Hello, Harford County!

Thank goodness that spring is upon us! After a long, cold winter, I know I’m not the only one excited to get outside and get to work planting the seeds of this season.

If you direct market any of your farm products, you’re also likely preparing to deal with customers again soon. Even if you don’t deal directly with customers, everyone encounters consumers on a daily basis – whether it’s while you’re out shopping or just with non-farming family members over Sunday dinner.

Dealing with customers, or consumers, is stressful for some folks. Many consumers know what they want in a food product, but many have little knowledge of what goes into producing their food. This dynamic can make a farmer’s efforts to communicate with them challenging and sometimes frustrating. Add this to the fact that farming is a rather introverted career choice and you’ll see that farmers have their work cut out for them in this department.

Consumers – whatever their thoughts, viewpoints, or opinions – are the driving force that supports agricultural production. We want our communication efforts to draw them into our businesses and keep coming back. On a larger scale, we want consumers to have a positive image of agriculture and a trust for the farmers who produce their food. How do we make that happen?

The first step is to make a connection. You won’t know each and every customer by name, but that shouldn’t stop you from connecting to each person as just that – a person. If you sell your products locally, your customers are also your neighbors, and you’re linked by community. Rather than speaking farmer to customer, speak neighbor to neighbor. Maybe you’re both parents. Maybe you both love football. Find those common human connections and let them lead the conversation.

Connection is one piece of the puzzle. Another is positivity. Many of us feel strongly about what we do and the way we do it, and it’s easy to get pulled into the trap of criticizing folks who do things differently. Don’t tell people what to eat. Don’t put down production methods you’ve chosen not to employ. And, although I’m a big proponent of science, don’t use facts and figures to try to convince someone of something. For most people, food is an emotional choice, not a scientific one. Tell others all the great things about your farm. If you’re passionate about what you do on your farm, let that show through. Focus on what’s right, not what’s wrong. The way the conversation makes a person feel is often more valuable than the words that were said.

When all else fails, a smile goes a long way!

Sincerely,

Sara Bhaduri Hauck
Ag Extension Educator
sbh@umd.edu
Upper Chesapeake Dairy Princesses Sought

Attention ladies in dairy! The Upper Chesapeake Dairy Princess program is seeking contestants. Girls 16 to 21 years old with a connection to the dairy industry (either through 4-H, FFA, employment, or family or friend’s farm) are encouraged to participate in the contest on May 30. Girls 13 to 16 years old are eligible to serve as dairy maids. The dairy princess program is a fantastic opportunity for young ladies to network, practice interviewing, attend industry events, experience public speaking, receive training, and gain many other valuable professional skills all while representing the dairy industry. If you have any questions or are interested in participating, please contact Mary Stewart at 443-604-4095 or maryarcher@mindspring.com.

Scholarships Available for Students

Harford County Farm Bureau, Inc. announces the availability of a scholarship 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 30, 2015. An additional scholarship will be awarded to fund the education of a graduating high school senior who has been involved in the 4-H program for at least two years. The candidate’s chosen curriculum does not have to be agriculturally related. For more information or an application, contact Alice Archer of the Harford County Farm Bureau at 410-836-7773 or harfordfb@gmail.com.

The Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board has again committed grain checkoff funds to support their scholarship program. Up to eight deserving students will be awarded $2,500 each. To be eligible, an applicant must be a Maryland resident enrolled or accepted to a 4-year institution working toward a BS degree, or enrolled or accepted to a 2-year institution with an agricultural program. The applicant or the applicant’s immediate family must be involved in the production of grain in Maryland. Applications are available online at www.marylandgrain.com and are due June 1. For more information, contact Marguerite at marguerite.mdag@gmail.com or 410-956-5771.

“Farming Liability and You” for Farm Women

As the final installment of our 2015 Women in Agriculture Supper Seminar series, join us to hear from Ashley Newhall, University of Maryland legal specialist, about liability issues that affect all farms. Being educated about your risks is the first step to reducing them. If your produce makes someone sick, if a car traveling down your road hits an escaped cow, or if your neighbor reports pesticides from your farm killed her flowers—are you protected? Ashley will discuss some common areas of liability on the farm and steps you can take to reduce your risks. The program will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a hot meal, followed by a lecture, and concluding with a round table discussion that will wrap up at 8:30 p.m. Registration is open to all women with a passion for agriculture, but each session is limited to the first 20 participants. The registration fee of $10 includes dinner. (That’s a great deal for the dinner alone!) For more details, visit extension.umd.edu/annies-project and select the Harford location. Register by calling 410-638-3255 by April 15. For questions, please contact Sara at sbh@umd.edu.
Starting an agricultural business in Maryland is an exciting and challenging undertaking. Careful planning, a good understanding of your numbers, adaptability, and perseverance are often the keys to a successful business start-up. The Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center announces “Your Ag Business: Dream, Plan, Implement!,” a guide designed to put you in the driver’s seat while on the road to making your ag business idea a reality. There are many good tools and resources within this guide to help you along the way. Access the guide online by visiting extension.umd.edu/mredc and clicking on the “Dream, Plan, Implement!” box in the center of the page.

**Maryland’s Cottage Food Business Law**

In 2012, Maryland passed a modified Cottage Law, allowing for citizens to operate a home-based bakery or home food processing company. A copy of the law can be found at the Maryland General Assembly website. This bill establishes requirements with regard to cottage food businesses (i.e., businesses that produce or package cottage food products in a residential kitchen for annual revenues of up to $25,000 from the sale of those products). The bill specifies that a cottage food business in compliance with these requirements is not required to be licensed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). A “cottage food product” is a nonhazardous food that is sold at a farmer’s market or public event. DHMH must adopt specified regulations to carry out the bill.

Under the law, the owner of a cottage food business may sell only cottage food products that are stored on the premises of the business and prepackaged with a label that contains (1) the name and address of the business; (2) the name, ingredients, and net weight or net volume of the product; (3) allergen information specified by federal labeling requirements; (4) if any nutritional claim is made, nutritional information as specified by federal labeling requirements; and (5) a printed statement that the product is made by a cottage food business that is not subject to Maryland’s food safety regulations. In addition, the owner must comply with all applicable county and municipal laws and ordinances regulating the preparation processing, storage, and sale of cottage food products.

**Products that may be produce under the Cottage Food Industry law include:**

- High acid fruit jams and jellies
- Non-potentially hazardous baked goods
- Hard candy
- Honey

Cottage laws can be helpful since they can reduce the amount of start-up cash a business owner may need since the owner might not have to pay business insurance or rent a building. On the other hand, the laws must be enforced to protect citizens from food that might get them sick or products that might be unsafe. Cottage food laws often limit the retail outlets for this type of food. However, starting small and learning about operating your own business and feedback about your specialty food product is priceless.

For more information on this topic and other similar topics, including labeling as discussed above, visit the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center.

**Pesticide Private Applicator On-Line Recertification**

If you would like the opportunity to learn from home yet still be engaged, then be sure to enroll in this online version of the private applicator recertification training. The session will focus on pesticide use and related topics for all field crops, fruits, and vegetables. This training will be conducted via the Internet directly from University of Maryland. A high speed cable or satellite Internet connection is required. Registration is required by April 8 in order to receive login instructions. To register, contact the Anne Arundel County Extension Office at 410-222-3906.
Have Your Received Your New Certification Card?

If you’ve attended a pesticide private applicator recertification class or a nutrient applicator voucher renewal session recently, you have probably been checking your mailbox waiting to receive your new certification cards. These cards are important: the pesticide private applicator card is required to purchase restricted-use pesticides, and the nutrient applicator card must be included with your nutrient management plan. Knowing how the renewal process works can help you understand when to expect to receive your cards. After you attend a qualifying meeting and sign the official Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) attendance form, we send the forms to MDA for processing. Processing can take a few weeks. Once processed, nutrient applicator cards are mailed directly to you. If you attended a pesticide training, you will not be mailed a new card right away but instead will receive a renewal form in the mail. The nutrient applicator card is free, but the pesticide private applicator card carries with it a $7 renewal fee. Once you return your paperwork and payment, expect to receive your new pesticide card within a few weeks. If you haven’t received something you expected to receive, call the Extension Office at 410-638-3255 and let us know. We can check with MDA on the status of your renewals.

Operator Certification for Nursery Nutrient Management

April 7, 2015
9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.
Central MD Research and Education Center
Ellicott City, MD

A training will be offered to growers who are interested in attaining Farmer Training Certification for writing nutrient management plans for their own nursery and greenhouse operations. This certification allows operators to sign-off and submit their own plans and annual implementation reports. The training day on April 7 will teach participants how to write a plan. After the training day, participants will have approximately five weeks to study the Nursery Nutrient Management Training Manual and develop their plan. There will then be an exam/sign-off day during which participants will sit for the certification exam and review their newly written plans with the trainers. The process is relatively simple for small and low-risk operations; if your operation is less than 5 acres, consider becoming a certified operator. The fee to attend the April 7 training is $20 per person. Lunch will be provided. The exam/sign-off day is tentatively scheduled for May 12, location to be announced. To express interest in this training, please contact Mike Webster at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, (410) 841-5957 (state that it is for Nursery FTC). For other questions or for directions, contact Andrew Ristvey at (410) 827-8056 x113.

Online Recertification for Nutrient Applicator Vouchers

April 17, 2015
4:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m.

If you would like the opportunity to learn from home yet still be engaged, then be sure to enroll in this online version of the private applicator recertification training. The session will focus on fertility and production related to all field crops, fruits, and vegetables. This training will be conducted via the Internet directly from University of Maryland. A high speed cable or satellite Internet connection is required. Registration is required by April 15 in order to receive login instructions. To register, contact the Anne Arundel County Extension Office at 410-222-3906.
Pasture-Based Meat Goat Test Accepting Nominations

The nomination period for the Western Maryland Pasture-Based Meat Goat Performance Test is April 15 through June 1. Any goat producer may nominate up to 5 male goats, of any breed or breed cross, with or without registration eligibility. Eligible goats must have been born between January 1 and March 15, 2015, and weigh between 40 and 70 pounds upon delivery to the test site on June 26. This is the 10th year of the Maryland test. It was established in 2006 to evaluate the post-weaning performance of meat-type bucklings consuming a pasture-based diet, with natural exposure to internal parasites. While on test, goats are evaluated for growth, parasite resistance, and parasite resilience. The 10 top-performing bucks will be recognized. For more information or to consign, visit the meat goat test blog at mdgoattest.blogspot.com. All documents pertinent to the test can be downloaded from the blog. Contact Pam Thomas at (301) 432-2767 x315 or pthomas@umd.edu to have a nomination packet mailed to you. All nominations received by the deadline will be treated equally.

Junior Sheep and Goat Skillathon

May 3, 2015
8:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.
Howard County Fairgrounds
West Friendship, MD

The 2015 Junior Sheep & Goat Skillathon will be held Sunday, May 3, at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival. A skillathon provides youth with the opportunity to blend knowledge and skills acquired in livestock judging, demonstrations, and care and exhibition of animals into a single activity. It consists of a series of stations where youth are tested on their knowledge and abilities related to livestock. In the Sheep & Goat Skillathon, all stations will pertain to sheep and/or goats. 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. Registration for the contest begins at 8 a.m. The contest starts at 9 a.m. Awards will be presented at approximately 1 p.m. A small donation is requested to cover the cost of lunch (pizza and sodas). Pre-registration of individuals and teams for the 2015 Junior Sheep & Goat Skillathon is requested by April 28. Teams must be pre-registered. 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, contact Susan at (301) 432-2767 x343 or visit the skillathon website at sheepandgoat.com/programs/skillathon/skillathon.html.

Sharps Use and Handling with Livestock

From University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension, Environmental Health and Safety

Sharps are items that can easily puncture the skin. Examples include needles, razor blades, and broken glass. All sharps must be handled and disposed of in a manner that protects you and others from exposure and possible injury.

Promptly dispose of all sharps in a rigid sharps container. Accounting for items before and after a procedure, and prior to clean up, can help reduce preventable injuries.

Rigid sharps disposal containers are available in a variety of shapes and sizes that can easily be incorporated into daily use. Lightweight plastic beverage containers should not be used. Needles and scalpel blades can easily puncture these containers, injuring the handler.

Re-purposed containers used for sharps must satisfy the following requirements:

- Must be labeled as “Sharps.”
- Must be labeled as “Do Not Recycle.”
- Must be rigid, leak and puncture proof, and sealable.

Needlesticks are one of the most common injuries in large animal husbandry, so caution should be exercised to minimize the risk. Recapping needles
should be avoided whenever possible as this is a common cause of needlesticks. Directly dispose of the needle into an approved sharps container.

**Best Practices**

- **DON’T** set needles down in areas or on surfaces where you or others could subsequently be stuck by the needle.
- **DO** ensure that animals are restrained, to the best extent possible, before uncapping a needle for use. Many needle stick injuries happen when trying to use a needle on an unrestrained animal.
- When applicable and feasible, needles should not be recapped to ensure staff safety.
- When working chute side, spent needles should be removed with pliers and disposed of in an appropriate sharps container. In some instances, the plastic needle cover may be replaced to facilitate removal of the needle from the syringe. The use of punctureresistant gloves is encouraged (e.g., HexArmor SharpsMaster II® 9014)
- **NEVER** recap a needle containing products toxic to humans (i.e., Micotil®)
- All puncture wounds from an accidental needle stick are considered dangerous, regardless of needle status (clean, sterile or used). If a needle stick should occur, wash area with soap and water, and notify your supervisor of the incident.
- **DO** not dispose of needles and scalpels with everyday trash. Sharps should be placed in approved sharps containers. If using disposable syringes, do not remove the needle from the syringe prior to disposal; place the entire syringe with attached needle into the sharps container. If you are using a glass syringe or an auto-injector and must remove the needle, use mechanical means such as pliers. Do not remove the needle with your fingers. Fill the sharps containers only 2/3 full to prevent potential injuries when disposing of sharps.
- If using containers other than approved sharps containers (e.g., laundry detergent bottles), render sharps non-infectious by covering sharps in a disinfectant solution before encasing. Fill containers no more than half-full of sharps, then add sufficient encasement compound such as concrete or cement to entrap all the sharps. By filling containers only half full, there’s room to do mixing within the same container. Seal the container.

**Reminders**

Use the appropriate needle size/gauge for the situation. Use the smallest needle possible to complete the injection, but large enough to prevent the needle from breaking off in the muscle. Primary considerations in needle selection include route of administration, size of animal, and location or site. Secondary consideration in needle selection includes viscosity of the fluid (how thick and tenacious the fluid is) and volume/amount of fluid injected.

**When to Change Needles**

- Immediately if the needle bends. (DO NOT USE BENT NEEDLES.)
- If needles become contaminated with feces, dirt, or irritating chemicals.
- If the needle point is damaged or burrs develop.
- Before the needle becomes dull (every 10 to 15 animals).
- Between livestock with known blood borne infectious disease.
- Based on your veterinarian’s instructions.

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**New Body Condition Score App Available**

HorseBCS is a new mobile application created by eXtension-Horses, the University of Nebraska, and Purdue University that gives horse enthusiasts a fun and easy way to monitor and record their horse’s body condition score. Check it out at www.tinyurl.com/horsebcsapp. The app allows you to take a photo of the horse, record its body condition for each of the major points, and then save the photo, stamped with the horse’s name, date and location. The tool is great for any horse owner, but especially for those who want to be able to track the condition of their horses. Commercial stables can use this to document the condition of horses in their care, volunteers working with 4-H youth can use it to help their members learn to evaluate their own horses, and people in law enforcement who may be called out on horse neglect cases can use it to accurately and consistently record the condition of horses they see. The app is a must-own for any horse owner, and is available for $1.99 at the iOS/Apple store/iTunes and Android/Google Play. Just search “HorseBCS”.
Introduction to Farriery Workshop

May 15, 2015
3:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Baltimore County Ag Center
Cockeysville, MD

Through a combination of lecture and demonstration, casual horse enthusiasts and professionals alike will gain a better understanding of hoof care and management. The program will begin with a lecture covering anatomy and physiology of the hoof, how hoof health and function is affected by conformation, skills associated with trimming the balanced foot, and when shoes are necessary. Dinner will be provided, followed by a demonstration of the trimming and shoeing process on a live horse with ample time for questions. Instruction will be provided by Chris Diehl, Certified Journeyman Farrier. Anyone is welcome to register; no experience is necessary. The program will be geared toward adults but may be suitable for older youth. The workshop is limited to 20 seats on a first-come, first-served basis; the deadline to register is May 12. Registration is $30 per person and includes all program materials and dinner. Participants may register online at www.introtofarriery.eventbrite.com (additional processing fees apply) or by calling the Harford County Extension Office at 410-638-3255 and paying by check. If you require special assistance to attend this program, please contact the Harford County Extension Office by May 1. For more details about the program, call the Harford County Extension Office at 410-638-3255 or e-mail Sara at sbh@umd.edu.

New Horse Discovery Centers and the MD Horse Chase

From the Maryland Department of Agriculture (abridged)

The Maryland Horse Industry Board, a program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture, is launching a statewide network of 35 Horse Discovery Centers in 15 counties during the month of April. These centers are carefully selected, licensed stables that are welcoming people of all ages and experience levels into their barns to learn about horses in a friendly and knowledgeable environment.

“We know from our research that there are thousands of Marylanders interested in becoming involved with horses, either as riders or spectators, but they don’t know where to go or how to get started.” said MHIB Chair Jim Steele. “The Horse Discovery Centers are the answer.”

The breadth and diversity of the stables in the Discovery Center network is wide and deep. They range from trail riding centers to Western riding operations to horse rescues and stables offering summer camps, English equitation, even Civil War re-enactments. Geographically they are located in all regions of the state.

Last year MHIB invited its more than 700 licensed stables to volunteer to become a Horse Discover Center if they were willing to meet stringent criteria and eagerly welcome newcomers with open arms to educate them about horses and horsemanship. A total of 68 stable owners responded and attended five information workshops throughout the state. Of these, 45 applied to join the program and 35 met the certification standards of an MHIB inspection team. Criteria included proof of commercial liability insurance; written programs and procedures addressing safety rules and public outreach; clean, sanitary conditions, equipment and facilities; and of course, well cared for and healthy horses.

To launch the program, MHIB will host a statewide scavenger hunt called the Maryland Horse Chase from April 6 to April 26. Kickoff festivities for the first Maryland Horse Chase will be held from 8 a.m. to noon on Monday, April 6 at the Graham Equestrian Center, 10301 Harford Road in Glen Arm.

Those who participate in the Horse Chase will comb the state, earning points by completing 75 simple horse-related photo, action and text challenges at the 35 physical locations and online. There is also the opportunity to earn points by answering bonus challenges. Participants who earn the most points will be able to redeem them for nearly 130 horse-themed prizes. All entrants will also receive free admission tickets to the 2015 Maryland Million on October 17; horse treats provided by Flax Jax, the official Treat
Introduction to Beekeeping Workshop

Farmers and landowners interested in beekeeping should plan to attend this six-hour introductory workshop hosted by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore’s Small Farm Outreach Initiative. The program will provide an overview of what it takes to become a honey beekeeper; the value of keeping bees, both environmentally and personally; local nectar sources for honey production; pollination benefits from honeybees; how to care for honey bees; equipment needed; and a host of other topics to help participants get started with beekeeping. The cost to attend is $20 per person plus $15 for each additional family member. For more information and to register, contact Candy Walter at 301-868-9366. Online registration is also available at introductiontobeekeeping.eventbrite.com.

Chainsaw Safety, Operation, and Maintenance Workshop

May 3, 2015
12:30 p.m.—4:30 p.m.
Baltimore County Ag Center
Cockeysville, MD

The chainsaw is an amazingly powerful tool, but without proper training and knowledge it can be a very dangerous tool. This workshop is a combination of classroom and practical components – including felling and clearing. Whether you work on a farm, in your backyard, or in a wood lot, this course is for you! The program will cover personal protective equipment, parts of a saw, saw operation and maintenance, chain sharpening, reactive forces, open face notch, bore cut, tree felling information, wedges, hazard tree management, and spring pole management. Limited spaces are available, and participants must be at least 16 years old. Registration is $25 per person. Instructor Saul Passe has been working in the tree industry for fifteen years and is currently the Arborist for Baltimore County Highways Department. For more information and to register, contact the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council at 410-887-8973.

Maryland Day 2015

April 25, 2015
10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
College Park Campus

Join us on campus on the last Saturday in April for our annual “open house”! Maryland Day has become one of the most popular annual events in the Washington/Virginia/Maryland region. The campus opens its doors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (rain or shine), offering more than 400 free events, free parking, free on-campus transportation, and many food choices. Throughout Maryland’s 1,250-acre campus, visitors can take tours, explore exhibits, and attend demonstrations. The university is divided into six areas: Ag Day Avenue, Arts Alley, Biz and Society Hill, Science and Tech Way, Sports and Rec Row, and Terp Town Center. Come find out why Maryland is increasingly known as a center of innovation, creativity, and social change. Visit www.marylandday.umd.edu to learn more.
Nominations Sought for Two Maryland Boards

The Maryland Department of Agriculture is seeking nominations for two advisory boards. The Maryland Young Farmers Advisory Board, which advises the Maryland Agricultural Commission and the Secretary of Agriculture on issues affecting young farmers, is seeking nominations to fill one vacancy. To be considered, applicants must be Maryland residents under the age of 45 and derive at least 50% of their personal income from farming. The Maryland Young Farmers Advisory Board meets the third Wednesday of January, April, July, and October from noon to 3:00 p.m. The Maryland Agricultural Commission, an advisory board to the Secretary of Agriculture representing all major commodities in Maryland, is seeking nominations to fill eleven positions. The open positions represent agriculture education, agri-tourism, bio-fuels, consumer, dairy, field crops, horticulture, nursery, organic, turf, and veterinary. To be considered, applications must be Maryland residents and have experience in the field they are interested in representing. Appointments are made by Governor Larry Hogan, and each member is eligible to serve two, 3-year appointed terms, depending on the Governor’s decision on the appointment. The Commission meets the second Wednesday of each month from 9:00 a.m. until noon. To be considered for any of these positions, contact Jessica Armacost at jessica.armacost@maryland.gov or 443-883-0217 for more information and application forms. All forms must be received by April 24.

Collection of Ag Plastics

Building on the success of the farm tire collection that took place in 2014, Harford County Farm Bureau is now working with the Harford County Department of Public Works, Division of Environmental Services, to schedule the collection of agricultural plastics. The following plastics will be acceptable for recycling: polypropylene bale twine; white supersacks and feed bags; colored or dirty supersacks; clear stretch wrap; clear greenhouse covers; white bale wrap; clean and bundled drip tape; and stacked, polystyrene greenhouse trays. All plastics should be as clean as possible and stored under cover to minimize moisture. Farmers should separate the plastic by type (i.e., do not mix baling twine in with stretch wrap) and make sure that the bundles of plastic can be handled by one person. Anyone can drop off plastics for recycling—you do not need to be a member of Farm Bureau. For questions, contact Alice Archer of Harford County Farm Bureau at 410-836-7773.

New Office for Soil Conservation, FSA, and MDA

The Harford Soil Conservation District, Farm Service Agency, and Maryland Department of Agriculture field office that was previously located on Newport Drive has moved! Their new location is in the Forest Hill Industrial Park at 2205 Commerce Road, Suite C. All phone numbers and e-mail addresses will remain the same. As of the printing of this newsletter, internet and phone services are being installed and should be functional very soon.
April 2015

Ad Nots

Harford County Newsletter

University of Maryland Extension
Harford County Office
P.O. Box 663
Forest Hill, MD 21050