

Charles County Farming

Spring 2020

Upcoming events:

Sat, Apr 27
Maryland Day
Sat, May 4
Waldorf Farmers Market
Opens
Wed, May 22
Small fruit farm tour &
Strawberry twilight tour
Wed, May 22
Charles Soil Conservation
District Dinner
Mon-Tue, Jun 17-18
Nutrient management course
Wed, Aug 7
So. MD twilight tour

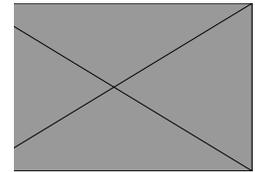
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I would like to take just a few moments to introduce myself. Starting back in mid-December, I joined the UMD Extension team as the new Agriculture Extension Agent for Charles County. Since then, I have felt like a college freshman all over again. My experience with agriculture has been as a researcher in the Entomology Department at UMD, so my real expertise is in conducting experiments to manage pest and beneficial insects on crops. Now, I'm researching all kinds of new topics like crop management, business planning, marketing, laws and government regulations, and herbicide chemistry. I've always enjoyed learning new things, it's what I enjoyed most about entomology research, and it looks like I will have no shortage of new things to learn in extension. Especially since Charles County has an incredible amount of diversity in the types of farming going on, and it seems like there is at least a little bit of everything happening across the county. I am excited for the challenge of becoming knowledgeable in so many production systems, and I look forward to meeting the farmers in the county practicing them.

My goals, as I begin my new career, are to meet as many

farmers as possible, and to see firsthand what they are up to. I'd like to learn about your successes and I'd like to hear about what might be holding you back from making a decent profit. In this newsletter, I am asking you to fill out and return a short survey to get me started on identifying the most common practices and the most common obstacles faced by farmers in this county.



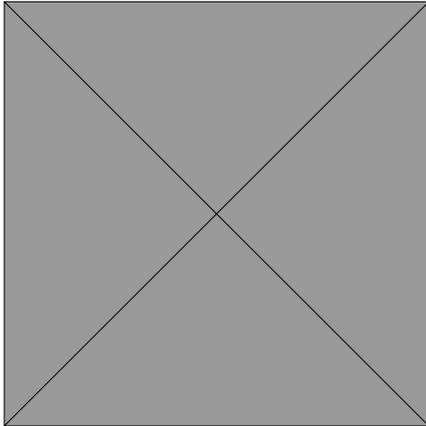
This will help me to figure out where to get started with my extension program, what kinds of educational programs to develop, and what kinds of research and demonstration projects I should prioritize to best suit the needs of the county. My hope is to encourage an open dialogue, where I learn what the needs of the farming community are directly from the farmers, and then provide the resources to solve problems and meet those needs.

Meanwhile, I would like to wish everyone a great start to a successful growing season. I am grateful for the warm welcome that I've received from farmers I've met so far, and I look forward to meeting the rest.

-Alan Leslie

Photo by: Edwin Remsburg

(Brief) Farmer Survey



Thank you for taking the time to complete this brief survey. As the new Ag. Educator for Charles County, I will be conducting a survey across Southern Maryland to find out specific issues that are important to farmers in the area, and to help me develop extension and research programs. By filling out this brief survey, you will help to identify the major areas that should be included in this upcoming survey. You can also complete this survey online by scanning the QR code, or by the following link:

<https://go.umd.edu/UF3>

1. What kind of commodities do you produce on your farm? (select all that apply)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grain | <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Fruit/Vineyard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hay | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheep/Goats | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery/Ornamental |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasture | <input type="checkbox"/> Cattle | <input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Pigs | <input type="checkbox"/> Turf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Fruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry | <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

2. What is the size of your farming operation (in acres)?

Field crops: _____

Fruit/Vegetable: _____

Livestock: _____

Other (please specify): _____

3. What production methods do you currently use on your farm? (select all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No tillage | <input type="checkbox"/> Cover cropping | <input type="checkbox"/> High tunnel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum tillage | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conventional tillage | <input type="checkbox"/> Plasticulture | <input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ | | |

4. What are the biggest challenges for your operation? (select all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crop prices | <input type="checkbox"/> Access processing facility | <input type="checkbox"/> Paying utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting crops to market | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Government regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Leasing land/land access | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crop pests/disease | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife damage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ | | |

5. On what topics would you like to see educational programs offered? (select all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New crop varieties | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil fertility | <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plant pathology/diseases | <input type="checkbox"/> New regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agronomy/Crop mgmt. | <input type="checkbox"/> Environ. conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic farming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insect pest management | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing strategies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weed control | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ | |

6. What are your preferred sources of information about farming? (select all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private consultants | <input type="checkbox"/> Seed/chemical/equipment dealers | <input type="checkbox"/> Grower association publications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extension agents | <input type="checkbox"/> USDA/NRCS | <input type="checkbox"/> Books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-govt agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet websites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University researchers | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crop insurance agents | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ | | |

7. Would you complete a future survey from University of Maryland Extension on needs/priorities of Charles County farmers?

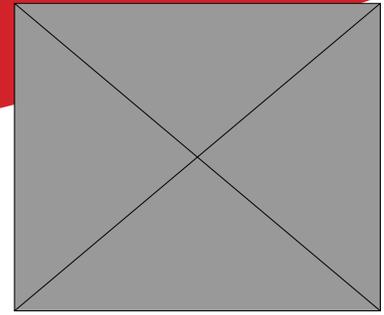
- Yes
 No

Please return completed paper surveys to the extension office either in-person or by mail to:

University of Maryland Extension
c/o Alan Leslie
9501 Crain Hwy, Box 1
Bel Alton, MD 20611

Thank you for your participation!

Events



Sat, Apr 27

Maryland Day

University of Maryland, College Park

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Enjoy a fun-filled day of livestock shows, hands-on educational activities, student demonstrations, exhibits, games, and food. It's a day of family-friendly events and activities that showcase AGNR's fearless ideas.

Sat, May 4

Waldorf Farmers Market Opens

10385 O'Donnell Place, Waldorf, MD

Sat: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

La Plata Farmers Market (now open)

Courthouse Parking Lot, La Plata, MD

Wed: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Sat: 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Indian Head Farmers Market (now open)

Village Green Park, Indian Head, MD

Thurs: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Sat: 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Fri, May 10

NNVGA Scholarship Available

The Northern Neck Vegetable Growers Association is offering three scholarships totaling \$10,000 to deserving area youth studying agriculture. Successful applicants must be 18-24 yrs. old and at least graduating seniors in high school. Funds are eligible for undergraduate course work including community college ag. programs and technical training. For more information and an application contact Stephanie Romelczyk at 804-493-8924 or sromelcz@vt.edu. The deadline for applications is May 10, 2019 at 5 p.m. Applications must be physically in the office, no electronic transmissions accepted.

Wed, May 22

Charles Soil Conservation District 31st Annual Dinner

Charles County Ag & Env Service Center

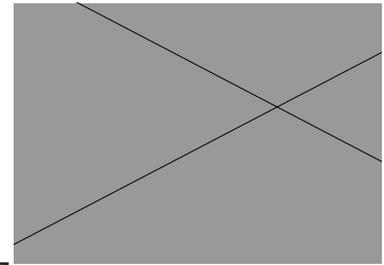
4200 Gardiner Road, Waldorf

Social: 6:00 pm

Dinner: 6:30 pm

Cost: \$30/person, \$35 after May 7

Celebrate the 2018 Charles SCD Cooperator of the Year: James Elmer "Junior" Hill Jr.



Wed, May 22

Southern MD Small Fruit Farm Tour & Strawberry Twilight Tour

11:30 AM - 10:00 PM

Join UMD Extension on a bus tour of two Southern MD fruit farms, and finish the evening at the Wye Research and Education Center for an open house showcasing small fruit research.

**Mon, Jun 17
&
Tue, Jun 18**

Nutrient Management Course

MD Dept. of Agriculture, Annapolis, MD

The "Fundamentals of Nutrient Management" pre-certification course is being offered by MDA. This course will prepare participants for the exam to obtain a Maryland Nutrient Management Certification.

**Fri, Jun 21-
Wed, Jul 17**

Sign up for Cover Crop Program

Contact the Charles Soil Conservation District to enroll in the MACS cover crop cost-share program.

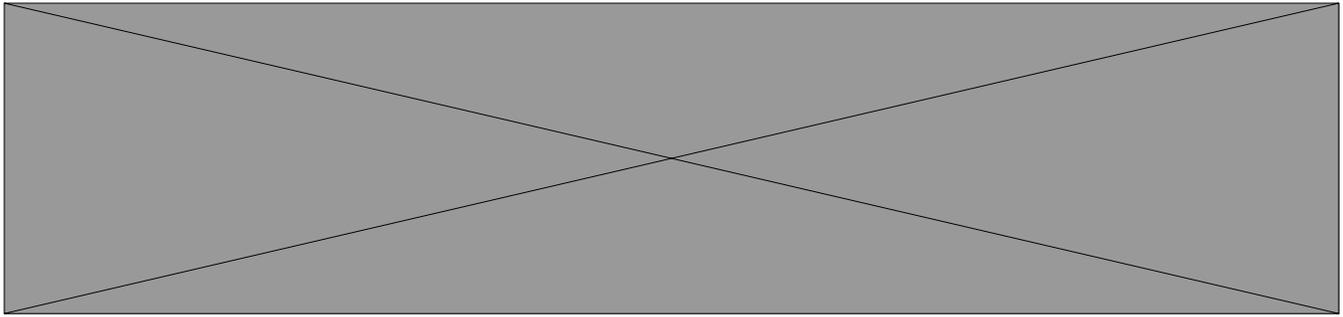
Wed, Aug 7

Southern MD Twilight Tour

CMREC research farm, Upper Marlboro, MD

Join UMD Extension and UMD research faculty for an open house tour of the facility and learn about the latest agricultural research happening in our area.

Check the Charles County Extension website
<https://extension.umd.edu/charles-county>
or call (301) 934-5403
for more information about upcoming programs



A well crafted farmers market vendor agreement protects both parties

SARAH EVERHART | APRIL 16, 2019

Now that spring is upon us, many area farmers markets are back in business. Farmers markets serve as an important source of income for many Maryland farmers and perform the vital function of connecting consumers to farmers. Although farmers markets vary in structure, all have rules and procedures vendors must follow, typically found in vendor agreement. A vendor agreement is a legally binding contract between the vendor and the market. Although operating a farmers market without vendor agreements is possible it subjects the parties to financial and legal risks.

A vendor agreement should contain the minimal aspects of any valid contract, in other words, it should be between two legal parties and contain an offer and an acceptance of that offer for something of value. In this context, deciphering the proper legal parties to the agreement should not be overlooked. Farmers markets differ in ownership structure and, if the farmers market itself is not a business entity (LLC, corporation, etc.) the vendor agreement may need

to entered into by a town or non-profit organization. Similarly, if a farmer has an entity which owns his/her farm, that entity as opposed to the farmer in his/her individual capacity, is most likely the proper party to sign the vendor agreement. As for the other aspects of the contract, vendor fees, the costs charged to vendors for participating in the market, should be clearly outlined. For example, many markets charge vendors a flat seasonal fee while others charge a fee per market day and/or a sales percentage fee.

Market standards are provisions written into a vendor agreement explaining what products can be sold and how the products can be sold. There are many different types of market standards, such as product standards (grown in a certain region, organic, prohibition on re-selling, etc.), vendor standards (i.e., signage requirements, equipment rules, etc.), and market safety and sanitation requirements (i.e., no smoking requirements, prohibition on pets, etc.). If a market wants the ability to enforce market standards, compliance with market standards and the consequence for violation of those standards

(ex. termination of the right to sell at the market) are key provisions of a good vendor agreement.

Markets with strict product standards often include farm inspection clauses in the vendor agreement. Inspection clauses ensure vendors know and understand what rights the market reserves to ensure the products sold by vendors are within the market requirements and safe for customer consumption. Markets may also want to include product inspection clauses to ensure high quality and stall inspections to allow for market management to verify that stall usage requirements are being followed.

Any standards the market management chooses to incorporate should be clearly explained to define the parameters of selling at the market and set expectations. If a market is operated pursuant to a lease, it is advisable to include all lease restrictions into the vendor agreement. Clearly articulated market standards protect vendors and market management by setting customer and vendor expectations, preventing conflicts between market management and vendors, and/

or vendors and customers, and ensuring only market-approved products are sold.

Reducing liability exposure is a reason many markets create vendor agreements. To ensure vendors are operating in compliance with the law, markets may consider a provision in the vendor agreement requiring vendor compliance with all local, state, and federal laws and/or permitting requirements and requiring proof of all necessary permits

before a vendor can sell at the market. Depending on the size of the market, farmers markets may also require vendors to submit proof of insurance (general liability and/or product liability) coverage with the market named as an additional insured. Lastly, a vendor agreement can address whether a vendor agrees to indemnify and hold a market harmless for liability related to the vendor's participation in the market.

To help farmers and market managers create a vendor agreement, the Agriculture Law Education Initiative recently created the Farmers Market Vendor Agreement Legal Guide. The Farmers Market Vendor Agreement Legal Guide outlines many of the considerations markets and vendor will want to consider when creating a vendor agreement and contains model vendor agreement language. It is always advisable, however, to seek the advice of an attorney when creat-

Crop Budgets and Custom Rates

Crop Budgets - Cost of production is very important when making decisions related to your farm enterprise and grain marketing.

Enterprise budgets provide valuable information regarding individual enterprises on the farm. This tool enables the farm manager to make decisions regarding enterprises and plan for the coming production year. The enterprise budget uses farm revenue, variable cost, fixed cost and net income to provide a clear picture of the financial health of each farm enterprise.

The 2019 Maryland enterprise budgets were developed using average yields and estimated input cost based upon producer and farm supplier data. The figures presented are averages and vary greatly from one farm to the other. It is therefore crucial to input actual farm data when completing enterprise budgets for your farm.

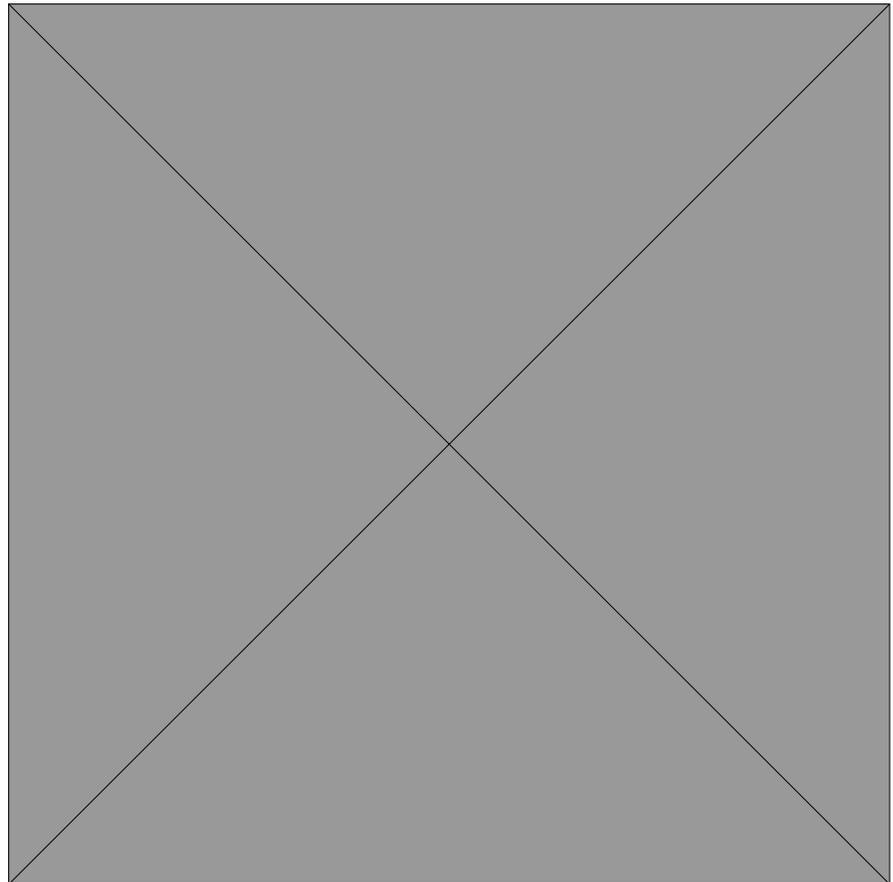


Figure 1. Average input costs per acre for major grain crops in Maryland

How to Use Enterprise Budgets: Enterprise budgets are available electronically in Excel worksheet and PDF format online at www.extension.umd.edu/grainmarketing. These enterprise budgets can be used as a baseline for your operation. Make changes to these budgets to include your production techniques, inputs and overall management. If you have problems downloading any of these budgets contact your local Extension office for copies.

Custom Rates - Financial and economic considerations such

as limited capital, untimely cash flow, insufficient labor, small acreage or other reasons require farmers to hire custom service for field operations. Custom work charges are determined by demand and supply and are negotiated between farmers and custom operators. The purpose of this publication is to provide information on custom work charges in Maryland and to provide data to assist in decision making regarding purchasing equipment.

Using Custom Rate Information
* Custom operators use custom

rates to compare rates with competitors.

* Farmers use custom rates as a guide for machinery, budgeting, and financial planning.

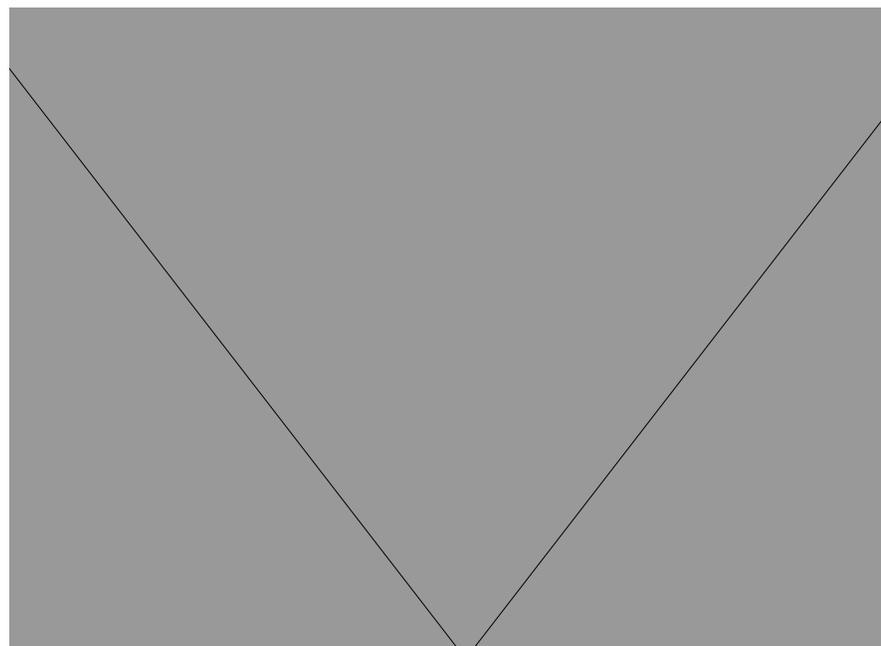
* Lenders, educators and government agencies use custom rates for budgeting, advising, and analysis.

Rates that are quoted in this publication are expressed in different ways depending on the specific job (per acre, hour, ton, mile, bale, etc.). The rates provided are to help custom operators and farmers make decisions about rate charges. The prices reported are not official or established rates but an average of responses from the survey.

Reported rates include charges for machines, power, fuel, lube, and the labor/operator. These rates do not include the costs of chemicals, seeds, and other materials with the exception of hay baling materials and where noted (i.e. spreading lime).

Operation	Avg. 2018	Avg. 2017	Change
Field preparation	\$20.29	\$21.74	-7%
Planting	\$20.38	\$20.33	0%
Field applications	\$10.88	\$11.41	-5%
Grass & hay production	\$15.88	\$13.11	+17%
Harvesting	\$72.70	\$76.99	-6%
Labor	\$32.34	\$30.23	+6%
Equipment expenses	\$62.78	\$74.36	-18%
Average total change	\$33.61	\$35.45	-5%

**The accuracy of this survey depends on the number of realistic responses. If you would like to be added to the custom applicator list for future surveys list send your name and mailing address to sdill@umd.edu c/o MD Custom Rates.*



2019 Vegetable Guides Available

Print copies of the 2019 Mid-Atlantic Commercial Vegetable Production Guides are available for purchase at the Charles County Extension Office. This guide lists vegetable varieties adapted to grow in this region, gives an overview of cultural practices, and lists chemicals recommended for managing pest insects, weeds, and diseases. Cost is \$20.

Evaluating Wheat Stands

The 2018 growing season was a record year in terms of precipitation and is one we would all like to soon forget. However, a soggy fall made it very difficult to seed the 2019 wheat crop and may have lingering effects. Persistent rains delayed planting or forced growers to plant into less-than-ideal field conditions, which may have affected seed establishment and/or plant emergence. As wheat begins to green up and as we approach planting season, it may be a good idea to consider evaluating your wheat stands to help you determine if you should keep the crop for grain vs. a cover crop, consider alternate uses, or terminate it to replant a different crop.

In order to accurately determine wheat stand you will need a yard

Plants/sq. ft	% Yield Potential
30-35	100
22-28	100
18-21	90-95
15-18	75-80
12-14	60-70

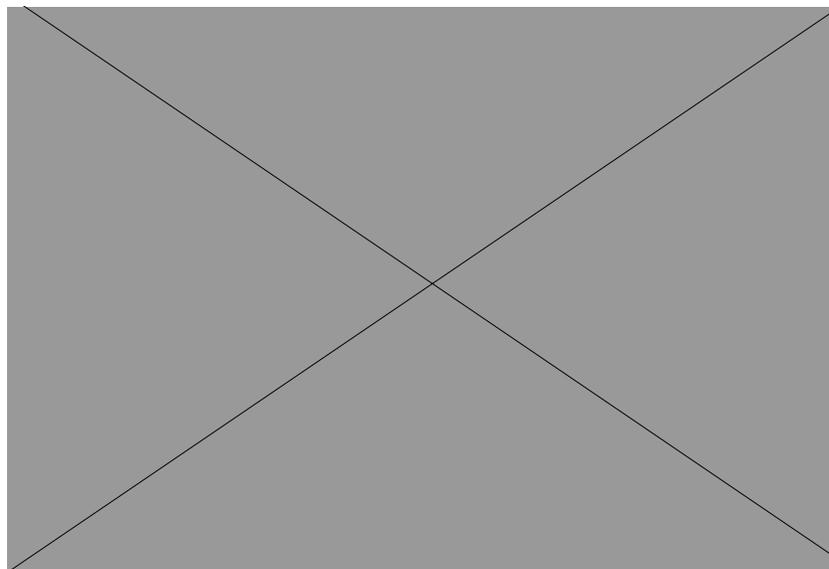


Photo by: Edwin Remsburg

stick (or any three-foot long stick) and a calculator. Place the stick along a row and count the number of plants in that three-foot section. Record this number and repeat this several times at random locations across the field that are representative of the field as a whole. I would recommend doing this at 15-20 locations to get an accurate average. Take your average and multiply it by four. Divide this number by your row width (in inches). The equation looks like the one below.

Alternatively, if your wheat is broadcast or flown on, you can calculate the number of plants per square foot by counting the number of plants in a 1 ft. x 1 ft. square or any other standardized form of measurement as long as you're consistent (for example, you could use a hula hoop; just calculate its area).

To achieve maximum yield potential, stands should be at least 22 plants/sq. ft. You may want to consider alternatives for stands fewer than 12-14 plants per square foot.

$$\text{Plants per square foot} = \frac{(\text{average number of plants per 3 ft of row}) \times 4}{\text{row width (in inches)}}$$

Worked example: 15 counts were made from a wheat stand planted in 7" rows

average number of plants per 3 ft of row =

(48+41+38+36+28+51+42+39+48+43+18+29+56+49+45)/15 = 40.7

$$\frac{40.7 \times 4}{7} = 23.6 \text{ plants per square foot}$$

USDA Releases 2017 Census of Agriculture

ANNAPOLIS, MD (April 11, 2019) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) published the results of the 2017 Census of Agriculture today with new information about the 12,429 Maryland farms and those who operate them, including first-time data about on-farm decision making, down to the county level.

“The release of the 2017 Census of Agriculture has been highly anticipated by everyone in the agriculture community. This important data helps Maryland farmers make critical decisions about the future of their operations,” said Agriculture Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. “I am pleased to see that this census reflects Maryland agriculture’s strong presence in the state and the forward progression of the industry.”

Census data provide valuable insights into demographics, economics, land, and activities on U.S. farms. Some key Maryland highlights include:

- The total value of production of Maryland agriculture increased by 9 percent from 2012, totaling \$2,472,805,000 in 2017.
- The per farm average net income increased from \$38,920 in 2012 to \$52,997 in 2017 – up nearly 36 percent.
- The number of farms increased from 12,256 in 2012 to 12,429 in 2017, due in part to an increase in smaller farms with 1 to 9 acres of land.

- The average age of all producers was 57 years old.

- The number of female producers increased by nearly 33 percent from 2012, totaling 8,148 producers in 2017.

For the 2017 Census of Agriculture, NASS changed the demographic questions to better represent the roles of all persons involved in on-farm decision making. As a result, in 2017 the number of all producers in Maryland was 21,279, up from 19,055 producers in 2012.

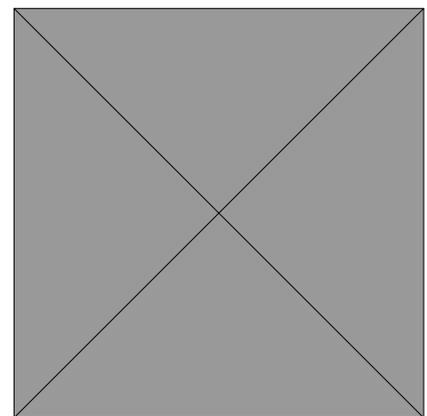
“The Census shows new data that can be compared to previous censuses for insights into agricultural trends and changes down to the county level,” said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. “We are pleased to share first-time data on topics such as military status and on-farm decision making. To make it easier to delve into the data, we are pleased to make the results available in many online formats including a new data query interface, as well as traditional data tables.”

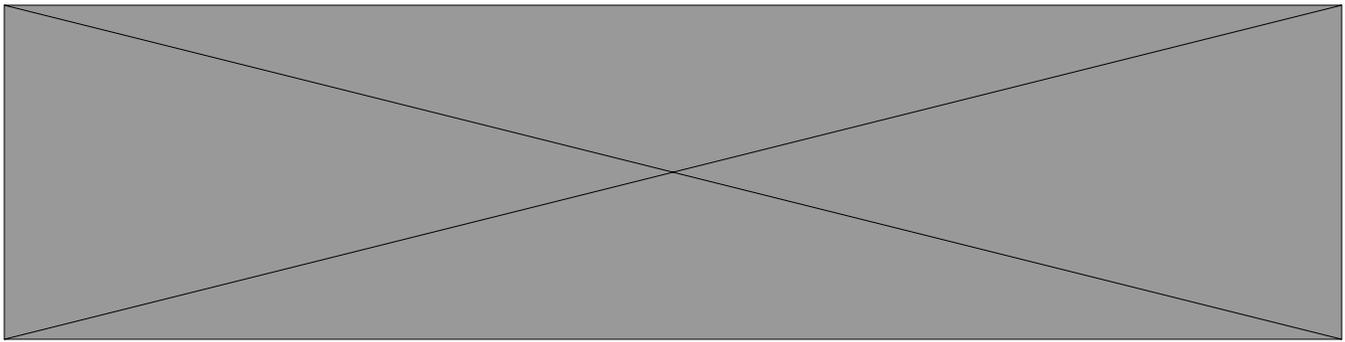
Other demographic highlights include:

- New and beginning producers with 10 years or less of farming comprised of 5,764 producers.
- Producers with military service was published for the first time with 2,054 producers represented.
- Young producers, age 35 years or less, comprised of 2,262 producers with an average age of 28.6 years old.

Results are available in many online formats including video presentations, a new data query interface, maps, and traditional data tables. All Census of Agriculture information is available at www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus.

The Census tells the story of American agriculture and is an important part of our history. First conducted in 1840 in conjunction with the decennial Census, the Census of Agriculture accounts for all U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. After 1920, the Census happened every four to five years. By 1982, it was regularly conducted once every five years. Today, NASS sends questionnaires to nearly 3 million potential U.S. farms and ranches. Nearly 25 percent of those who responded did so online. Conducted since 1997 by USDA NASS – the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture – it remains the only source of comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation and is invaluable for planning the future.





Paraquat Certified Applicator Training to Prevent Poisonings Now Available

PRESS RELEASE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

A new certified applicator training module for paraquat dichloride (also known as paraquat) is now available. The training was developed by paraquat manufacturers as part of EPA's 2016 risk mitigation requirements and approved by EPA.

to harvest. Paraquat is a restricted use pesticide for use only by a certified applicator. The restriction applies to mixing, loading, and applying paraquat, as well as other pesticide handling activities.

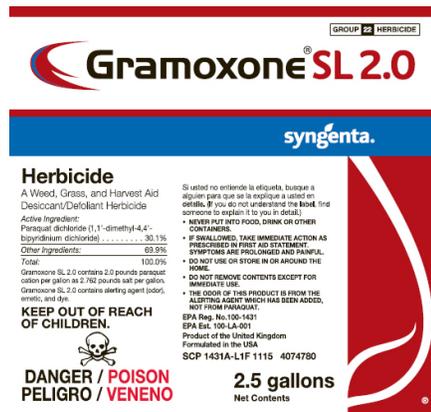
Since 2000, 17 deaths have been caused by accidental ingestion of paraquat. Many of these deaths resulted from people illegally transferring the pesticide to beverage containers and the victim later mistaking it for a drink. A single sip can be fatal. In addition to the deaths by accidental ingestion, since 2000, three more deaths and many severe injuries have been caused by the pesticide getting onto the skin or into the eyes of those working with it.

The training also covers paraquat toxicity, new label requirements and restrictions, consequences of misuse, and other important information.

The requirement for training is only one of several actions EPA has taken to prevent poisonings, including making label changes, restricting the use of all paraquat products to certified applicators only, and requiring closed-system packaging for all non-bulk (less than 120 gallon) end use product containers of paraquat.

Visit the EPA's website at www.epa.gov to view the paraquat:

- Training module and list of FAQs,
- Summary of mitigation measures, and
- Mitigation decision and other supporting documents at www.regulations.gov under docket # EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0855.



Paraquat is one of the most widely used herbicides in the U.S. for the control of weeds in many agricultural and non-agricultural settings and is also used as a defoliant on crops such as cotton prior

To help prevent these tragedies, certified applicators must now take paraquat-specific training before use, to emphasize that the chemical must not be transferred to or stored in improper con-

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**WANTED:
DEAD • OR • ALIVE**



**THE SPOTTED
LANTERNFLY**

A new invasive insect that seriously threatens Maryland crops, including grapes, apples, peaches, and many others. If you see it...Snap it! Catch it! Freeze it! Send it! And, report it to DontBug.MD@Maryland.gov

mda.maryland.gov/spottedlanternfly

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