once. At that point we were rushing to don our warm clothes and hurried down to the barn,” senior animal science major Hannah Gorrie said. “When we got there, there were already two front feet and a nose protruding!”

Students said that before they left the barn, Pax was running circles around his mother, before eventually tiring himself out and lying down for a nap.

“Many of the students, including myself, had never witnessed a birth before, so it was a very unique and educational experience,” Gorrie said. “We have all worked very hard to care for our pregnant mares, and it is very rewarding to witness the end result: a healthy, bouncing baby.”

Foaling returned to the university’s Campus Farm last year, when two foals were born on campus for the first time in three decades. Before the mid-80s, the Campus Farm had more acreage and the practice was somewhat common.

Dr. Amy Burk, associate professor and extension horse specialist in the Department of Animal and Avian Sciences, said that bringing the foal births back to campus has given the equine studies program, department, and College a lot of visibility in the community.

“When you’re trying to teach what it’s like to raise animals, sell them, and care for them, it really helps to have your own breeding herd,” Burk said. “It’s also uplifting because every year you have the excitement of new life.”

Equine reproduction students plan to go back on foal watch in early April, when a second Thoroughbred foal is due. “I gave the students the option to only come to one foaling, which would have split the class into two groups, or the option for everyone to come to both foalings,” Apter said. “The students unanimously voted to attend both births, an indication of the level of interest in this whole process.”

The foal born in April will be the offspring of Friesian Fire and Daylight Lassie—a sibling to the colt born on the Campus Farm last spring nicknamed “Rebel” by students and eventually given the racing name “Diamondback Fire” by the UMD community.

“I am really excited for the second foal because this was such as great experience,” senior criminology major Corey Willett said. “Now that I have been through it once, I sort of know what to expect, and hopefully the second birth will go as smoothly as Bess’ did.”
Horseback riding carries a higher injury rate per hour than downhill ski racing, hang-gliding, football or motorcycle racing. Participants in competitions for these sports all wear helmets!

Each year approximately 70,000 people are treated in emergency rooms as a result of equestrian related injuries. Repeated trauma to the head, even when minimal, can cause cumulative damage to the brain. Each new accident expands the original damage because the brain cannot recover fully from injury.

Medical Examiner reports show that 60% or more of horse-related deaths are caused by head injuries. Helmets can reduce this possibility by 70-80%. The American Medical Equestrian Association calculates that ASTM/SEI approved helmets have reduced all riding-related head injuries by 30% and all severe head injuries by 50%.

**ASTM & SEI Safety Guidelines**

ASTM stands for the American Society for Testing and Materials. It is a volunteer organization comprised of thousands of knowledgeable individuals such as doctors, engineers and physicists. The job of the ASTM is to set standards for the function of many types of safety equipment, including riding helmets.

The ASTM has researched and tested helmet designs and has determined the qualities that are necessary in a safe helmet. Some areas that are regulated on ASTM helmets are: the amount of impact the helmet must be able to sustain, the security of its harnessing system, and the areas of the head that must be covered by the helmet. You should look for a helmet that is certified to meet the current ASTM standards.

SEI stands for Safety Equipment Institute. SEI is an independent testing laboratory that tests the helmets to ensure that they meet the standard set forth by the ASTM. SEI inspects random helmets to be sure they are meeting the standard. SEI also inspects the manufacturing process.

**How to Fit a Helmet**

An improperly fitting helmet can cause, rather than prevent, damage when a fall occurs. There are several easy guidelines to help riders determine if their helmet is fitted appropriately. Different brand names may fit a variety of head shapes better than others. Be sure that the helmet fit is placed in a higher priority than the specific brand name.

**Fitting Guidelines**

☆ The helmet should fit snugly but not pinch the head. Check by rocking the helmet forward and backward on the head. The eyebrows should move up and down with the helmet.

☆ The helmet should sit 3/4 to 1 inch above the eyebrows.

☆ The chin strap should be snug under the chin when buckled. Loose hanging straps can be a cause for more injury.

☆ If the rider puts their head in an "upside down" position, the helmet should stay on without the chin strap buckled.

☆ The side straps should meet just below and in front of the earlobes.

☆ The back harness needs to be snug enough to prevent the helmet from moving forward.

**Helmet Fitting Guidelines for Horseback Riders**

By Jenifer Nadeau, Equine Extension Specialist, University of Connecticut, and Betsy Greene, Equine Extension Specialist, University of Vermont

Spring has sprung, and better riding weather is here! As you put away those blankets and dust off your saddle, remember to check that you’ve got a safe, well-fitting helmet ready for the riding season.

**Manure Matching Service Ready for Business**

With spring planting season upon us, the Maryland Department of Agriculture reminds farmers that its Manure Matching Service is available to link farmers with excess manure with other farmers or alternative use projects that can use the product as a valuable resource. The Service is voluntary, free and available to both sending and receiving farms. For more information, call the Harford Soil Conservation District at 410-838-6181x3, call MDA at 1-855-6MANURE, or visit www.mda.maryland.gov.
Abridged from Maryland Department of Agriculture press release

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has launched a new web portal as part of its new “Manure Happens” public outreach campaign. The new page centralizes resources for the general public to better understand farming practices and rules governing those practices. It also provides information for farmers who currently use chemical fertilizers and may want to consider switching to manure and farmers who are currently recycling manure as part of their crop production. The page provides links to additional resources available for farmers (i.e., grants, tax credits, technical guidance), and scientific research that describes manure management practices required by Maryland’s nutrient management program and that explains the benefits of manure. The “Manure Happens” campaign will include a series of color advertisements that will be published in news media outlets across the state in print and online during the last week of March and first week of April. Additionally, MDA will incorporate the ads into social media (@MdAgDept on Twitter and Facebook/MdAgDept) throughout the spring. For more information, visit MDA’s new manure management resources page at www.mda.maryland.gov/manure.

Spring Nutrient Management News

By Tricia Hoopes, Harford County Nutrient Management Advisor

Even it doesn’t feel like it yet, it is spring! Our goal is to have current Nutrient Management Plans in our client’s hands prior to any nutrient applications, but that depends on you.

Have you met with and provided your advisor with the information needed to develop your plan for spring 2014? If not, you are late. It is important for you to get on your advisor’s schedule today. A complex plan will take days to complete if all of the information is provided and there are no questions. If information is lacking or if any type of study is involved, it may take longer.

Developing your custom-built Nutrient Management Plan requires the following information:

⇒ Tax account ID number
⇒ Aerial maps
⇒ Current soil analysis (soil analyses are valid for three years)
⇒ Current manure analysis (manure analyses are valid for one year)
⇒ Animal information
⇒ Bedding information (type and amount)
⇒ Manure applications for the past 3 years
⇒ Previous year’s crop rotations
⇒ Current year’s crop rotations

Note: Specific situations may require additional information and/or maps.

Please allow adequate time for plan development. Working together, we can get it done! Call your advisor today.

Maryland Nutrient Management Plans are developed following recommendations from University of Maryland research. This research was done in Maryland, on Maryland soils, by professors from the University of Maryland with proven results. Fertilizer recommendations from soil labs are not accepted by MDA (Maryland Department of Agriculture) as a substitute for a Nutrient Management Plan.
By Dr. Bob Tjaden, UMD Extension Specialist (abridged)

Filing your federal and state income taxes can be an overwhelming task this time of year – especially figuring out what to do with taxes related to your forest lands. You may have planted trees, had a timber sale, or developed a new forest stewardship plan. Knowing how to handle and report these expenses and income can save you much money, but you have to do your homework. First of all, there are some valuable references available to you. The University of Maryland Extension has an excellent publication titled “Forest Management Account Book” (EB-360) which explains some of the basic items you need to think about when reporting either forest management expenses or income from timber sales. There are many examples given to help guide you through your forest management expenses and income reporting. This publication also explains the state of Maryland’s reforestation and timber stand improvement tax deduction. (For a free copy of EB-360, contact Bob Tjaden at 410-310-4690 or rtjaden@umd.edu). Other excellent resources are the “USDA Federal Income Tax on Timber: A Quick Guide for Woodland Owners” and “Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2013 Tax Year.” Both can be found for free at www.timbertax.org. Also on this site is the newly revised Federal Form T for you to report your 2013 timber sales. The single most important thing you can do is establish your “basis.” The basis is the single most important figure for you to have in your records, because when you sell your timber you are only taxed on the amount of money you made above your basis. This could save you hundreds or even thousands of dollars, so take the time to establish the basis!

Applying for Woodland Harvest Permits

Harvesting woodlands is an essential part of good management and supports the forest products industry. However, each of Maryland’s 23 counties has their own process for applying for woodland harvest permits, which can lead to confusion and lost time. Fortunately, University of Maryland Extension recently released an updated bulletin called “Green Book 2014: How to Apply for Woodland Harvest Permits in Maryland”. This bulletin summarizes these steps on a county-by-county basis for individual landowners, professional and consultant foresters, and logging operators involved in timber harvesting. Access the publication online at extension.umd.edu/woodland/your-woodland/publications-library-managing-your-property.

“Buy Local” Signs Available

The Harford County Agricultural Marketing Cooperative still have Buy Local signs. The metal, double sided signs with stand are available to any Harford County producer of an agricultural product or service. The Buy Local signs are a continuation of the County-wide campaign for citizens to purchase local products. If you are interested, please contact Bill Tharpe by phone 443-907-9379 or email bill.tharpe@yahoo.com.
The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by University of Maryland Extension is implied.

Jeff Myers
Area Extension Director
Harford, Baltimore, and Carroll Counties

Sara Meagher BhaduriHauck
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facebook.com/HarfordAg

Each April, University of Maryland hosts a campus-wide Open House at College Park with activities, displays, and shows featuring all the great work of the University. The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources appropriately calls this celebration “Ag Day” as they host a livestock show, horse show and riding demonstrations, farming activities for kids, fistulated cow demonstration, displays featuring the latest research, free ice cream, many 4-H events, and more! Join us for a fun-filled day to explore the university and all it has to offer. For more details, check out the website at www.marylandday.umd.edu.

Great resources are just a click away!

Bull and Oyster Roast to Benefit Harford 4-H Camp

April 12, 2014
2:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m.
Deer Creek Overlook
Street MD

Come out and support the Harford County 4-H Camp! Tickets for the bull and oyster roast are $35 each or $350 for a table of 10. The menu will include: pit beef, ham, and turkey; oysters and clams on the half shell; pork BBQ; pork loin and sauerkraut; baked macaroni and cheese; fried chicken; homemade potato salad and cole slaw; and draft beer, soda, water, and coffee. There will also be live music performed by Tainted Souls (classic rock, country, and everything in between) as well as raffles, prizes, and more! To purchase tickets, mail a check to Harford County 4-H Clubs Inc, P.O. Box 70, Forest Hill MD 21050.

Spring Bazaar at Deer Creek Overlook

April 13, 2014
10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
Deer Creek Overlook
Street, MD

The Spring Bazaar will feature crafts, artisans, jewelry, collectibles, candles, a mom swap, a man swap flea market, and children’s activities. Food and drink will be available. Bring a donation of non-perishable food for the local food bank and be entered to win prizes! Admission is free for shoppers. For more information or to rent space, contact Cheri Lamey, the Rustic Peddler, at 443-243-1888 or therusticpeddlers@aol.com. Rain date is April 27.
University of Maryland Extension
Harford County Office
P.O. Box 663
Forest Hill, MD 21050