Meet a Partner—UMES

The Small Farm Institute (SFI) marks a partnership between the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) and the USDA-Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) in the implementation of a Small Farm Outreach Initiative for small-scale, limited-resource, and/or socially disadvantaged farmers and landowners in Maryland and Virginia.

The main goal of the project is to provide educational programs and outreach activities on a variety of Ag-related subjects that will enable farmers to own and operate farm businesses successfully as well as ensure their equitable participation in USDA programs.

The Small Farm Institute coordinates research and extension outreach programs for evaluation and development based on the current issues and interests among small family farm operations. The SFI utilizes facilities located at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore campus and research farm to plan and conduct most program events and activities.

UMES will be hosting a Small Farm Workshop Series featuring a variety of topics, including high tunnel production, grafting tomatoes, and small ruminant Integrated Parasite Management. The series aims to support small as well as beginning farmers and will run from March through April, see our online events page for more information.

March/April Events—click events for more information

3/15-Small Ruminant IPM Workshop
3/19-Small Farm Business & Marketing Experiences class
3/20-Organic Food Gardening Class
3/22-Farriery Seminar
3/22-Saving Seeds for the Future of Heirlooms class
4/1-Rain Barrels & Cisterns Workshop
4/5-Grafting Tomatoes class
4/9-Farming Land in Baltimore Workshop
4/11-Poultry & Rabbit Processing Workshop
4/12-Pasture Management for Horses Seminar
4/16-Backyard Vegetable Workshop
4/16-Urban Soils Class

More events can be found on our site under “events”
Entrepreneurs are Made

Entrepreneurs are made, not born. They can be developed to their full potential when provided training, a support network, and access to resources. They also need to have a sounding board for their ideas and dreams and a trustworthy “reality check” in their business planning process to help them avoid wasting time and resources.

New and beginning farmers, like other entrepreneurs, can greatly benefit from working with an agricultural “entrepreneur coach”, someone who can listen, advise and encourage budding agricultural entrepreneurs.

The Beginning Farmer Success program can provide new and beginning farmers with an Entrepreneurial Coach. This trained agricultural professional can provide one-on-one consulting and access to a wide variety of resources. A copy of the 17 trained Agricultural Entrepreneurial Coaches and videos related to agricultural entrepreneurship are located under the “Dream, Plan, Implement” section of the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development website at www.extension.umd.edu/mredc or for more information contact Ginger Myers at gsmyers.umd.edu.

I Have . . .

✔ Access to Land
✔ Determined Enterprise
✔ Found a Mentor

Use Maryland FarmLINK to find a mentor today!

Featured Video

Value Added Products with Ginger Myers, UME and Robin Way, Rumbleway Farm

Click below to view the video.
Consumers want to get the most “bang for their buck”. Finding a good deal on a quality product increases the likelihood that consumers will return to the vendor for continued service. Producers on the other hand want to offer a quality product but receive ample profit in return. One way a producer can increase their profitability is by diversifying their supply with value added products.

The Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center in conjunction with the Maryland Beginning Farmer Success Project provides detailed information on how to include value added products into the markets of local producers.

**What is Value Added?**

“Any product can be considered value-added if it is originally grown by the farmer and increased in value by labor and creativity. Value-added is a customer-driven process in which the farmer retains more of the food dollar by processing, enhancing, packaging, and marketing the product him/herself. Value-added may also include production methods such as organic, grass-fed, hormone-free, and others”. (http://extension.umd.edu/mredc/specialty-modules/direct-marketing-and-value-added-products).

One example of diversifying with value added products is for a dairy farmer to not only sell milk but also produce ice cream. The dairy farmer could also grow fruit to create new flavors and sell canned fruit jellies or toppings.

Find out more on the Beginning Farmer Success Website under “On Farm Food Processing”.

**On Farm Food Processing**

**Click here to receive this newsletter every month**

To submit information for the monthly newsletter please contact the Beginning Farmer Success Project Coordinator, Andrea Rice at amrice@umd.edu

Please submit information and photos by the first of the month.

“The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to any person and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression.