Hello, Harford County!

At this time of year, I never fail to get calls about buttercup infestation in pasture. Pastures are plagued with all types of weeds, but for some reason buttercup seems to be the most irritating to people!

Perhaps folks are vigilant about buttercup because its toxic to livestock and they want it gone. That’s pretty logical. But, have you ever seen a horse or a cow eat buttercup? I haven’t. The fact is that lots and lots of plants are toxic, but animals will very rarely eat them as long as there is other food available.

That’s not to say you shouldn’t be on the lookout for toxic plants and try to control them, but it does mean that a little bit of buttercup in the field probably isn’t going to hurt anything. As long as animals have enough grass or hay to nibble on, they typically won’t get hungry or bored enough to eat something toxic.

There are a few exceptions to that rule, though. Buttercup is toxic but not very potent so an animal has to eat a lot of buttercup to die. Highly toxic weeds, on the other hand, should be controlled as quickly as possible. The two of biggest concern in this area of the country are hemlock and yew. Hemlock is a perennial herbaceous weed with small white flowers. There are two types of hemlock (poison hemlock and water hemlock, which is actually the more poisonous of the two) and both are deadly. Yews are ornamental coniferous shrubs. You won’t find them growing wild in the field, but they are popular in landscaping. Both hemlock and yew are highly toxic when fresh and when dried. As little as half a pound of either can prove fatal for an adult cow or horse.

Yews are ornamental, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be concerned about them. Check out your surroundings – at home and out and about, if you take your animals to competitions – to see if yew is growing nearby. If an animal gets loose, all plants are fair game to be eaten. If your neighbor has yew growing, you may want to let him know about its toxic properties, too. Sometimes well-meaning but uneducated neighbors dump yard waste into pastures as a treat for the animals or just because they need a dumping area.

Aside from hemlock and yew, there are lots of other plants that are moderately toxic and should not be allowed in or near animal areas. I’ll be writing some articles about specific toxic plants in the upcoming issues of “Ag Notes” to help you get acquainted with some of the most common.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
MDA Launches Farmers’ Market Price Reporting

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service, will begin a pilot project reporting the prices of products sold at five farmers markets in the state. MDA is also now reporting prices from livestock auctions in Western Maryland and grain prices from around the state under the same agreement with the Federal Market News Reporting Service. The farmers’ market price reporting program will give a snapshot of the retail prices of local produce and other food products. The information gleaned through this program may be used by the USDA Risk Management Agency as it improves crop insurance products for produce farmers. Currently, there is little reliable data on sale prices for produce sold through retail farmers markets. Farmers’ market managers at five markets in four jurisdictions -- Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Prince George’s and Alleghany Counties -- will gather information for weekly reports. Other markets throughout the state will be added as the pilot program progresses. Farmers whose prices are included will not be identified and their information is confidential. Each market will have its average prices reported. The farmers’ market price reporting program will begin in June. Prices will be posted on MDA’s Maryland’s Best web site, www.marylandsbest.net, under the Market News tab. Reports now available on the Maryland’s Best web site include prices paid for grain and soybeans in the state, and livestock auction reports from Friends Livestock Auction in Garrett County and Four States Livestock Auction in Washington County. These reports are also distributed to agricultural newspapers in the state. Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture (abridged).

2015 Lambing and Kidding School

Hold the date! The 2015 Lambing and Kidding School will be held Saturday, December 5 at North Harford High School in Pylesville. The school will feature separate educational tracks for youth and adults. The youth program will be mostly hands-on. The main speaker will be Dr. Richard Ehrhardt, the Small Ruminant Specialist at Michigan State University. In addition to working with both large and small-scale producers, Dr. Ehrhardt is involved in the training of veterinary students. Detailed information about the 2015 Lambing & Kidding School, including registration information, will be available soon. Proceedings from previous schools may be downloaded from http://www.sheepandgoat.com.

MDA Revises Poultry Fair and Show Policy

As highly pathogenic avian influenza continues to spread in midwestern states, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, in an abundance of caution, has revised its 2015 Fair and Show Requirements for poultry. Effective immediately, waterfowl will be not allowed to enter Maryland Fairs and Shows. All poultry, both in state and out of state, must be tested for avian influenza within 10 days prior to entry, or originate from a NPIP Avian Influenza Clean or Monitored flock. At this time, the MDA is not ordering the closure of Maryland Fairs and Shows to poultry other than for waterfowl. However, MDA is constantly monitoring the situation. If highly pathogenic avian influenza enters our region, MDA will order a complete closure of all poultry from Maryland fairs and shows. Any questions, please call the MDA Animal Health Program at 410-841-5810. Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture (abridged).
More than 33 million birds have been affected by the current outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) sweeping across 20 states from the Pacific Northwest to the Midwest regions of the country. While cases have not been reported on the East Coast, poultry growers and workers on the Delmarva Peninsula should be aware of how HPAI is transmitted and the necessary measures to prevent it.

Although these types of outbreaks do not pose any risk to human health or food safety, the effects are economically devastating to the U.S. poultry industry. A 1983 outbreak of avian influenza in the Mid-Atlantic region cost the federal government more than $62 million to eradicate. Egg, broiler and turkey producers lost nearly $200 million. The current outbreak of HPAI was first detected in a captive gyrfalcon in Washington State and in a backyard poultry flock in Oregon in December 2014. As of mid-May, more than 163 cases have been reported and continue to add up daily with most recent outbreaks affecting commercial egg layer flocks in Iowa and commercial turkey flocks in Minnesota.

Migratory waterfowl (ducks, geese, and swans) are the natural reservoirs and serve as carriers for avian influenza viruses. These birds do not get sick from the infection but shed the virus in their feces and contaminate bodies of water such as lakes, rivers and ponds. People and animals or objects that come in contact with infected manure from these birds may then spread the virus to susceptible domestic poultry such as chickens and turkeys.

Because the Atlantic Flyway – a migratory bird route – covers the area from Maine to Florida and cuts directly over Delmarva chicken farms, poultry growers and workers on the Delmarva Peninsula who have contact with live chickens should avoid contact with waterfowl and their manure. More than ever, poultry growers, including backyard flock owners, must practice strict biosecurity measures.

- **Keep poultry away from wild birds.** Keep all poultry away from areas where they could potentially share an environment with wild birds, particularly waterfowl or shorebirds. Ideally, poultry should be housed indoors.

- **Don’t let wild birds (or fecal material) into barns.** Close barn doors at all times. Consider delaying total cleans of finishing farms until the current HPAI outbreak has been contained. This will prevent accidental introduction of contaminated material onto the farm and will avoid creation of watering holes for migratory birds. Do not move equipment into or between barns containing poultry without thorough cleaning and disinfecting, particularly when it is muddy outside.

- **Nothing should enter a barn unless it’s been properly cleaned and disinfected.** Equipment (including parts, loading panels, etc.) should be stored inside so that wild birds (or their droppings) don’t come in contact with it. Avoid driving trucks (such as shavings or delivery trucks) into barns. If that’s not possible, clean and disinfect them thoroughly before entering.

- **Use barn-specific boots and coveralls.** Keep protective gear in the barn’s entryway and use it each time a person enters the barn. Upon exit, remove the coveralls and boots and leave them in the entryway. They should not be worn outside.

- **Eliminate standing water to prevent waterfowl from gathering on the farm.**

- **Address feed spills as soon as they occur to avoid attracting wild birds to the farm.**

- **Eliminate any unnecessary farm visits.** Non-essential personnel should not enter the farm.

- **Report any sick birds or unusual bird deaths** to the Animal Health Program of the Maryland Department of Agriculture: 410-841-5810. To report groups of dead or sick waterfowl, shorebirds or gulls, contact DNR’s Wildlife Section: 1-877-463-6497.

Despite the best efforts of some flock owners, chickens sometimes do get sick and die unexpectedly. Veterinarians who treat pets may not treat poultry or livestock, but your local veterinarian can refer you to someone who treats birds, or you can contact a board certified avian veterinarian. (To find a board certified avian veterinarian in Maryland, go to the Association of Avian Veterinarians website at www.aav.org/search.) If many birds in your flock suddenly die, or if birds have signs of an unusual or severe disease, call MDA’s Animal Health Program at 410-841-5810 to report the problem and for further assistance. (continued on next page...)
The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) confirmed a new case of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDv) in Central Maryland and is alerting swine producers across the state to take proper precautions to protect their herds. PEDv only infects pigs, poses no known public health threat and is not a food safety concern. Mortality rates, however, can be as high as 100 percent in suckling and early weaned pigs.

PEDv was first diagnosed in Great Britain in 1971, and Europe has had periodic outbreaks ever since. The disease was confirmed in the United States in May 2013. It was confirmed in Maryland in November 2013. That case was contained. The latest case was confirmed in late April 2015, and a hold order has been placed on that farm to contain the disease.

Primary clinical signs of the disease are: severe diarrhea in pigs of all ages, vomiting and high morbidity and mortality. It is generally spread among pigs and by infected feces transported into pig areas by trucks, boots, clothing, and the like. Once infected, the incubation period is very short (12-24 hours) and the virus is shed for 7-10 days. Producers who raise swine are encouraged to follow strict biosecurity methods and undertake disinfection procedures, which include the following:

- Limiting traffic (people and equipment) onto the farm;
- Thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting anything coming onto the farm;
- Enforcing downtime requirements and maintaining a log of visitors;
- Taking care when disposing of dead stock particularly if using a communal disposal method;
- Isolating newly arriving animals and continuing to vet discussions about animal health at the herd of origin; and
- Showering before going into the facility where practical and changing into clean boots and coveralls. (Veterinarians should also be careful not to track the virus between herds on their person, equipment or vehicles.)

Producers who suspect their pigs are sick should contact their veterinarian immediately. In June 2014, the USDA made PEDv a "reportable disease," which are diseases of great public health concern. PEDv cases must be reported to MDA and to District 1, USDA, APHIS, VS, Area Epidemiology Officer Dr. Gillian Comyn, 804-343-2563 or gillian.a.comyn@aphis.usda.gov. For more information, contact the Maryland Department of Agriculture Animal Health Section at 410-841-5810.

Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture (abridged)
Carpenter Ants

By Stanton A. Gill, Extension Specialist in IPM and Entomology, University of Maryland Extension

A landscaper brought a bottle of large black ants to our labs. The ants were all over the customer’s kitchen counters. The customer was obviously upset and wanted action. The ants that they brought in were carpenter ants, Camponotus pennsylvanicus (DeGeer). In their natural habitat, carpenter ants aid in the decomposition of dead, decaying trees. They normally nest in logs, stumps, and hollow trees. In May and June I commonly get calls about these ants invading people’s home, usually in kitchens and bathrooms. The large, dark-colored workers often invade homes in search of food. The name carpenter ants implies to many that they are going to cause structural problems to their house, like termites. Not true. The carpenter ants do not have the protozoa in their gut that is found in termites that allow them to digest cellulose (wood). Carpenter ants nest in wet wood. If you have a leaking faucet under the kitchen sink and the wood remains wet for extended periods then possibly carpenter ants might nest in the wood. Repairing the leak and replacing the wood with dry wood is all that is generally necessary. Often they are not nesting in the house but are found out in the landscape nesting in a rotting tree stump or a cavity in a tree. These ants seldom tunnel into dry, sound wood, but they may excavate moist, rotting wood and other soft materials (such as foamed plastic insulation board) to make satellite nests. Rarely will the expansion of a nest into a building’s wooden timbers cause structural damage.

Pesticide Container Recycling

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is offering the empty plastic pesticide container recycling program in 2015. Triple-rinsed (or equivalent), clean, plastic, pesticide containers will be collected. All containers must be made from high density polyethylene (HDPE). The container must have held an EPA-registered pesticide or adjuvant, crop oil, etc. Any size container will be accepted, but containers over 30 gallons must be cut prior to recycling (contact MDA for information). Stained containers are acceptable provided no materials can be smeared or removed when touched by a rubber glove. Please remove lids and label booklets prior to recycling. To ensure a successful program, each individual container will be inspected by MDA personnel. Any container that is not clean will be returned to the owner, who will be responsible for disposing of the container in a legal manner. For more information, including scheduled collection dates and sites in other counties, call MDA’s Pesticide Regulation Section at 410-841-5710.

Do Your Cows Get Out in the Middle of the Night?

By Ashley Newhall, Ag Legal Specialist, University of Maryland. Reprinted from the MD Risk Management Education Blog.

It’s not uncommon to hear about livestock getting out of their pens in the middle of the night. This story frequently comes up in conversation with agriculture operators in Maryland. It even happened on my family’s dairy farm in Arizona growing up (those dairy cows were smart; they headed straight for the swimming pool in 100 degree heat!). As funny as these stories can be, sometimes they can cause tragic accidents. Motor vehicle and livestock (and even wild animal) accidents are a frequent occurrence in Maryland. As areas throughout the state continue to grow, more traffic is seen in Maryland’s rural areas. What does this mean for agriculture operators? You might be asking yourself: What happens if a vehicle hits my cow, horse, goat, or the like and someone is injured? Can they sue me?

In the state of Maryland, owners of livestock which have caused injury can be sued under a negligence standard. In order to prove negligence, the injured party must prove (1) the livestock owner owed a duty of care, (2) that duty of care was breached, (3) causation, and (4)
Horse Trails Coming Soon to Baltimore County Ag Center

If you love horses but don’t own a large parcel of land, riding options can be limited. Soon there will be a new public area open to horse riders and drivers alike. Through a grant from the Maryland Horse Industry Board, and in partnership with My Lady’s Manor Driving Club and Trail Riders of Today (TROT), the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council has been working hard to develop a system of horse riding and carriage driving trails through the Baltimore County Ag Center. The trail will generally circumnavigate the property, hugging the borders. Included will be a flat loop around one of the pastures at the southern end of the property as well as a forested switchback loop at the northern end. Care is being taken to design the trails with safety for the horses and riders as well as all of the other concurrent users of the property. Spearheading the initiative is MARC board member Bill Edelen, who has years of trail design and maintenance background with the National Park Service. Bill is forming a volunteer trail gang. If you’re interested in learning more about volunteering your time to this effort, e-mail Bronwyn Mitchell, Programs Manager, at bronwyn@marylandagriculture.org.

Carriage Fun Day at the Farm

My Lady’s Manor Driving Club will be hosting an afternoon of carriage fun and games. Pack a lunch and bring the whole family! See a variety of horse carts up close, then cheer the drivers on as they navigate a series of 6 farm-themed obstacles including delivering the mail, stealing a flag from the general store, buying an apple, and backing and dropping. Kids will have the opportunity to run the obstacle course (sans horse). Tickets are $5 per carload; funds are being used to help support the ongoing trails initiative. For questions or more information, contact the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council at 410-887-8973 or bronwyn@marylandagriculture.org.
Pre-Sidedress Soil Nitrate Testing: Crucial for Corn!

By Patricia Hoopes, Harford County Nutrient Management Advisor

When growing corn grain or corn silage, soil nitrogen levels are very important for crop health and yields. Fertilizer recommendations, generated for a field that had a previous forage legume crop or manure application, assume a significant nitrogen contribution from the previous crop or manure application. Nitrogen is not a stable compound, and there are many factors that can affect the amount that is actually present when the plant needs it.

The PSNT test takes the guess work out of nitrogen availability. This test determines how much nitrate nitrogen is present in the soil at a critical time. When the results indicate that the nitrogen level is satisfactory, the grower is saved from any more financial inputs. However, when nitrogen levels are found to be too low, nitrogen can be side-dressed at a rate to ensure an adequate crop.

Do your crop recommendations depend on a nitrogen credit from an organic application or a previous forage legume crop? Are you applying less than 50 pounds of nitrogen per acre in your starter fertilizer? If this scenario describes your corn field, it is highly recommended that you schedule a PSNT study to evaluate the nitrogen levels at this critical time.

**Qualifications for PSNT testing:**
- Corn silage or corn grain is being grown.
- Manure or biosolids have been applied this year or in the past two years, OR a forage legume was grown in the previous year.
- Less than 50 pounds of commercial fertilizer nitrogen per acre was applied prior to testing.

**PSNT is not applicable when:**
- More than 50 pounds of commercial fertilizer nitrogen has been applied to the field.
- Commercial fertilizer has been the only nutrient source.
- Irrigation is used.

**When should this test be done?**
This test must be run when the corn is between 6 and 12 inches tall. If the corn is over 12 inches tall the test cannot be completed because results will be invalid. It is recommended that you let your nutrient management advisor know now that you will want this test done to ensure the advisor’s availability. It is also recommended that growers alert their advisors prior to the 6 inch stage. Corn grows quickly during this critical time, and scheduling can be challenging.

For questions on the PSNT test or to schedule testing for your fields, call Tricia Hoopes, Nutrient Management Advisor, at the Harford County Extension Office, 410-638-3255.

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**Nutrient Management Training Course**

If you would like to become a certified nutrient management consultant, this two-day *Fundamentals of Nutrient Management Pre-Certification Training Course* will provide an overview of material covered by the Maryland Nutrient Management Certification Examination that is scheduled for August 7. Topics include state nutrient management regulations, nutrient management principles, basic soil science, and soil fertility recommendations. The non-refundable registration fee is $125 and includes learning materials and lunch. Register by mail by June 1. Applications are available on MDA’s website or by contacting the Harford County Extension Office.

**North American Manure Expo**

The North American Manure Expo combines a trade show specific to manure handling and nutrient management, side-by-side equipment and technology demonstrations, educational opportunities, and tour days that allow participants to experience highlights or local agriculture and manure treatment technologies. For more information, visit manureexpo.org or contact Robb Meinen, Penn State Department of Animal Science (rjm134@psu.edu, 814-865-5986) or Jennifer Brattheuar, Franklin County Conservation District (jbratthaurar@embarqmail.com, 717-264-5499x105).

**Pre-Sidedress Soil Nitrate Testing: Crucial for Corn!**
The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) has announced a grant funding opportunity to encourage Maryland’s independent agricultural producers to engage in value-added activities and pursue financial support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Value Added Producer Grants Program (USDA-VAPG). The USDA-VAPG is a highly competitive nationwide grant program with approximately $30 million available for distribution in 2015. These grant funds can be used for planning or working capital expenses in accordance with USDA regulations. Eligible purposes include feasibility studies or business plans, working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy projects. MARBIDCO is making available Maryland Value Added Producer Matching Grants (MVAPMG) of up to 15% of the amount of a USDA-VAPG award to help an eligible applicant meet the non-federal financial matching requirement. All applicants that meet the MARBIDCO requirements will receive a commitment of matching funds to be included with their federal USDA-VAPG application. A MVAPMG monetary award from MARBIDCO will only be provided to an applicant that is selected to receive USDA-VAPG funding. The application submission deadline for the USDA-VAPG program is Thursday, July 2, 2015. Questions regarding the USDA-VAPG can be addressed to the Maryland/Delaware Office of USDA-Rural Development at 302-857-3629. Applicants seeking to receive a commitment of matching funds from MARBIDCO must submit an application at least two weeks prior to the federal submission deadline. The deadline for submission of MARBIDCO applications is Monday, June 15, 2012 (or postmarked by June 12, 2015). Please visit the MARBIDCO website for more information and to download the MVAPMG application form: www.MARBIDCO.org. Questions about the MVAPMG may also be addressed by contacting Andra Davis, MARBIDCO Financial Programs Specialist, at 410-267-6807.

Maryland Value Added Producer Grants Available

The University of Maryland has announced the appointment of Dr. Craig Beyrouty as dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Dr. Beyrouty has been involved in teaching, research, and extension for more than 35 years. He will officially join the university on November 1, 2015.

“We are extremely fortunate to have Dr. Beyrouty’s three decades of experience teaching and leading in the field of agriculture,” says Mary Ann Rankin, UMD’s senior vice president. “His extensive leadership experience and expertise in the field will be a valuable asset to the university and will take our College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to new levels of success.”

Dr. Beyrouty joins the University of Maryland from Colorado State University, where he most recently served as dean of the College of Agriculture Sciences. In that role, Dr. Beyrouty was the chief administrative and academic officer for the college, leading and overseeing the college’s programs, budgets, and related activities, including resident instruction, research, outreach, and international activities.

“I am honored to join the prestigious faculty and staff in the University of Maryland’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,” says Dr. Beyrouty. “I look forward to helping shape a college that will meet the developing public needs and opportunities of the future in agriculture, families, natural resources and the environment.”

Dr. Beyrouty concurrently served as director of the Agricultural Experiment Station for Colorado State University, which operates research centers in eight locations throughout Colorado and provides broadly based funding for agricultural-related research. Previously he held positions as professor and head of Agronomy at Perdue University and professor at the University of Arkansas. He has led and participated in international research teaching and administrative activities all across the world in...
Grow It, Eat It, Preserve It Canning Workshops

Harford County is proud to offer continuing food preservation classes through October 2015 to provide hands-on experience for both beginning and advanced canners. The course is aimed at introducing the food science principles of high and/or low acid foods to be preserved, as well as the knowledge to safely can. The typical class will include a lecture, followed by experience in the kitchen canning produce that participants will take home the same day. Handouts, fruits/vegetables, lids, jars, and use of canning equipment will be supplied to participants. Space is limited, so registration is required. Registration is $35 per person for the first class and $20 for each additional class attended. Instructor Dr. Shauna Henley is the Family and Consumer Sciences Educator for Harford, Baltimore, and Carroll Counties and is ServSafe certified by the State of Maryland. Register online at www.gieipihc.eventbrite.com. For questions or to register by mail, contact Shauna at 410-887-8090.

Candidates Sought for Dairy/Beef Extension Position

University of Maryland Extension is seeking applicants for a coordinator of the statewide beef and dairy Extension programs. The position is housed within the Department of Animal and Avian Sciences on the College Park campus and will be 80% Extension and 20% teaching. Applicants must have a Master’s Degree in animal science, dairy science, ag business, ag education, or a related field. For best consideration, apply by June 1. Applicants must apply online at https://ejobs.umd.edu/postings/33384.

Maryland 4-H Day at Camden Yards

Support Maryland 4-H while watching the Orioles take on the Cleveland Indians on June 28. Seats are reserved in sections 316-356, rows 12-25, for $14 per ticket (plus an additional 10% service charge per ticket). $5 of every ticket sold will benefit Maryland 4-H. The first 20,000 fans 15 and over will receive an Orioles cap. To purchase tickets, visit www.orioles.com/tix/maryland4h. This offer is not valid at the box office. For any questions or accessible seating, call 888-848-2473 and ask for the ticket services team.

Great resources are just a click away!

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

Sara Meagher Bhaduri Hauck
Faculty Extension Assistant
Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Dr. Beyrouty is a fellow of the Soil Science Society of America and the American Society of Agronomy. He has served as vice chair of the International Rice Root Working Group and president of the Plant Root Environment Working Group. In 1983, he received the Georgia Scarseth Research Award.

Dr. Beyrouty earned his Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in soil chemistry from Perdue University and a B.S. in soil science from Cal Poly State University. Prior to pursuing graduate studies, he mapped soils for the Soil Conservation Service and was a research scientist for Castle and Cooke Foods in Illinois.
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