Hello, Harford County!

If you’re a seasoned “Ag Notes” subscriber, you may remember receiving a survey asking about your farming operation and your preferences for learning more about farming. That survey – what we call a needs assessment – provided me with a lot of helpful information about how I could better serve you and has guided many of my decisions in the Extension Office.

Over the past few weeks, I’ve been revisiting the results of that needs assessment so that I could formally share them. I’ve compiled some highlights from the needs assessment into a report that you can find inside this newsletter. Those who completed the survey might remember the last question allowed space for respondents to write in any additional comments. In reviewing the results, I also re-read every comment. I sincerely appreciate each person’s feedback, and each comment was meaningful to me and to UME. There were lots and lots of great ideas included about how we could improve the services that Extension provides, and I wish we could implement every one of those great suggestions: more programs for beef producers, more farm visits and agent availability at the farmers’ markets, and evening and weekend office hours, to name a few.

If you haven’t noticed any change in response to the survey, or if we didn’t implement your idea, you might think that we’re just all talk. I don’t intend to offer excuses, but I do think that transparency into our organization is an important part of the Extension-client relationship. The main reason we simply can’t offer more for ag producers is staffing. Currently there is one agriculture position in the Harford County Extension Office. Every ag program that comes from Harford County Extension is created, planned, and implemented by me with assistance from a shared administrative assistant.

Besides time, the other drawback of having only one ag faculty member is expertise. My training and experience is with livestock, specifically horses, which is why most of the programs you’ve seen offered in Harford County are geared toward horse owners or folks who are new to farming and looking to just learn some basics. Fortunately, I can call on ag faculty in other counties as well as on specialists at the university for questions that are outside of my scope of expertise. Occasionally the specialists are available to conduct programs in Harford County. In most cases, there is one specialist per commodity (admittedly in some cases, no specialist at all), and that person is also conducting research and/or teaching undergraduate courses on campus while also serving Extension offices in all 23 counties.

I’m sharing this information because I believe in the mission of Extension and know that the ability to improve what we offer at the county office level is limited. To do more, we need more people – more county educators and more university specialists.

The economic climate in Maryland has been tumultuous, and the University – Extension included – has been impacted by recent budget cuts and hiring freezes. Like many other industries, we continue to do more with less. However, it’s important to realize that...
the University is a state-funded institution. Our county office is also partly funded by Harford County government, and we value the county’s generous support. As a citizen and taxpayer of Maryland and of Harford County, you have the right — and the responsibility — to express how you think funds should be allocated. If you think Extension provides a worthwhile service, and if you want the scope of those services to grow, I encourage you to share these thoughts with those decision makers who can impart the change: your county council members, state legislators, and the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

I look forward to the day when we have the opportunity to do more for our agricultural producers. In the meantime, I’ll continue to serve you through Extension in the best way I know how. I’ll also reiterate the mantra I’ve adopted working here: if you need assistance, don’t hesitate to ask. Despite our limitations, we have a lot to offer, and we are best able to help those that reach out and ask for it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Maryland Commodity Classic

**July 23, 2015**

10:00 a.m.—5:30 p.m.
Queen Anne’s 4-H Park
Queenstown, MD

Don’t miss the 17th Annual Maryland Commodity Classic for an educational program, good fellowship, good food, and some good discussion. The keynote speakers will be the Peterson Farm Brothers, whose YouTube music parodies have created awareness of today’s family farmers. New this year, tours of checkoff funded projects will be held at the 4-H Park beginning at 10:00 a.m. The program will conclude at 4:00 p.m. with a crab feast and pork and chicken barbecue. Tickets can be purchased at the gate for $10 for entry prior to 2:30 p.m. or $20 after 2:30 p.m. Lunch will be available for purchased from 4-H clubs. The Commodity Classic is co-sponsored by the Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA), Maryland Soybean Board (MSC), Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board (MGPUB), and Mid-Atlantic Soybean Association (MASA). For questions, contact Lynne Hoot at 410-956-5771.

Cover Crops Sign-Up Open Through July 15

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has announced that its 2015-2016 Cover Crop Sign-Up will take place June 24 through July 15 at soil conservation district (SCD) offices statewide. This popular program provides grants to help farmers offset seed, labor and equipment costs associated with planting cover crops on their fields this fall to control soil erosion, reduce nutrient runoff and protect water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. New this year, cover crop mixes containing crimson clover, Australian winter peas or hairy vetch are eligible for grants. There are two planting options for farmers. Traditional cover crops receive a base rate of $45/acre and up to $45/acre in add on incentives for using highly valued planting practices. They may not be harvested, but can be grazed or chopped for livestock forage on-farm use after becoming well established. Harvested cover crops qualify for $25/acre with a bonus payment of $10/acre if rye is used as the cover crop. Last fall, Maryland farmers planted the largest cover crop in Maryland history, a record 478,000 acres. This helped to prevent roughly 3 million pounds of nitrogen and 95,000 pounds of phosphorus from impacting Maryland waterways. Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA); abridged.

For more information or to enroll, contact the Harford SCD at 410-838-6181 ext. 3.
The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has confirmed the presence of the invasive, highly destructive emerald ash borer (EAB) beetle in four more counties, including two on the Eastern Shore: Baltimore, Harford, Dorchester and Queen Anne’s counties. The discovery is expected to bring the state under a federal EAB quarantine. In 2011, MDA enacted a quarantine prohibiting the movement of hardwood from the 14 counties west of the Chesapeake Bay and Susquehanna River to the Eastern Shore. The quarantine was designed to protect the Eastern Shore counties from getting the EAB for as long as possible. With the recent discovery of the EAB on the Eastern Shore, MDA expects the State of Maryland to become a part of the federal quarantine. Once that happens, MDA intends to rescind the state quarantine, which will no longer be needed.

Ash products affected include: all ash wood with the bark and sapwood remaining, ash nursery stock, all hardwood firewood, and hardwood chips larger than 1 inch in 2 dimensions.

The EAB is an invasive wood-boring beetle, native to China and eastern Asia. It probably arrived in North America hidden in common wood packing materials. It was first detected in the United States in 2002 and arrived in Maryland in 2003. Since then, the EAB, which is known to travel by attaching itself to hardwood, has steadily made its way across the state, killing, damaging and defoliating thousands of ash trees. Ash trees are one of the most common landscaping trees used in the United States and are common in western Maryland forests. Ash is also the most common tree in Baltimore, accounting for about 5.9 million of the metro area’s 6.6 million trees.

To combat the destructive beetle, MDA began releasing biocontrol agents – that is, other insects that can attack and kill the EAB in 2009. MDA will be releasing them again this year in at least four areas, though a fifth may be added later in the season. The four sites are in Charles, Anne Arundel (2) and Howard counties. MDA has released more than 210,000 parasitoids in eight counties since 2009, with continued releases in the future.

In addition, MDA encourages homeowners, campers, vacationers, and outdoor enthusiasts not to move firewood. When it comes to firewood, burn it where you buy it. Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA); abridged.

**Pesticide License Renewal Now Online**

Businesses, public agencies and commercial applicators can now renew their pesticide licenses, permits or certificates online from any mobile or desktop device, 24 hours a day, through the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) website. This online service also allows those renewing licenses to print their renewal certificates directly from a computer. Along with renewals, consumers can search an online database for certified businesses, applicators and dealers of pesticides. Searches offered online also include information about pesticide renewal and recertification courses. Renewals and database searches can be done at [www.egov.maryland.gov/mda/pesticides](http://www.egov.maryland.gov/mda/pesticides). Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA); abridged.

**Toxic Plants and Accidental Poisoning**

*By Sara Bhaduri-Hauck, University of Maryland Extension—Harford County*

Many plants that are commonly found in and around pastures and hay fields can cause poisoning in livestock animals. In many cases it may be impossible to completely remove all toxic plants, but having the proper knowledge about how to manage against poisoning by toxic plants can be enough to prevent it.

In most cases, livestock will avoid eating toxic plants as long as there is adequate other forage available. Livestock are more likely to consume toxic plant materials:
Toxic Plant Profile: Hemlock

By Sara Bhaduri Hauck, University of Maryland Extension—Harford County

There are two types of hemlock: water hemlock and poison hemlock. Although counterintuitive, water hemlock is ten times more poisonous than poison hemlock.

Water hemlock is a native perennial that thrives in wet areas. This is the most poisonous thing an animal can eat. All parts of the plant are poisonous, but the root is the most potent. Eight ounces (just a handful) of the root will kill an adult horse, cow, or human. The toxic compound is cicutoxin which targets the nervous system, causing paralysis to the respiratory system, seizures, and ultimately death. Most often, animals that accidentally ingest water hemlock are killed quickly and found dead. Water hemlock is an erect, branching plant that can grow up to 8 feet high. It has a hollow stem and very distinctive small, white or light green flowers arranged in an umbel configuration.

Poison hemlock is an invasive biennial that is commonly found in disturbed soils. Toxicity varies with plant maturity; it’s most toxic in the spring before it flowers. Like water hemlock, the root is most poisonous although all parts of the plant are toxic. Poison hemlock contains several alkaloid toxins that are structurally similar to nicotine. Like cicutoxin, these alkaloids target the central nervous system and cause paralysis of the respiratory muscles. Although there is no antidote, affected animals may spontaneously recover if they have eaten only a small amount of the plant. Poison hemlock looks quite similar to water hemlock. It is also a tall growing, branching plant with an umbel of white flowers. The leaves, however, are more finely divided and somewhat fernlike. The stems can have purple blotches, and the plant can have an unpleasant musky odor.

Since hemlock is so poisonous, livestock managers should scout pastures and hay fields for these weeds and take steps to prevent animals from accessing them. Glyphosate is usually an effective control, especially when applied before the plant flowers, but it may need to be reapplied for complete control. Don’t compost hemlock plants because the toxin doesn’t break down.

When working with hemlock plants, take precautions to protect yourself. The toxin is most potent when ingested but can also be absorbed through the skin or inhaled. If you’re pulling plants by hand, wear gloves; if you’re mowing them, it’s a good idea to wear long sleeves and a face mask. (Mowing, however, won’t kill the hemlock plant.) When you’re finished, take a shower and...
Harford County, located in north central Maryland, is largely a suburban county but still retains a significant and thriving agricultural industry with 75,000 acres (27%) of the county’s land area devoted to farming. Population and development in the county have increased over the past decade, however, which has created many obvious pressures for the industry. Harford County’s agricultural producers need access to unbiased information to help them adapt to the changing face of the county.

University of Maryland Extension (UME), in its land grant mission, is tasked with providing outreach education to the farming population of the counties within Maryland. In 2012, UME faculty conducted a needs assessment of Harford County’s agricultural clientele to determine the educational needs of the population. Highlights of the survey are outlined here and are being used to guide UME faculty in developing effective educational events and resources.

Survey Technique
A seven-page written survey instrument was developed to collect information regarding the scope of agricultural enterprises operated by respondents. Respondents were also polled on their preferences for resource materials and educational events. The survey and all supporting documents were reviewed and approved by the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board.

The survey was sent to all addresses subscribed to Harford County Extension’s agricultural mailing list (n=499). Materials, as described below, were sent either via postal mail or e-mail, depending on the subscription preference of the addressee. A multiple mailing technique was used in order to maximize the response rate. Participants were first sent a letter explaining the purpose of the survey and informing them that they would be receiving the survey. One week later, participants were sent a cover letter and the survey instrument. Postal mail recipients received a hard copy of the survey and a stamped, return envelope. E-mail recipients received a link to complete the survey online. A reminder was sent to non-respondents two weeks after the initial mailing.

Data was collected during July and August 2012. Forty seven percent of the recipients completed the survey.

Survey Results
Who responded to the survey?
Of the respondents, 77% were over the age of 50; 33% of respondents were over the age of 65. 75% of respondents were male. 99% of respondents were Caucasian. Respondents represented a variety of education levels. 72% of respondents had attended at least some college and 49% had a college degree. 85% of respondents had Internet access at home and 83% were using e-mail.

Conclusions: Respondents to this survey were primarily older white males. This mirrors the demographic of Harford County’s farming population but also underscores the fact that fewer young people are working in agriculture. As older clientele retire from agriculture, Extension needs to seek out new clients and must ensure that resources and programs meet the needs of this new generation. Strategies needed to reach these new clients will not necessarily align with the best practices implied by the results of this survey. It is also noteworthy that despite the fact that many clients are of an older generation, most respondents have Internet access at home and are using e-mail.

What types of farms and businesses are represented by those who responded?
- Of the respondents, 68% were operating a farm business intended to produce profits. 42% of these also worked off the farm. Of those who also worked off the farm, 27% held an off-farm job that was related to agriculture.
- 11% of those who operated a farm business hosted agritourism or special events for the public on their farms.
- 60% of those who operated a farm business sold products produced on the farm directly to consumers.
- 71% of respondents (156 out of 219) raised livestock. Of those raising livestock, 58 raised equines (horses, donkeys, and/or mules), 55 raised beef, 30 raised poultry, 17 raised dairy animals (lactating cows, dry cows, replacements, and/or heifers), 15 raised goats, and 14 raised bees. Of the number of livestock raised by respondents, 55% were game birds, 22% were poultry, 11% were dairy animals, 7% were beef, 1.5% were equines, and 1.5% were sheep. Respondents also reported raising swine, goats, and rabbits to a lesser extent.
- 76% of respondents (166 out of 219) grew crops. Of those growing crops, 86 grew pasture and forage crops, 64 grew field crops for cash sale, and 61 grew field crops to support livestock. Of the number of acres of crops grown by respondents, 59% were field crops for cash sale, 20% were field crops to support livestock, and 17% were pasture and forage crops. Respondents also reported growing vegetables, fruit trees, nursery/greenhouse crops, and Christmas trees to a lesser extent.

Conclusions: The majority of clientele are farming for profit, but a significant percentage of farm operators supplement their farming income with off-farm jobs. More than half of producers are involved in direct marketing so assistance in this area would be widely applicable. Distribution of producers raising livestock and growing crops was fairly even. Most crop producers are growing either forage and pasture crops or field crops; therefore programs should be focused in these areas. Livestock programs should focus on equines, beef, poultry, and dairy, as these species represent the greatest number of livestock producers surveyed and also the greatest proportion of animals raised.

What educational resources do respondents utilize, and how have they utilized Extension in the past?
- Roughly half of respondents had accessed UME publications, interacted with UME faculty, or attended an educational event sponsored by UME in the previous
• Most respondents had a favorable impression of UME. More than 85% of respondents believed that UME has an effective agricultural education program and an excellent reputation in the community. 86% responded that they were likely to go to UME if they had a question or problem on their farm.

• 70% of respondents typically attend at least one educational program about farming per year. Of these, typically 63% attend at least two programs per year. Of the 149 respondents who had attended educational programs about farming in the previous 12 months, 25% had attended UME programs. Respondents also attended programs hosted by Maryland Department of Agriculture (15%), agri-service providers (14%), Farm Bureau (8%), and private businesses or farms (8%).

Conclusions: UME has a positive reputation within the community of agricultural Extension clientele, and respondents indicated that they would go to UME for assistance with a question or problem. However, only about half of respondents had accessed UME resources in the previous 12 months. It’s possible that respondents view UME as a resource for questions but don’t actively seek resources otherwise. Almost three-quarters of respondents attend educational programs, and more than half of those attend more than one program per year. While resources are widely accessed, more respondents attend programs so efforts should focus on program development over resource development.

What are respondents’ preferences for programming and receiving resources?

• The most preferred method for receiving resources was by newsletter with 80% of respondents utilizing information delivered via this method. Other popular methods included via the Internet (utilized by 47%), and farming newspapers (utilized by 46%). The most preferred method of notification of upcoming Extension programs was via newsletter (selected by 71%), followed by e-mail (selected by 56%), and farming newspapers (selected by 24%). Only 6% of respondents indicated that they prefer to hear about upcoming programs via website postings or social media.

• In terms of scheduling of programs, respondents were most likely to attend a weekday evening program, followed by a weekday daytime program or an online course. Respondents were least likely to attend a daytime webinar or an all day weekend program. Respondents were most likely to attend programs in January, February, and March and least likely to attend programs during summer and fall months.

• In terms of type of program format, respondents were most likely to attend a demonstration workshop or field day/barn meeting. Respondents were least likely to attend a round table discussion.

The majority of respondents (38%) were willing to travel to a neighboring county for educational programming. 35% were willing to travel only to programs within Harford County.

Conclusions: Newsletters were overwhelmingly selected as the preferred method for respondents to receive resources and notification of upcoming programs. While website postings and social media were not highly preferred, they may be useful platforms for reaching new, younger clients who did not respond to this survey. Availability to attend programs reflects the seasonality of farming: respondents are most likely to attend in winter months. There is also a strong preference for hands-on program formats and programs in Harford or a neighboring county. Scheduling preferences were varied, but weekday programs, both daytime and evening, were generally preferred.

Response-Driven Changes to Programming

Publication of newsletters will continue. Due to the overwhelming positive responses regarding newsletters, the Harford County “Ag Notes” newsletter will continue to be published monthly and will include notice of upcoming programs as well as timely educational articles. Communications outside of the newsletter will be utilized as appropriate, but “Ag Notes” will be designated as the primary means of communication with clientele. Efforts to connect new clients with Extension will rely heavily on increasing distribution of the newsletter.

Efforts will be taken to connect the younger generation with Extension. As demonstrated by this survey, there is clearly a deficit of young producers connected with Extension. Since the younger generation represents the future of agriculture, it is imperative that Extension reach out to build relationships with these potential clients. In the short term, younger producers will be targeted through social media and building online networks through current clients. Ideas are currently being explored with assistance from Maryland Department of Agriculture via the Young Farmers program and the National Young Farmers Coalition.

Specialists will be sought to host more programs in Harford County. Harford County’s Extension clientele represents a diverse range of enterprises, but currently the county’s Extension Office employs only one agriculture faculty. In an effort to connect producers with
Reminders for Fruit Growers

By Patricia Hoopes, Harford County Nutrient Management Advisor

Are your fruit tissue sample analyses and soil analyses up to date? It is once again that time of year to consider your sampling needs. Sample analyses are good for three years. If you need to update your analyses, this is the time of year to prepare to do that. Nutrient recommendations for mature (bearing) perennial fruit crops are based primarily on plant tissue nutrient concentrations and secondarily on soil test. It is important that the soil sampling and tissue sampling be done at the same time and in the same area. Sampling the appropriate plant part at the appropriate time is very important for accurate analyses and therefore reliable recommendations. The table below gives sampling times, and areas to sample for various crops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Time to Sample</th>
<th># of Samples/ Plant Part</th>
<th>Location on Plant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blueberries</td>
<td>1st week of harvest</td>
<td>40 leaves (detach petioles)</td>
<td>Current season’s growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brambles</td>
<td>Aug 1 – 20</td>
<td>60 leaves (detach petioles)</td>
<td>Select the most recent fully expanded leaf blade of each primocane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit trees</td>
<td>Jul 15—Sept 1</td>
<td>50 leaves and Petioles</td>
<td>Select shoots at eye level from around outside of the tree. Select shoots that make a vertical angle of 45-60 degrees to the ground. Remove 1 or 2 leaves from the mid-portion of the current season’s growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>At full bloom</td>
<td>75 petioles</td>
<td>Remove the petiole across from the first blossom cluster, closest to the cordon or permanent cane.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reducing Property Taxes Through Forest Management

From “Branching Out,” University of Maryland Extension’s Woodland Stewardship Newsletter

Property tax rates vary widely across the state of Maryland, but woodland owners have several options available to them to obtain a lowered property tax assessment. They include: 1) enrolling in a forest management program; 2) qualifying for an agricultural assessment; and, 3) donating or selling a conservation easement. This article will provide information on the forest management programs.

The Maryland Department of Assessments & Taxation (cited in State of Maryland Property Tax Article 8-211) offer two programs for this purpose, known as the Woodland Assessment Act: 1) the Forest Conservation Management Agreement (FCMA); and 2) the Forest Management Plan (FMP). Many woodland owners have purchased woodland or land capable of producing woodland (pasture or cropland), only to find they are being assessed at the high residential rate. Regardless of which forest management program a landowner may choose, the property tax reduction may be significant, depending on the area you are located. However, the difference in woodland assessment value per acre between each program is small ($125 per acre for the FCMA & $187.50 per acre for the FMP). Each program has its advantages and disadvantages.

To take advantage of the FCMA or FMP, the landowner must get a written forest stewardship plan for their property developed by a licensed professional forester. The landowner must have at least 5 wooded acres, or land that can be put into woodland. Some landowners may have an old pasture or lawn that they want to plant with trees or that they will allow to transition naturally. An acre is usually removed for the house, so in practicality the landowner usually needs at least 6 acres total to qualify for these programs. Service foresters with the Maryland DNR Forest Service will develop a 15-year plan for properties of at least 10 acres (cost is usually $200-$275), but smaller property owners would have to use the services of a consulting forester, which may cost more for plan preparation. There are some cost-share programs available that will pay for plan preparation and for tree planting as well. The plan and associated activities are developed based on landowner objectives but they are not written in stone – they can be modified with the agreement of the forester.

The FCMA is a legal agreement binding for 15 years and is attached to your deed. The DNR service forester in the county usually handles the arrangements. The entry fee is equal to 0.55% of the land’s assessed value and there is a $100 inspection fee every 5 years. In contrast, the FMP requires the landowner to get the plan developed and then submit it to the county tax assessment office. A DNR service forester can prepare the plan (minimum of 10 acres) or a consulting for industrial forester can do it as well. Most counties require the property to be inspected every 3 years by a licensed professional forester to make sure the activities are being implemented. One of the big advantages of the FMP is that there is no legal attachment to the property deed nor any time commitment, so the landowner can exit the program when they please. This provides the landowner a lot of flexibility.

It may be advantageous for owners of agricultural properties with woodland to use one of the woodland assessment programs, depending on the county. Some counties assess agricultural land at a flat rate while others use the soil capability class to set the assessment value, with more fertile land paying a higher assessment. Woodland is usually included in that assessment. In some cases the per-acre assessment may be significantly higher than either of woodland assessment options. Farmers and other landowners with an agricultural assessment that is higher than $187.50 per acre may benefit by putting their woodland in a FMP or FCMA. The landowner would have to consider the cost of plan preparation and other fees mentioned above, but it is worth consideration for some.

For more information on this topic, check out University of Maryland Fact Sheet 630, “Tax and Estate Planning for Maryland Forest Landowners”.

Extension Does Watershed Protection, Too!

Did you know that – in addition to agriculture, 4-H, horticulture, and nutrition programming – Extension also has a branch dealing with watershed protection? It’s called the Sea Grant Watershed Protection and Restoration Program. Harford County’s Extension watershed specialist, Krisztian Varsa, is shared with Baltimore and Carroll Counties and Baltimore City and works primarily out of the Baltimore County office. Krisztian and his partners across the state conduct classes and workshops for homeowners, provide technical assistance to help communities meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals, and connect watershed science to policy makers and community leaders. If you’re interested in this Extension program, check out their quarterly newsletter, Headwaters. The newsletter and more information about the program is available at extension.umd.edu/watershed.
When Can You Call a Product Local?

By Sarah Everhart, Legal Specialist, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law
Reprinted from the Maryland Risk Management Education Blog

We have all seen products advertised as locally grown or locally raised at farmers markets and on menus of all manner of restaurants. But when can the term local be used, and what does it mean? Is a Delaware watermelon local or must a product advertised in Maryland as locally grown be from a Maryland farm?

The U.S. Congress in the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act found that the total distance a product can be transported and still be considered a “locally or regionally produced agricultural food product” is fewer than 400 miles from its origin, or within the State in which it is produced. However, that definition has not been nationally adopted and has not been used to control labeling of products.

Back in 2010, at the request of Maryland Agriculture Secretary Earl “Buddy” Hance and with unanimous approval from the State Legislature, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) formed an advisory board to draft regulations on how and when agricultural products could be labeled “local.” In June 2011, the regulations became effective and now require persons, including wholesalers, retailers, farmers markets, and restaurants who advertise agricultural products as “local” to disclose certain information about that product.

Specifically, a person may not advertise an agricultural product as “local” or “locally grown” unless the advertisement includes a disclosure of the place of origin of the product, which means the state where the product was grown or raised or, in the case of fish or shellfish, the state where the product was raised or landed. This prohibition applies to raw meat, eggs, fish, fruits, vegetables, shellfish, and processed dairy products. Processed foods do not fall under this regulation. A person who knowingly violates the local labeling regulation is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine not to exceed $500 or imprisonment not exceeding three months or both.

According to an article in the Baltimore Sun from January 5, 2011, MDA officials had originally hoped to define local more exactly (by mileage, for instance), but the designation became problematic. For now, whether a local watermelon was grown in Maryland or Delaware is all the information legally required; as to what exactly local means, the State has left that decision up to the individual consumer.

Maryland Ice Cream Trail Officially Open

Maryland Agriculture Secretary Joe Bartenfelder has announced the official start of the 2015 Maryland’s Best Ice Cream Trail. The trail is made up of eight dairy farms across the state that produce and sell ice cream directly to consumers. The eight farms on the Ice Cream Trail stretch more than 290 miles from Ocean City in the east to Washington County in the west. Creameries on the trail include: Broom’s Bloom Dairy (Harford County); Chesapeake Bay Farms (Worcester County – with two locations); Keyes Creamery (Harford County); Kilby Cream (Cecil County); Misty Meadows Farm Creamery (Washington County); South Mountain Creamery (Frederick County); Prigel Family Creamery (Baltimore County); and Rocky Point Creamery (Frederick County). Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA); abridged.

Did you know that July is National Ice Cream Month? Yum!

Great resources are just a click away!

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

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Agriculture and Natural Resources

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July 2015

Ag Notes
Harford County Newsletter

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