It's a new year.

New year’s day marks an end to the holiday season for most of us, and so begins the wait for spring. January tends to be a pretty uneventful month for most people. A time to get caught up on work you’ve been putting off, and to start planning ahead. For me, January is a reminder of a difficult topic that most people would rather not discuss, because January is when my grandfather killed himself.

Despite popular belief, suicides are most common in late spring and early summer, not in winter. However, for people like my grandfather, who have seasonal affective disorder (SAD), winter depression is more common and severe. The causes, symptoms, and treatment of depression are very complicated, and vary from person to person. Now, I know depression isn’t a fun topic, and this a farming newsletter, not a mental health newsletter, so why am I talking about it here? Because last year, a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that people working in agriculture – including farmers, farm laborers, ranchers, fishermen, and lumber harvesters – take their lives at a rate higher than any other occupation. The data suggested that the suicide rate for agricultural workers in 17 states (including Maryland) was nearly five times higher than in the general population.

Soon after the CDC’s study became public, Newsweek reported that the death rate by suicide for farmers was more than double that of military veterans. This is likely an under-estimate, as the Newsweek study skipped several major agricultural states, including Iowa. Experts were quick to add that the farmer suicide rate may be even higher, because an farmers often disguise their suicides as farm accidents.

This suicide crisis is not unique to the US, in Australia a farmer kills themselves every 4 days, in the UK it’s one a week, in France it’s every other day. Dr. Rosmann, an expert in the crisis says, “The rate of self-imposed [farmer] death rises and falls in accordance with their economic well-being … Suicide is currently rising because of our current farm recession. If your farm is struggling, you’re certainly going to be depressed and going to be worried about how to put food on the table, how to get your kids to college.”

The CDC report suggests possible causes for the high suicide rate among US farmers, including “social isolation, potential for financial losses, barriers to and unwillingness to seek mental health services (which might be limited in rural areas), and access to lethal means.” There was an attempt to create an assistance program specifically for farmers called the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, but despite being approved as part of the 2008 Farm Bill, it was not funded.

I’m writing all of this because, if there’s a farmer you think might be hurting, reach out to them. You might be the person who understands the most about what they’re going through. To read more, go to: https://go.umd.edu/guardiandepression

If you’re having a hard time with depression, Maryland’s Crisis Hotline is available 24/7 to provide support, guidance and assistance at: 1-800-422-0009.

Wishing you all the best,
Sugarcane Aphids were found this October in sorghum fields in Charles, St. Mary’s, and Prince George’s Counties. In some fields, aphid populations were very high, with thousands of aphids present on a single leaf. In other fields numbers were still low, with only a few aphids found per leaf. Given the variable numbers found and the different stages of sorghum present, growers should take time to scout fields. This new pest was found for the first time in Maryland late last fall in Charles County. The sugarcane aphid has caused substantial losses to sorghum in states to our South.

The sugarcane aphid is a relatively new pest of sorghum. As the name implies, the sugarcane aphid was historically only a pest of sugarcane fields. It was first found in the United States in 1977 in Florida and moved slowly throughout the sugarcane regions of the southeast. However, it started showing up as a major pest in sorghum fields in 2013 in the sorghum producing regions of Louisiana and Texas. It has since migrated through most of the southeast causing significant injury to sorghum. It is still unclear if this is a new biotype introduced from South America capable of infesting sorghum, or if there was a shift in the aphid populations in sugarcane in the southeast US adapted to sorghum. However the shift occurred, sugarcane aphid is now the most significant insect pest of sorghum in the US.

**Lifecycle:** Sugarcane aphids require a living host to survive. The aphids will overwinter in the warmer regions of the southeast United States on volunteer sorghum, Johnsongrass or sorghum-sudan grass. They begin their migration north as spring temperatures warm. The winged adults can be carried long distances on wind currents. Sugarcane aphids are all female who give birth to live pregnant young. Young immature aphids mature to adults in only 5 days and live for up to four weeks. These characteristics allow sugarcane aphid populations to increase very quickly, especially during the hot summer months. As with other aphids, sugarcane aphids have piercing/ sucking mouthparts that are used to extract nutrients from plant sap. Sugarcane aphids feed on the underside of leaves towards the base of the plants. Once the plants head out, the aphids will feed in the grain head. The sugarcane aphid produces large amounts of a sugary sticky substance called honeydew. Leaves will often appear glossy or shiny and may be covered in a black sooty mold. The honeydew substance can gum up combine heads and prevent harvest. These aphids will feed on sorghum all the way through harvest. If infestation occurs early enough, sugarcane aphids can greatly reduce yield potential and even kill plants. In Maryland, we expect the aphid to occur much later in the season, if at all, with the potential to cause some yield loss, reduction in test weight and potential harvesting issues. Identification: There are several species of aphids capable of infesting sorghum. Sugarcane aphid can be distinguished from other aphids by black feet, antennae and cornicles (tailpipes) (See Figure 1). The overall body is normally a yellow, gray or tan color. Adults are typically wingless, however can develop wings, especially when confronted with stress or adverse conditions. If you find aphids in sorghum, please contact your local Extension Agent for help in confirming their identification.

Look for information on scouting, thresholds, and treating for sugarcane aphids in next month’s issue!

**Figure 1.** Common aphids of sorghum. Sugarcane aphid (top left) can be distinguished by a smooth body combined with black cornicles (tailpipes, arrow 1), black antennae (arrow 2), a pale head (arrow 3), and black feet (arrow 4). Yellow sugarcane aphid (top right) is a different species that has very short cornicles (tailpipes, arrow 1) and rust colored hairs on the body (arrow 5). Green bug (bottom left) is the most similar to sugarcane aphid but can be distinguished by a dark stripe down the middle of the body (arrow 6). Corn leaf aphid (bottom right) has a dark head (arrow 3). Photos from aphids reared by Dr. Scott Armstrong, USDA-ARS, and photographed by Rick Grantham.
With 2017 coming to an end, I want to take a minute to look back at many of the top legal developments impacting Maryland agriculture in the year. Many of these legal developments may seem like repeats from my 2016 update; click here to see. With those repeated issues, in many cases we have seen resolutions, and we will probably continue to see litigation further develop with a few issues in 2018. Moving into 2018, we will probably see new issues develop as a new Farm Bill debate and cycle potentially begins. If you have not already signed up for updates, go to http://feeds.feedblitz.com/MDRMEB to get email updates sent to you as new content is available.

Emissions Reporting Under CERCLA

In April, the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ended an exemption created by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2009. This exemption freed animal operations from reporting emissions of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA). Environmental groups challenged this exemption in federal court, and EPA in 2010 asked the court for time to reconsider the exemption.

This year, the federal court of appeals held that EPA did not have the authority to exempt animal operations from reporting emissions. EPA is now working to implement the ruling from the court of appeals earlier this year. The federal court had issued an order earlier that livestock producers had till November 22 to notify the National Response Center (NCR) of reportable emissions of ammonia or hydrogen sulfide. The court delayed this order at the eleventh hour till January 22, 2018. After notifying NCR, growers will have 30 days to file the appropriate paperwork with EPA. To determine if your animal operation qualifies, check out this page developed by EPA (http://bit.ly/2hvsPDw). To learn more about this ruling, check this post out: http://bit.ly/2gWdVJZ.

Drift Issues Caused by Dicamba

This year was the first growing season that new, reduced-drift versions of dicamba were allowed on soybeans and cotton varieties resistant to dicamba. Many expected fewer drift damage issues compared to 2016, but in 2017 final dicamba-related damage is estimated at 3.6 million acres across the United States. Due to this damage, we have seen some class action lawsuits filed across the country. These lawsuits often rely on a common set of claims; see an overview of one class action suit at http://bit.ly/2vgkuNH.

Continued issues with dicamba drift damage have caused many states to reconsider their approvals of the new types of dicamba and to limit dicamba’s usage during the growing season. EPA has also issued new restrictions on the new dicambas. This issue will continue to be a top issue in many places across the country in 2018.

Trump Administration Delays or Pulls Obama Era Regulations

Over the course of the year, we have seen the new Trump administration delay, pull, or begin to develop new regulations related to those issued during the Obama administration. The controversial, "Waters of the United States," or WOTUS rule, developed by the Obama administration would have expanded the
reach of the Clean Water Act in the number of water bodies covered. After becoming final, a federal district court and a federal court of appeals stayed the final rule, and the Supreme Court recently heard a challenge to this stay in enforcement issued by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Trump administration has begun the process to revise this rule to something closer to previous Supreme Court rulings. Stay tuned in 2018 for what this proposed revised rule would say.

In December 2016, the Obama administration announced two proposed rules and an interim rule covering poultry and livestock production contracts; see http://bit.ly/2iLqKEk. In October 2017, the Trump administration announced plans to withdraw the interim rule but has not announced any movement on the two proposed rules.

In November, the Trump administration also delayed the effective date of final rules related to organic livestock and poultry standards developed for the National Organic Program by the Obama administration. This delay will push the rules potentially going into effect till 2018. Organic Trade Association has sued USDA over this delay. The Organic Trade Association claim the delay violates federal law; to read more about the delay, click here.

Proposed Settlement Reached in Syngenta Class Action Lawsuit

In June, the first trial in the Syngenta MIR162 class action litigation began in Kansas; for the details of this class action; see http://bit.ly/2iL5kY2. The first trial involved the class of Kansas corn growers which did not grow the MIR162 variety. In that first trial, the jury returned a verdict in favor of the corn growers for $218 million. A second trial began in September involving Minnesota plaintiffs. While the second trial was going on, the parties announced a settlement to all claims. Details of the settlement are currently unknown, and probably will not be known till 2018. News reports estimate the settlement is for $1.4 billion and includes all plaintiffs who did not grow the MIR162 variety, covering the growing years between 2013 and 2017. To read about how the settlement could impact growers, see http://bit.ly/2kgme0Z.

Cases to Watch in 2018

You might be thinking at this point: Paul, what should I be on the lookout for in Maryland in 2018? There are already a couple of cases on the radar for 2018, besides just the dicamba class actions discussed earlier. Food & Water Watch v. USDA is a challenge to Farm Service Agency (FSA) providing a loan guarantee to a poultry grower starting a farm in Maryland. The group claims that FSA should not have issued a Finding of No Significant Impact required under the National Environmental Protection Act. This case will potentially require FSA to revise how the agency handles environmental reviews before approving loan guarantees for U.S. poultry farms. To learn more, see this review of Food & Water Watch’s complaint.

Another case with legal implications on Maryland agriculture is the appeal of the circuit court's decision which ruled state law preempted Montgomery County's pesticide ordinance. The county has approved appealing this ruling to the Court of Special Appeals. If the county prevails, it may open the door for other counties in Maryland to regulate pesticides, creating differing standards among the counties. For an overview of the circuit court’s ruling, see http://bit.ly/2wxIsAS.

As 2017 draws to a close, we will see new issues develop in 2018. We will also see many issues hopefully conclude. As we move forward, keep checking the Risk Management Education Blog (agrisk.umd.edu) for how these new developments will impact your operations. I wish you all a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.

Grain Marketing Workshop

This breakfast meeting will include speakers on various topics in grain marketing. Come have breakfast and discuss this year’s strategies for marketing your grain. Speakers include marketing specialists, traders and more. Topics include local and national grain outlook for 2018, tax considerations, crop insurance and the farm bill. This is a workshop that will be live-streamed in the Harford County Extension Office from the Eastern Shore. No charge for the workshop and a light breakfast will be provided. Please register by January 15 by calling (410) 638-3255 or e-mail akness@umd.edu.

January 18
8-11:30 AM
Harford County
Extension Office
3525 Conowingo Rd.
Street, MD
The Harford County Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting will be held on February 13, 2018 at the Deer Creek Overlook on 6 Cherry Hill Rd. in Street, MD. The meeting will satisfy the credit requirements for private applicator pesticide re-certification and nutrient management voucher training. Check-in begins at 8:30 and the program will begin at 9 a.m. This year’s topics include: herbicide resistance and dicamba; soybean and wheat disease update; seed saving laws and considerations; nutrient management; and grain bin safety. Participants will also have an opportunity to meet with local agribusiness vendors and sponsors. A full program agenda can be found here. Registration is $12 in advance or $20 at the door and includes lunch. Please call the Harford County Extension Office at (410) 638-3255 or e-mail Andy at akness@umd.edu to register. Checks can be mailed made out to “HC EAC” and mailed to our new office location (Suite 600, 3525 Conowingo Rd., Street, MD 21154) after January 9, or our old PO Box 663 in Forest Hill before January 8.

2018 Women In Agriculture Conference

Women across the region coming together to EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER. February 9, 2018 will mark our 17th Annual MidAtlantic Women In Agriculture Regional Conference. The conference goals are to provide women involved in agriculture an opportunity to come together to learn about current issues and topics so they can make informed decisions concerning their agribusinesses and family lives. Sessions will cover topics in marketing, financial, production and legal.

Back by popular demand we will offer a preconference, February 8, 2018 with the option of two topics: Social Media and Specialty crops.

Location: Dover Downs Hotel & Casino Dover, Delaware (room rates available). Registration is open: www.extension.umd.edu/womeninag. Early Bird Pricing Available until 12/31/17. For further information, contact: Shannon Dill at sdill@umd.edu or (410) 822-1244

Starting a Small Farm for Local Markets

Ten-week series for beginning and aspiring farmers. Classes meet Wednesdays starting January 24, 2018. Topics will cover multiple areas from business planning, marketing, equipment, pest management and much more! Cost is $60 for the entire series, or $10 per session. More information can be found online or by contacting Neith Little: nglittle@umd.edu or (410) 856-1850x123.
Maryland Winter Application Restrictions

Darren Alles, Nutrient Management Specialist
Maryland Department of Agriculture | (410) 838-6181

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is reminding operators that the application of nutrient sources is restricted statewide during the winter application period starting December 16 thru February 28. All stackable organic sources, including on-farm generated and imported sources (i.e. poultry litter, spent mushroom soil, compost, imported manure etc.), must be stored in available storage structures on site followed by temporary field stockpiling. The stockpiling of these materials must follow the stockpiling guidance contained in the Maryland Nutrient Management Manual (NM Manual) under the modified 2016 Nutrient Application Requirements.

Liquid manure sources generated on the farm must be stored in available storage structures through the winter period. An emergency provision in the modified regulations allows MDA to work with farmers to prevent overflow from storage structures during the winter period. Under these circumstances, farmers will need to consult with their regional MDA nutrient management specialist for liquid manure application guidance. A 100-foot setback from surface waters is required for any emergency application during the winter. Field conditions for winter application must consider vegetative cover, small grain crops, and established hay fields and pastures along with restrictions concerning soil saturation, when snow is greater than one inch, or hard frozen ground is greater than 2 inches.

The prohibition against making a winter application does not apply to a liquid nutrient source that originates from a dairy or livestock operation with less than 50 animal units until February 28, 2020. However, the emergency provision for winter application of a liquid nutrient source generated on the farm also applies currently to these operations with 50 animal units or less. Farmers in this category will need to consult with their regional MDA nutrient management specialist, adhere to a 100-foot setback from surface waters, and consider the crop cover and ground conditions prior to making application.

Farmers will need to contact their nutrient management consultant to have their current plan amended for winter fertility application rates and deductions from their spring fertility application rates for the crops applied on. Farmers challenged with the inability to avoid liquid manure applications during the winter are required to enter into agreement of intent with the Soil Conservation District and evaluate winter storage management options for implementation to their operation. Farmers may begin applications for all organic sources beginning March 1 provided that the field conditions are suitable (i.e soil saturation, snow, and hard-frozen ground limitations).

Inorganic fertilizer sources are also restricted during the winter application restriction period with the exception of certain situations. For small grains and perennial forage crops, nitrogen may be applied at green-up as recommended in the NM Manual. Certain nutrients may be applied for greenhouse production and for other vegetable and small fruit crops as listed in the NM Manual. The restriction on the application of chemical fertilizers during the winter also does not apply to potash or liming materials. Farmers may begin applications for all inorganic sources beginning March 1 provided that the field conditions are suitable (i.e soil saturation, snow, and hard-frozen ground limitations).

For more information, contact your regional MDA nutrient management specialist or MDA’s Nutrient Management Program at (410) 841-5959.

### Upcoming Regional Nutrient Management Voucher Training Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 26, 2018</td>
<td>Central MD Vegetable Growers’ Meeting</td>
<td>9-3PM. Friendly Farm Restaurant, Upperco, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 6, 2018</td>
<td>Carroll County Winter Agronomy Meeting</td>
<td>9-3PM. Carroll County Extension, Westminster, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 13, 2018</td>
<td>Harford County Winter Agronomy Meeting</td>
<td>9-3PM. Deer Creek Overlook, Street, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7, 2018</td>
<td>Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training</td>
<td>8:30-11AM. Baltimore County Extension, Cockeysville, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13, 2018</td>
<td>Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training</td>
<td>9-11AM. Harford County Extension, Street, MD</td>
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Graduate Programs in Applied Entomology

Understanding and managing insects—both harmful and beneficial—can have a profound impact on individuals, communities, and the environment. UMD’s Graduate Programs in Applied Entomology provides an understanding about the importance of insects and their roles in various ecosystems. Programs include a Masters in Applied Entomology or Graduate Certificates in either Beekeeping, Pest Management, Sustainable Agriculture, or Urban Agriculture. Develop best practices, skills, and knowledge to improve your management strategies and enrich your professional opportunities.

Graduate Programs in Applied Entomology are offered through UMD’s online learning environment, using a 12-week calendar format that benefits working professionals with flexibility, convenience, and accessibility. Instruction is provided by UMD faculty and experts in the field. The programs are offered through the Department of Entomology in the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences.

Click here to get further information about the online graduate programs we offer.

Farm Bureau Scholarship

The Maryland Farm Bureau will offer five $2,000 scholarships. Applicants must be high school seniors starting college in the fall of 2018 or full time college students at any community college or four-year institution. Applicants or their parents/guardians must be members of Maryland Farm Bureau. Three of the scholarships will be offered to agricultural curriculum majors and two scholarships will be offered to non-agricultural or agricultural curriculum majors. Selection will be made by a committee designated by Maryland Farm Bureau.

To apply, students must return the application form with a current photo (which will be used in a recognition program and a press release recipient announcement as well as on the Farm Bureau webpage) and an essay on: “With 3-5 generations removed from the farm, how do you see your role as an advocate for agriculture to minimize the knowledge gap between farmers and consumers and promote a more positive image for agriculture?”

Complete application instructions and forms can be found online.

Frederick County Farm Transition Workshop

Don’t forget to sign up for the farm transition workshop on January 30th! Frederick County will be one of several workshop locations in a series of one-day workshops to be held throughout Maryland this fall and winter for family farmers interested in learning about the components of a successful farm transition.

The Workshop will be held January 30 at the Frederick County Extension Office at Frederick, MD 21702 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sessions will cover family communications, business planning, forestry planning issues, estate and transition planning, agricultural land preservation and estate taxes. All generations on the farm are encouraged to attend. Lunch will be provided and there will be no cost for the program, but space is limited, so register soon. Call the Frederick County Extension Office at (301) 600-3567 to register.

Great resources are just a click away!

Peter Coffey
Extension Agent
Small Farms/Alternative Ag

Andrew Kness
Extension Agent
Ag and Food Systems

Bryan R. Butler, Sr.
Extension Agent
Ag and Food Systems

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**Dates to remember**


**17 Jan.** Sprayer Clinic with Finch and The Mill 9-2 PM. Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Call (410) 742-1178.

**17 Jan.** Farm Succession Workshop. 9-2 PM. Deer Creek Overlook, Street, MD. Free. Call (410) 638-3255.


**Jan 26.** Central Maryland Vegetable Growers Meeting. January 8:30-3:30 PM. Friendly Farms Restaurant, Upperco, MD. $15 in advance, $25 at the door. Call (410) 887-8090.

**30 Jan–1 Feb.** Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention. January 30-Feb. 1. Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, Hershey, PA. $75-$165. Register online.

**6 Feb.** Carroll County Mid-Winter Farm Meeting. 9-3:30 PM. Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Call (410) 386-2760.

**9 Feb.** Women in Ag Conference. Dover Downs Hotel & Casino, Dover, DE. Call Shannon Dill (410) 822-1244.

**10 Feb.** Mid-Atlantic Small Flock Expo. 9-3 PM. Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Call (410) 742-1178.

**13 Feb.** Harford County Mid-Winter Agronomy Meeting. 9-3 PM. Deer Creek Overlook, Street, MD. $12 in advance, $20 at the door. Call (410) 638-3255.

**21 Feb.** Pesticide re-certification training. 6-8PM. Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Call (410) 386-2760.