Hello, Harford County!

On December 23, Governor-elect Larry Hogan named Joseph (Joe) Bartenfelder the new Secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture. You are probably interested to learn a little bit about the man who will be the new head of MDA. I know I am.

Bartenfelder is a long-time farmer from our neighboring Baltimore County. His family now lives on the home farm in Preston and also owns and operates two other farms in Hurlock, all on the Eastern Shore. His wife and four children are all actively involved in the farm business. Any given Sunday, Bartenfelder can be found at the Baltimore City Farmers’ Market selling his fruits, vegetables, and flowers. His family also sells produce wholesale, raise poultry, and grow wheat, beans, and corn. He has over 30 years of experience as a farmer and small businessman.

The Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) has been receptive to Bartenfelder’s appointment. Valerie Connelly, MFB executive director, commented that his farm background is “very important to the Farm Bureau and its members.”

Bartenfelder is a member of both Baltimore County and Caroline County Farm Bureaus.

He’s also got experience in elected office. Bartenfelder served three terms in the Maryland House of Delegates and four terms on the Baltimore County Council.

Bartenfelder attended Calvert Hall High School and then Towson State University, earning a B.S. in business administration.

All of Hogan’s appointees, Bartenfelder included, must be approved by the legislature before they are sworn in later this winter. It’s both an exciting and anxious time as we prepare to welcome a new leader to our department, and I’m sure we will all learn more about Mr. Bartenfelder after he assumes his new role.

As an aside, Hogan’s appointments secretary, James (Jim) Fielder, is a farmer from Harford County.

Sincerely,

Sara Bhaduri Hauck
Ag Extension Educator
sbh@umd.edu
Women with a passion for agriculture won’t want to miss our 14th annual regional conference! We’ll kick off with a pre-conference on February 12 from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. with sessions on agri-tourism and ag law before an evening harness racing reception. The main conference will feature keynote speakers Jennie Schmidt, the “Foodie Farmer,” and Justin Berk, Meteorologist and President of Just In Weather, LLC and closing speaker Kate Ziehm, President of Morning Ag Clips, LLC. Breakout session topics will include marketing strategies that work for your farm, the woes of social media privacy, the magic of digital photography, how the 2014 Farm Bill applies to you, computer maintenance and security, introduction to soil health, farm food safety, and more. For a link to registration and more details, visit extension.umd.edu/womeninag/2015-conference.

Women in agriculture won’t want to miss this opportunity to network and learn from local professionals on a variety of farm-related topics. Each seminar will begin at 6:00 pm with a hot meal, followed by a guest speaker, and concluding with a round table discussion that will wrap up at 8:30 pm. Register for all or just for the sessions that interest you! 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 about each session, visit extension.umd.edu/annies-project and select the Harford location. Register by calling 410-638-3255 at least a week in advance of each session. For questions, please contact Sara at sbh@umd.edu.

February 4, 2015 – “Speaking to the Public on ‘Hot Topics’ in Ag”
Jennie Schmidt, MS, Registered Dietician, and farmer (thefoodiefarmer.blogspot.com)

March 4, 2015 – “Legal Documents Every Farmer Should Have”
Rajiv Goel, Esquire, Offit Kurman Attorneys at Law

Jim Kilgalen, Director and Senior Clinician, Kilgalen and Associates

April 22, 2015 – “Farming Liability and YOU”
Ashley Newhall, Agriculture Legal Specialist, University of Maryland Extension

A spin-off of the Annie’s Project course, this class will focus on “Goal Setting to Retirement: Steps to a Successful Agriculture Business.” Topics will include finding a marketing niche, value added products, leasing and renting, opportunities with FSA and NRCS, loan preparation, human resources and labor, navigating health care, identity theft, financial planning, and more. Class will be held every Tuesday evening from January 13 through February 17. Registration is $75 per person. For more information, call 410-887-8090. A link to online registration is available at extension.umd.edu/annies-project.
Join us for our annual Midwinter Meeting to learn the latest in agronomy research and news from University of Maryland researchers and specialists. Topics this year will include: palmar amaranth is here, now what?; seed treatments and in-row insecticides; managing legal risk on the farm; nitrogen use, application, and management; and soil health and nitrogen cycling. A hot lunch will be served. As in the past, attendance for the full day will count for pesticide private applicator recertification credits and nutrient applicator voucher credits. Registration is $12 if you payment is received before February 10 and $15 if you pay at the door. To register or for questions, call the Harford County Extension Office at 410-638-3255.

Regional Hay and Pasture Conferences

Three regional hay and pasture conferences across Maryland and Delaware will provide opportunities for farmers as well as agribusiness and agency personnel to obtain practical and useful information that can make a difference. Topics will include: some little known facts that can make a difference in your bottom line, improving hay and pasture quality through new developments in alfalfa, cool season grass variety trial results, nutrient needs and common deficiencies of forage crops, when and how to fertilize hay and pasture crops, herbicides for hay and pasture, and more. Credits will be offered for certified crop advisors, pesticide applicators, nutrient management applicators, and conservation planners. Three conferences will be held: Delmarva Hay & Pasture Conference, January 13, Delaware State Fairgrounds, Harrington, DE; Southern Maryland Hay & Pasture Conference, January 14, Baden Volunteer Fire Hall, Brandywine, MD; and Tri-State Hay & Pasture Conference, January 15, Garrett College, McHenry, MD. There is no registration fee for the Delmarva conference and lunch will be available on site for purchase. Registration fee for the Southern Maryland conference will be $15 per person by January 7 and $20 at the door. Checks should be made payable to University of Maryland and sent to Hay & Pasture Conference, University of Maryland Extension, PO Box 663, Leonardtown, MD 20650 (phone: 301-475-4484). Registration for the Tri-State conference will also be $15 per person by January 7 and $20 at the door. Checks should be made payable to Garrett EAC and sent to Hay & Pasture Conference, University of Maryland Extension, 1916 Maryland Highway, Suite A, Mtn. Lake Park, MD 21550 (phone: 301-334-6960).

Fruit and Nut Tree Academy 2015

Join orchard expert Ben Howard for a 5-session course in tree species and biology, soil and planting techniques, pruning and tree care, comprehensive site design, and more! Meeting at the beautiful Homewood Friends House adjacent to the Baltimore Museum of Art at 3107 North Charles Street, this class will meet February 1 and 15 and March 1, 15, and 29. Cost is $125. For more details or to register, contact Outreach@BaltimoreOrchardProject.org. (Source: Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation’s “The Buzz” newsletter.)
As with all animals, death is a part of life with a poultry flock. This fact is important to consider before starting a flock. Whether a bird is kept as a pet or a producer of food, it will die eventually. Animal welfare is an important matter at this end-of-life time.

Why are end-of-life plans necessary? Whether you raise poultry as pets or for egg production, you will face end-of-life decisions related to members of your flock. Poultry can suffer from a wide variety of diseases that can make them very sick with little hope of recovery. When a pet or an egg layer contracts such a disease, you must make a decision about whether to end its suffering.

Moreover, even healthy hens will not lay eggs indefinitely. A hen that lays eggs for two to three years can be considered a successful layer. If you raise poultry for egg production, culling can be an important tool for maintaining an economically sustainable laying flock, so you may wish to remove any poorly performing hens.

How are end-of-life plans implemented? Various methods for euthanizing poultry exist. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has a 2013 edition of guidelines for euthanizing animals, which includes a section about euthanizing poultry.

In a research setting, euthanasia of poultry typically is achieved by giving an overdose of an anesthetic. Because such drugs are controlled substances, they can be administered only by personnel who are registered with the US Drug Enforcement Administration. Consequently, the use of anesthetics as a method of euthanasia is not feasible for home use. You may take a bird to a veterinarian for drug-based euthanasia, at a cost. Before doing so, it is a good idea to call to find out the veterinarian’s availability and willingness to perform this procedure.

Some home flock owners use decapitation when processing poultry for meat consumption. However, cutting the jugular veins is a cleaner choice for processing chickens. Commercially, poultry are electrically stunned to render them unconscious before cutting the jugular veins to bleed out the birds.

More readily available and acceptable methods include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and inert gases.

Carbon dioxide is the most commonly used gas. Using this gas will result in involuntary motor activity; the bird will be unconscious but may flap its wings.

Carbon monoxide also may be used, but even more convulsions may occur. When using this method, it is important to achieve a concentration of at least 6 percent carbon monoxide quickly. Tailpipe emissions from a car are not a suitable source of carbon monoxide.

Some researchers have started using the inert gases nitrogen and argon, either individually or in combination, but these gases typically are not available for backyard use. Inert gases can be obtained from a welding supply shop or soda distributor. If using an inert gas, it is preferable to double-bag a bird in heavy-weight trash bags before filling the bags with the gas. This procedure must be performed outside and never while alone.

Cervical dislocation. The neck of a bird can be broken manually or mechanically. It is important to achieve a complete separation of the vertebrae from the skull or crushing of the spinal cord. In manual cervical dislocation, the legs of the bird are grasped, and the neck is stretched by pulling on the feet while applying a down-and-upward rotational force on the skull. This method must be performed by someone who is trained in the procedure.

Blunt-force trauma. Turkeys or broiler breeders that are too large for cervical dislocation can be killed by accurately hitting them on the head to cause blunt-force trauma. The back of the skull (the medulla oblongata portion of the brain) is the desired location.
Sheep and Goat Pasture Management Webinars

Wednesdays in February and March
7:00—8:30 p.m. from your home computer!

The University of Maryland Small Ruminant Extension Program will host a winter webinar series on consecutive Wednesday evenings in February and March 2015. The focus of the webinar series is Pasture Management for Small Ruminant Producers. Sub-topics include: planning a pasture system (Feb. 4); pasture plants, including alternative forages (Feb 11); pasture and grazing management (Feb 18); pasture nutrition (Feb 25); and pasture health problems (Mar 4). The instructors for the webinars will be Jeff Semler, county Extension agent in Washington County, and Susan Schoenian, Extension Sheep & Goat Specialist. Jeff and Susan conduct the Western Maryland Pasture-Based Meat Goat Performance Test. Each webinar will begin at 7 p.m. EST and last for approximately 60 minutes. Each will be followed by a 30 minute question and answer period. Anyone with an internet connection may participate in the webinars; high speed access is recommended. Pre-registration is not necessary for any of the webinars. Instead, interested persons are asked to subscribe to the University of Maryland’s webinar listserv. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.umd.edu. In the body of the message, type “subscribe sheepgoatwebinars”. The webinar listserv is used to communicate with webinar participants and notify subscribers of upcoming webinars. All webinars will be recorded and converted to YouTube videos that can be viewed later. For additional information, contact Susan Schoenian at sschoen@umd.edu or visit sheepandgoat.com/programs/2015webinars.html.

Maryland Buyer-Grower Expo

The Maryland Department of Agriculture will host a Buyer-Grower Expo to connect Maryland growers, producers, and processors with buyers from grocery retailers, restaurants, schools, institutions, and other venues. More than 400 registrants attended in 2014, including produce farmers, artisan cheese and ice cream producers, beef and bison farmers, grocery store representatives, chefs, school nutrition directors, distributors, economic development officials, University of Maryland Extension, and regional agricultural marketing officials. The event is designed to help growers, producers, and processors find new markets for their products. To register or for more information, visit www.marylandsbest.net. The exhibit fee for Maryland growers, producers, and processors is $40. There is no fee for buyers to attend. For questions or help registering, contact Stone Slade at 410-841-5779 or stone.slade@maryland.gov. (Source: MDA)
Brief History

Let me paint you a picture. It’s the year 1911 and the Spur family begins farming in Maricopa County, AZ, about 15 miles west of central Phoenix. In 1956, Spur’s predecessors begin developing feedlots.

In May of 1959, Del Webb begins planning an urban retirement community to be known as “Sun City” 10.5 miles north of Spur’s feedlot. Before the development of Sun City, there was nothing near the feedlot for miles. By May of 1960, there were 450 to 500 houses completed or under construction. By 1962, the area where both industries resided looked like the following:

By 1965, the Del Webb community had expanded, coming within 500 feet of Spur’s feedlots. The enterprises now looked like this:

As you might have already guessed, having a large neighborhood abutting a cattle feedlot brought many issues. The smell of manure and abundance of flies affected the current residents of Sun City and inhibited housing sales.

Del Webb brought suit for an injunction against Spur, which would have forced Spur to halt or move their business. Ultimately the court granted the injunction but required Del Webb to pay Spur the costs of moving or shutting down the operation.

Reasoning Behind the Court’s Decision

You might be wondering why the court forced the Spur feedlot to move and required Del Webb to pay for the expenses associated with the relocation. First, this case came about before there was any such thing as a “right-to-farm” law. Right-to-farm laws generally provide immunity from nuisance actions brought against agricultural producers as a result of conditions created by their operation as long as certain requirements, stated by statute, are fulfilled. So prior to the right-to-farm law, the court actually had a choice as to what it wanted to do and was not required by law, or statute, to deny Del Webb’s injunction request.

Next, let’s look at the questions which actually needed to be answered in the lawsuit in order for the court to come to its ruling:

- May a lawful business that becomes a nuisance due to a subsequent residential development be required to move or cease operation?
- If the nuisance may be moved or ceased, may the developer (Del Webb) be required to pay the nuisance (Spur) the cost of its move or cease of operation?

The court answered YES to both of these issues. In its reasoning, the court said that Spur was a public nuisance, meaning dangerous to public health and “any condition or place in populous areas which constitutes a breeding place for flies, rodents, mosquitoes and other insects which are capable of carrying disease-causing organisms to any person or persons.” However, it was not due to any wrongdoing or unlawful acts by Spur, but was “because of a proper and legitimate regard of the courts for the rights and interests of the public.” The court went further to state that since Del Webb knowingly “came to the nuisance” (building and planning the community within a knowing distance from Spur’s operation), to the “foreseeable detriment of Spur.”
Thus Del Webb was required to pay Spur all the costs of moving or shutting down. As you can see, this was likely a very costly and headache-ridden case. Spur Industries v. Del Webb was finally decided in 1972, almost 10 years after the lawsuit was filed. It was because of cases similar to this – where residential or urban communities moved into a rural, agricultural area where the dust, noise, and smell are a common occurrence – that right-to-farm laws came about. Public policy did not support pushing out and forcing producers to move their operations after existing for many years because new neighbors decided they did not actually enjoy living next door. Not only does it appear unfair, it is also potentially costly to continue in the way the Spur v. Del Webb court was going. No producer wants the nightmare of moving animals and the entire operation, nor do they want the neighbors forced to pay the thousands of dollars in relocation costs.

New Publication: “Manure as a Natural Resource”

A new publication discussing alternative management of manure is now available from University of Maryland Extension. New technologies are coming available to help manage various types of manure. Extension Bulletin EB-420 discusses some options (transport, composting, energy use) and what some of the benefits and costs may be. It is meant to be a general guide for any future discussion of technology choices, which change rapidly. You can read the publication online at extension.umd.edu/anmp/manure-and-organic-sources or call our office to request a copy.

**FLVs and Nutrient Management Planning**

*By Patricia Hoopes, Nutrient Management Advisor, Harford County Extension Office*

The University of Maryland recommends 8 different labs to use when testing soil for nutrient content. These labs are guaranteed to work for Nutrient Management Planning in Maryland. However, the soil analysis results are not directly comparable between labs.

**There are four main reasons lab results are not comparable:**

- Extracting solutions vary between labs. Chemical extracting solutions are used on soil samples to extract plant-available nutrients. Different extractants are used for the same nutrient because the plant-available forms of a nutrient can vary from one soil region to another.
- Different procedures are used at the various labs in processing soils.
- Labs may report the nutrients in different forms (phosphorus or phosphate).
- Labs may report in different units of expression (pounds per acre or parts per million).
- These differences between labs may make it inaccurate to directly compare one lab results with another. However, lab results can be converted to the University of Maryland Fertility Index Value numbers (FIV).

**FIV numbers makes everything easier!** Once the lab result numbers are converted to a common unit of measure, the FIV numbers, then converted results are directly comparable. These resulting numbers can be put into the NuManPro program, along with other pertinent data, to generate the University of Maryland crop recommendations. (The NuManPro program is what we use to develop Nutrient Management Plans.) The FIV levels give a general expected response to fertilization as seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil Test Fertility Index Value</th>
<th>Soil Test Category</th>
<th>Likelihood of Yield Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-25</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>Optimum</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>Excessive</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on this topic, call Tricia Hoopes at the office and ask for Nutrient Manager “Focus On: Soil Testing and Nutrient Recommendations”.

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By Patricia Hoopes, Nutrient Management Advisor, Harford County Extension Office
Firewood and pellets are the renewable fuels of choice for residential users, accounting for 70% of residential renewable energy consumed in the US. It is also the fastest growing residential heat fuel in Maryland and the US, with a 33% increase from 2000 to 2010. While solar and geothermal systems require an investment of tens of thousands of dollars, a two or three thousand dollar investment in a wood or pellet stove can pay for itself in a few years and is within reach of most middle class American families. While fossil fuel prices are low now, that is unlikely to continue.

One of the greatest challenges for wood users, new and experienced, is determining when wood is properly seasoned to burn. Many retailers and buyers of firewood don’t understand that wood needs to dry to 20% moisture throughout the log in order to maximize efficiency and minimize emissions. Freshly-cut wood moisture is very high (40% or more) and will not burn well in wood stoves. Even if you get it to burn, most of the heat is used to drive off the water in the log, providing little heat.

So how do you properly season wood? It needs to be cut and split to expose the surface area of the log, then stacked and covered to keep rain off the pile, keeping the sides open to allow air movement and promote quick drying. Proper drying can take 6 to 9 months, not weeks. The importance of splitting wood to promote drying was made clear in a recent study where hickory logs were cut into rounds and split, but other logs were just cut into rounds and not split. After a year the split logs were at 20% moisture but the unsplit logs, when split, still had moisture levels of over 30% — too wet to burn.

The Woodland Stewardship website has fact sheets to help users properly season wood, but there is a simple meter that can take away the mystery. A moisture meter has four prongs that can be pushed into the wood to provide a moisture reading. First, you need to split the log to get the interior moisture because the outside may be dry but not the inside. The meters can be purchased at wood stove retailers, some big box stores, and online. For the $20 or $30 cost you can be sure your wood is dry enough to burn. If you buy wood, before the load is dumped, split a few pieces of wood and see that they are in the low 20% range. If not, let the supplier know because his wood is not properly seasoned. After that you can negotiate because it will need time to season.
The Harford County Farm Bureau will host a farm trucking forum in conjunction with the State Highway Administration and the Maryland State Police. They will present current compliance rules and regulations including commercial vehicle inspection and registration (K-tags) among others and feature safety inspection demonstrations. For more information, contact Matt Teffeau at Maryland Farm Bureau, 410-922-3426 or mteffeau@mdfarmbureau.com.

Agriculture Energy Efficiency Grants

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) is again offering the Kathleen A. P. Mathias Agriculture Energy Efficiency Program. Subject to funding availability, this program will provide grants to farms and businesses in the agriculture sector to cover up to 50% of the cost of energy efficiency and/or renewable energy upgrades. Applications must be submitted by January 30. MEA will host information webinars on this grant program on January 7 at 10:00 a.m. and January 22 at 1:00 p.m. (For an invitation to the webinar, contact Erin Kelly at erin.kelly@maryland.gov.) For more details and an application, visit energy.maryland.gov/business/mathiasag14.htm.

Introduction to Beekeeping Short Course

The Maryland Agricultural Resource Council will host a 2-day beekeeping short course (with one additional field day to be held in the spring, date to be announced). The course will focus on the guiding principles of beekeeping to help beginners build a framework to continue their educations as beekeepers. Topics will include: understanding the players in the hive, how the hive operates as a collective unit, time line of a typical season, signs of a healthy hive, and common pest and diseases and ways to identify them. Registration is $60 per person. For more details and to register, visit beekeepingmarc.eventbrite.com.

Great resources are just a click away!

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Area Extension Director
Harford, Baltimore, and Carroll Counties

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Harford County Newsletter

Ag Notes

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