

NEWSLETTER

HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU

VOL. 18, NO. 3

MAY, 2009

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Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

The March, 2009 Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast is scheduled for **8:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2009** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please join us.

Our guest speaker will be **Delegate Gail Bates**. Ms. Bates, also a former member of the Howard County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, is a highly popular speaker and has honored us numerous times in recent years by serving as guest speaker.

We expect that with the 2009 Maryland General Assembly Session now a part of history, there should be many interesting arguments about the "good" and the "bad" legislation that was either passed, shouldn't have been passed, or definitely should have been made into law. With the volatile state of our economy today, there should be many important concerns to discuss. Be sure to read Delegate Bates' report from Annapolis in this newsletter.

We hope that you will make every effort to be present for this very important and informative program. Bring your spouse, and/or a friend. Enjoy the food, the fellowship and a lively, hopefully friendly exchange of information. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. and the speaking program will get underway at 8:30 a.m.

Please RSVP by noon, Tuesday, May 12, by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or Martha Clark at (410) 531-3455. The cost of the breakfast is \$10.00 per person, payable at the door.

The formal part of the program will conclude by 9:00 a.m. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, **May 14**, at the next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

This will be the final Howard County Farm Bureau Breakfast Meeting for the 2008-09 season. The next breakfast meeting will be in September, 2009. Suggestions for speakers for next season would be most welcome.

President's Message by **Howie Feaga, President** **Howard County Farm Bureau**

I think that we made it! It's warming up more each week and we are getting some rain and that's a good thing. The daffodils are blooming and soon the Red Winged Blackbirds will be nesting in the weeds in our hay fields. I always leave a few weeds just for them, don't you?

I hope you all enjoyed the legislative dinner. It's always good to see everyone and it shows us that you approve of what we are doing. Your Board of Directors works hard to keep up with all the new changes and at the same time with their own farm work. With the economy in such a ditch, I can't say rut, because I think it's a bit deeper than that, we need to remind ourselves that we are all here together with the same problems. So don't hesitate to tell others about how things are going, good or bad, and it will help everyone.

I was fortunate to be able to participate in Farm Bureau's DC drive-in this year where we had, as a group, an opportunity to lobby our Congressmen and Senators. We met with each one in small groups to argue our views on how the different bills would affect us as farmers, and agriculture as a whole. We visited the Capital Visitors Center. It was all a really good experience for me. My background in how government really works is not very extensive, so this experience was quite educational for me.

It's almost summer once again, so don't be in too big a hurry to enjoy the early summer warmth and the nice summer days. I know that we are all very busy. But God didn't make these nice days for everyone else. He made them for everyone. So have a great summer! Be careful! And like always, "Keep your plow in the ground; we're all pulling for you."

Greetings from Annapolis
Lions and Tigers and Bears! Oh My!
by **Delegate Gail Bates**

I keep thinking that if I click my heels, I can get back to Kansas (the America I knew) once again. Instead, I am following with my friends the *Yellow Brick Road* that leads to the *Wizard* (otherwise known as President Barack O'Bama).

Legislation flowing through Annapolis is being initiated in the Halls of Washington, DC. Not entirely mandated, the legislation is needed to secure Federal stimulus money for our State. "What could be the problem with that?", you might ask. Well, the fact that the growth in government required by adopting and expanding these programs is not sustainable in the out years when the stimulus money is long gone.

For example, in order to receive Federal unemployment money, our unemployment laws need to be changed to include eligibility for part-time work, which has already passed the legislature. It also may include paying a dependent allowance, allowing receipt of unemployment for a compelling family reason (domestic violence, illness in a family, etc.) and extending benefits to those enrolled in a State approved job training program. Once enacted, these will not likely be rescinded and employers of the State will be left with increasing unemployment costs beyond the doubling of rates that took place in January before these expansions.

We were given the second supplemental budget from the Governor on Tuesday, April 7, while the conference committees are trying to work out differences between the Senate and House versions of the budget. To hear all the talk, the Governor has cut over \$2 billion from the budget (actually from the expectations). With the previous supplemental budget, the budget grew by over \$600 million and now with the second supplemental, it grows by an additional \$900 million (a total of \$1.5 billion).

All this is happening at a time when Marylanders are looking for ways to do more with less. Our State government is growing by leaps and bounds, increasing State jobs (while furloughing existing employees) and establishing spending growth that will lead to another round of massive tax increases. Our Governor, in his State of the State speech talked optimistically about the budget situation (looking dark at that moment) "for two reasons ... Barack O'Bama". Like in the movie, I suspect that when the curtain is pulled, we will not find a wizard who can deliver us back home, but a mere man pulling strings and making noise.

I really do want to get back to Kansas (my country). I want to get back to where jobs are created by small and large businesses, not government. I want to get back to where hard work not only pays, but is satisfying and self-sustaining. I want to get back to where every poor choice is not "Bailed out" by people who live within their means.

Maybe I can just click those ruby red slippers and say "There's no place like home."

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Friday, April 10, 2009 – As they say on TV, **Breaking NEWS:** HB176 passed the House of Delegates on April 10. This bill, called the Bay Restoration Act of 2009, although only applying to the Critical Areas, is a precursor to what will be done to any of us on septic systems in the future. It will require that when septic systems fail, they must be replaced with a system that utilizes nitrogen removal technology. This will add anywhere from \$10,000 to \$60,000 to the cost of replacement. Once again, a full court press on rural jurisdictions.

Howard County Farm Bureau
Member Benefits
by **Susan Baker, Director**
Howard County Farm Bureau

Members of Howard County Farm Bureau have access to an array of benefits offered by our "umbrella" state organization, Maryland Farm Bureau. This month we will focus on insurance offerings as well as discounts on equipment and supplies.

Insurance: Farm Bureau insurance began in 1926 when a group of Ohio Farm Bureau members started an auto insurance company

because they believed they were being overcharged by established insurers. Maryland Farm Bureau and other states joined soon thereafter to support the newly formed company, Farm Bureau Mutual. In 1955, the name was changed to **Nationwide Insurance**.

Nationwide and its predecessor, Farm Bureau Mutual, have now worked with Farm Bureau members for over 90 years to provide programs especially geared to farm families. Discounted programs include auto, home, farm, boat, long term care, and pet policies, as well as "Rev and Ride" policies for off-road vehicles such as snowmobiles, ATVs, golf carts, transport trailers, and even dirt bikes and Segways. For more information, call 443-883-6425. Nationwide also offers special risks accident coverage. Farm Bureau members automatically receive a limited accidental death and dismemberment insurance policy just for signing up. For details, call 1-800-248-9012. To find a Nationwide agent close to you, log on to the following website: <http://www.nationwide.com/locator/index.htm>.

Health insurance: Howard County Farm Bureau members can also take advantage of Maryland Farm Bureau's relationship with **Custom HealthCare Inc.** A subsidiary of Virginia Farm Bureau, Custom HealthCare is a health insurance broker that has been working with Maryland Farm Bureau for the past six years. Custom HealthCare staff members will assist Howard County Farm Bureau members with enrolling in group dental and vision plans, will help individuals and families find health coverage, and offer plans that meet the needs of farm businesses, family businesses, and growing businesses throughout Maryland. It works with numerous health care providers, including Aetna, CareFirst, Kaiser Permanente, Coventry of Delaware, United HealthCare, United Concordia, and Davis Vision. Custom HealthCare is located in the Maryland Farm Bureau Building in Randallstown, and the office phone numbers are (toll free) 866-634-2211 or (local) 410-521-3994.

Member Savings on Equipment and Supplies

As you continue with spring and summer work seasons and the equipment and supplies that you need, don't forget the discounts offered to Farm Bureau members by **Safemark** and **Grainger**. Safemark products include farm, truck and passenger tires, as well as tillage and cutting parts, twine, oil and batteries.

Grainger offers discounts on their catalog of

thousands of products, including hand and power tools, electrical, plumbing, painting, and metal supplies, among others. For office supplies, **Staples** offers 5 to 40 percent discounts on over 30,000 office items when you sign up online at StaplesLink.com.

Want to know more? To learn more about these benefits, as well as many others offered to Farm Bureau members, log on to www.md.farmbureau.com, then click on "Member Services," or call the Maryland Farm Bureau office at 1-800-248-9012 for a benefits brochure.

Much of the above information may also be found at the following websites;

<http://www.mdfarmbureau.com/Information/NWstory.htm>; at

<http://www.mdfarmbureau.com/Information/MemberB.htm>; and at

<http://www.choosechc.com/>

Howard County Home to New Initiative to Protect and Restore Chesapeake Bay: New Extension Position Announced

The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Howard County Office is pleased to welcome Amanda Rockler as the new Regional Watershed Restoration Specialist (RWRS) for Western Maryland.

This new position is a part of the new Watershed Assistance Collaborative between the Department of Natural Resources Chesapeake and Coastal Program, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Sea Grant Program to increase efforts to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

This position is one of two in the state, with the other one being located on the Eastern Shore. "One of the major waterways targeted for this program is the Patuxent, and given that, the central location of Howard County, and the priority that County Executive Ulman has given the environment, makes this an ideal location to base this position," states Christine Lothen-Kline, Howard County Extension Coordinator.

The RWRS will assist local government and watershed groups to plan, implement and

monitor projects funded by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund. Ms. Rockler will work closely with existing and developing organizations within the state to facilitate current and new efforts.

Doug Lipton, the Coordinator of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Sea Grant Program, shares that "Ms. Rockler has a tremendous enthusiasm and passion for environmental stewardship, conservation and restoration".

Prior to coming to the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension, she served as the Watershed Protection Specialist for the City of Rockville.

If you would like to contact Amanda Rockler, please call 410-313-2708 or email her at rockler@umd.edu.

Composting Livestock Mortality
as reported in *Farm Notes, Carroll County*
Extension Newsletter, March, 2009

If you have livestock, you inevitably have dead stock – a reality of animal agriculture. With the rising costs and availability of rendering services and increased concern for bio-security on farms, producers need to consider all their options for disposing of their livestock mortalities.

Composting can be an environmentally sound way to handle livestock mortalities – it's a natural way to recycle organic materials, there are no odors generated from a properly managed compost pile, and the final product is a good soil conditioner for gardening or crops. Composting done correctly destroys pathogens, weed seeds and insect eggs, as well as reduces the bio-security risk presented by rendering trucks coming onto farmsteads. Composting can be a cost-effective disposal alternative – start-up and operating costs are minimal, but composting does require good management.

Livestock mortality composting is more than dead animals on a pile. But, composting does not have to be high-tech and expensive to be effective.

Composting is defined as the biological decomposition of organic wastes under controlled conditions to a state where storage, handling, and land application can be achieved without adversely affecting the environment. The

process of composting results in the production of carbon dioxide, water, minerals and stabilized organic matter (humus).

To successfully compost you must have a good composting recipe, which entails the correct Carbon/Nitrogen ratio, the right amount of moisture and good porosity. The C:N ratio should range from 25:1 to 40:1. A C:N ratio that is too low results in ammonia and other odors. A high C:N ratio results in slow decomposition and low temperature. The composting moisture target is 55 percent. If the compost pile is too dry, it results in lower pile temperature and slow decomposition. If moisture levels are too high, putrid odors result and flies are attracted to the compost pile. Porosity is important to the aerobic process of composting. Oxygen levels above 5 percent should be maintained. If porosity is low, decomposition rates slow down, along with reduced temperatures, and odors ensue. Also, if porosity is too high, decomposition rates and temperature are lower.

Heat is an important byproduct of the bacterial activity that's responsible for 80-90 percent of the decomposition. An effective compost pile should reach temperatures of 130-150 degrees F. The increased temperature stimulates rapid heat-loving bacteria growth, which promotes decay. Temperatures above 130 degrees for three days also kill most pathogens, along with destroying insect larvae and weed seeds.

The only time a compost pile should have an odor is when it's being mixed. If carcasses are covered properly, there should be no odor from decomposing livestock. Keeping the carcasses under enough cover also keeps vermin, such as coyotes, out of the pile.

A livestock composting pile should be located away from livestock housing facilities and away from normal farm traffic, and at least 300 feet from surface water. The pile should have a feedstock base of 1-2 feet. The feedstock will vary by farm, but is commonly sawdust, straw, manure, or combinations thereof. Carcasses should be at least 1 foot from the pile's edge and covered with at least 1 foot of feedstock, with at least 6 inches between carcasses. The rate of decomposition will vary with the level of management and size of the animals being composted.

Regulations pertaining to livestock composting vary by county, state, and country. Start by

contacting your local health department to determine what regulations you must adhere to.

For more detailed information, contact the Carroll County Cooperative Extension Office at (410) 386-2760 and request a copy of Environmental Science and Technology Fact Sheet FS-2 entitled Guidelines for Composting Large Animal Mortalities in Maryland. You can also check the website www.compost.umd.edu.

Farmers' Markets Open

by **Kathy Zimmerman**

**Agricultural Marketing Specialist
Howard County Economic Development
Authority**

Spring is in the air and April showers bring May flowers. It also brings about the opening of Howard County Farmers' Markets with three locations throughout the county.

Local vendors throughout the region are gearing up so that you can have the great taste of just off the farm. Be sure to stop in frequently and taste the fresh bounty being brought to you.

East Columbia Library

6600 Cradlerock Way, Columbia
May 7th through mid-November
Thursdays, 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Glenwood Library

2350 Route 97, Glenwood
May 9th through October 31st
Saturdays, 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Oakland Mills Village Center

5851 Oliver Place, Columbia
May 3rd through mid-November
Sundays, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Scientific Assessment of the Welfare of Dry Sows Kept in Individual Accommodations

CAST Issue Paper 42, March, 2009

The use of individual gestation accommodations (IGAs) for dry sows in commercial pork production is an issue that has raised much debate. Public perceptions and misconceptions of welfare issues have the potential to dramatically impact swine production.

The nine-member international Task Force of this new Issue Paper critically evaluates the scientific evidence of IGAs for sows, including considerations for behavior, nutrition and feeding, reproduction, clinical examination and health, manure management, worker safety, and system design.

The authors indicate that no compelling evidence exists from scientific evaluations and comparisons of dry-sow keeping systems that, overall, either individual or group accommodation is more appropriate than the other.

The CAST (Council for Agricultural Science and Technology) 20 pp Issue Paper 42 Task Force was chaired by Dr. Stanley Curtis, Department of Animal Sciences, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL. IP-42 is available free from CAST online at www.cast-science.org or in print by calling (515) 292-2125. There is a fee for shipping/handling).

Spring Soil Sampling

by **Dr. Doug Beegle, Extension Soil Fertility Specialist, Penn State University**
as reported in *Farm Notes, Carroll County Extension Newsletter, March, 2009*

If you hadn't collected your soil samples last fall, which is the best time to do this, it is time to start thinking about soil sampling.

First, resist the urge to put off soil testing this year because of the difficult economic times we are experiencing. Soil testing is always important, but even more so under current conditions. You cannot afford to have your crop come up short because of lack of nutrients after you have made a significant investment in the many inputs required to put out the crop.

At the same time, you cannot afford to apply extra nutrients that will not give you an economic return. The economics of soil testing are pretty simple. If you sample a 10A field every 3 years as recommended, the cost per acre is around \$0.30/A/year. This very small investment in soil testing results in recommendations that are used to manage typically \$100-200 worth of nutrients on a crop that is probably worth \$600-800/A. You can't risk this magnitude of input costs and potential returns on a guess.

So when times get tight, we should do more soil testing, not less. A good soil test begins with a

good soil sample. Here are some guidelines for getting good soil samples.

Sample uniform areas. Usually we sample each field individually. However, there may be times when we need to subdivide fields if there is the potential for significant differences across the field. Examples include: significant soil differences, part of the field receives manure but not the whole field, topographic differences such as low areas versus side-hills, etc.

Also, there are situations when we can combine fields. For example when we have small strips that are all managed the same, we can lump these together into one sample.

Take lots of cores. At least 15 to 20 cores should be collected to make up a composite sample to send to the lab. More is better.

Sample to a uniform depth – 8 inches. For most routine soil testing, samples should be collected to plow depth, even in no-till or permanent sods. Inconsistent sampling depth is one of the biggest sources of errors in soil sampling. This is especially true in no-till and reduced tillage systems where there is often significant stratification of nutrients in the soil.

Avoid atypical areas or sample them separately. Sample between the rows and avoid any fertilizer bands as much as possible. Also, many fields have known atypical areas such as dead furrows, old fence rows, lime or manure stacking areas, wet spots, etc. If the areas are too small to manage separately, do not sample them. Taking one or two cores from these odd areas just contaminates the sample for the rest of the field.

If the areas are large enough that you are able and willing to manage them separately, then take a separate sample from these areas.

Handle the sample carefully. Collect the soil cores in a clean bucket so as not to contaminate it. Crumble the sample cores and air dry the sample. Mix the cores thoroughly and take a sub-sample to fill the mailer to send to the lab.

Fill out the soil test information sheet. Additional information such as the crop to be grown, the expected yield, the crop rotation, tillage depth, etc. are used along with the soil test results to make the lime and fertilizer recommendation. Thus, it is critical that the soil

test information sheet be filled out completely and accurately.

**Census of Agriculture Shows Growing
Diversity in U.S. Farming**

from *USDA News* as reported in
*Farm Notes, Carroll County
Extension Newsletter, March, 2009*

The number of farms in the United States has grown 4 percent and the operators of those farms have become more diverse in the past five years, according to results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture released recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS).

Through the census, we're able to take the aspects of agriculture that make it most unique - the numbers and the people - and incorporate them into the most accurate profile possible of U.S. agriculture.

The Census of Agriculture is far more than a tally of numbers. It's a reflection of the people-and their livelihoods-behind those numbers, truly the People's Department at work. And it's a guide to putting dollars and resources into programs and services that will serve the people well in this century.

The 2007 Census counted 2,204,792 farms in the United States, a net increase of 75,810 farms. Nearly 300,000 new farms have begun operation since the last census in 2002. Compared to all farms nationwide, these new farms tend to have more diversified production, fewer acres, lower sales and younger operators who also work off-farm.

In the past five years, U.S. farm operators have become more demographically diverse. The 2007 Census counted nearly 30 percent more women as principal farm operators. The count of Hispanic operators grew by 10 percent, and the counts of American Indian, Asian and Black farm operators increased as well.

The latest census figures show a continuation in the trend towards more small and very large farms and fewer mid-sized operations. Between 2002 and 2007, the number of farms with sales of less than \$2,500 increased by 74,000. The number of farms with sales of more than \$500,000 grew by 46,000 during the same period.

Census results show that the majority of U.S. farms are smaller operations. More than 36 percent are classified as residential/lifestyle farms, with sales of less than \$250,000 and operators with a primary occupation other than farming. Another 21 percent are retirement farms, which have sales of less than \$250,000 and operators who reported they are retired.

In addition to looking at farm numbers, operator demographics and economic aspects of farming, the Census of Agriculture delves into numerous other areas, including organic, value-added, and specialty production, all of which are on the rise.

The 2007 Census found that 57 percent of all farmers have internet access, up from 50 percent in 2002. For the first time in 2007, the census also looked at high-speed Internet access. Of those producers accessing the Internet, 58 percent reported having a high-speed connection.

Other "firsts" in the 2007 Census include questions about on-farm energy generation, community-supported agriculture arrangements and historic barns.

The Census of Agriculture, conducted every five years, is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation. Census results are available online at www.agcensus.usda.gov.

Marketing in an Upside Down Economy

by **Ginger Myers,**
Regional Marketing Specialist, WMREC
 in **Mastering Marketing**, Spring, 2009

"Make lemonade out of lemons" is a fitting call to action for marketing in an ailing economy. Everywhere you turn, there's bad economic news and concern about family budgets, jobs, and overall financial security. Yet, people still need to eat and farming, while not inflation-proof, is in a better position than most other industries to weather a recession.

But what about the individual producer's economic position? Commodity producers will have to weather the storm in the world market arena, which seems to change daily. There are steps small producers, direct marketers, and self-employed service providers can take now to

re-position their products, expand or change your market segments, and get prepared to take full advantage of an up swing in the economy when it comes.

First, take a hard look at the products and services you provide. Should you drop some of the varieties you produce, drop some of your marginal markets, or re-package your services to maintain a baseline of sales? Segment your products and concentrate on those with the best returns for now - grow the four varieties of peppers that sold the best for you and don't count on selling those few super - hot ones. Or, start offering group riding lessons at a reduced cost or frequency to maintain your stable clients. Landscapers could offer additional services such as a free lawn aeration with a seasonal mowing contract. Look for ways to make your product and services a better value for the money and tell your customers about those attributes. Diversification and flexibility will be the key elements of production and marketing plans in 2009.

Use this slower time to develop new products or services. That's what other industries do during slower times of the season. For example, they develop or install new software programs, work on their marketing materials, or look for ways to improve their administrative efficiencies. Update your website, take new farm or promotional pictures, revise your marketing materials, take a training course or offer one to your employees. Take this time to think through your business model and make those revisions you and your accountant, insurance provider, business consultant, or Extension agent have been proposing.

Useful On-Line Marketing Resources

by **Ginger Myers,**
Regional Marketing Specialist, WMREC
 in **Mastering Marketing**, Spring, 2009

The Organic Agriculture Information Access is an electronic collection of historic United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) publications related to organic agriculture. In this collection, there are almost 200 documents published before 1942 (before synthetic chemicals became widely used) that contain state-of-the-art information and data that is still very pertinent for today's agriculture. This collection is provided by the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, a part of the National Ag Library, with

funding from the USDA National Organic Program and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/n/nal/>

Activity Plans
by **Jim Myers, USDA-NRCS**
District Conservationist
Howard SCD

The 2008 Farm Bill offers a new avenue for promoting conservation on the farm. This new strategy involves the use of a concept called the activity plan. Though not entirely new, the activity plan can now be cost shared. The producer has a private consultant write the plan and then is reimbursed at the 75% rate.

Activity plans in Maryland include irrigation water management plans (IWM), comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMP) and the forest management plan.

The IWM plan will include many practices that can be introduced into an irrigation system to reduce the use of water or to recycle used water. The practice can be as simple as using reduced-flow nozzles to such extensive matters as tailwater recovery ponds from which recovered runoff can be recycled into the irrigation system. Though more common on Maryland's Eastern Shore, the IWM may have a niche in Howard County in the nursery or vegetable industry.

The second type of activity plan, the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) has been in the agriculture news in recent months as it relates to the poultry industry. A CNMP is required for all farms which reach the threshold of being a concentrated Animal Feeding Operation or CAFO (see the Howard Soil Conservation District, if you have questions). Even if you are not labeled with the CAFO honorific, you may voluntarily get a CNMP. CNMPs have been required for several years for all producers using EQIP cost share funds for building animal waste storage structures.

A CNMP consists of a farm's Maryland-required nutrient management plan, the soil and water conservation plans for all land where manure will be spread, and all conservation practices needed to prevent nutrients from entering waters of the U.S.

Lastly, the forest management plan, or forest stewardship plan, is written for a landowner by a forester. The forester will include practices in the plan that meets the landowner's goals. They may emphasize wildlife benefits of the woodland or timber production. The plan could include such practices as selective harvesting, protection of riparian areas, and location of erosion control practices during harvest operations.

For details on these activity plans, questions about CAFO regulations, or other EQIP opportunities, contact the Howard Soil Conservation District at 410-489-7987.

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Air Quality Emphasis in EQIP

Under the 2008 Farm Bill, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been tasked with including air quality concerns in the conservation programs. Within Maryland, several counties in the central part of the state, including Howard, have been identified as having air quality as a major issue. These counties (Howard, Anne Arundel, Prince Georges, Charles, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, and Montgomery) will have special emphasis on air quality as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Though central Maryland mainly has air quality problems with urban causes, farmers can do their part in reducing air pollution. The pollutants of concern are particulate matter and volatile organic compounds.

Many of our usual on-farm conservation practices reduce air pollution or its potential. Improvements with these practices often times involve reduced fuel usage. This is especially true with no till and other reduced tillage methods. Waste storage reduces the trips to the field of daily hauling and helps to maintain more of the available nitrogen for use by crops, since it is applied nearer to the time of crop uptake. Following the contour helps reduce the power needed to pull farm equipment through the field. Not only a fuel reduction, but wear on engines is reduced so that they might operate more efficiently.

Following a nutrient management plan in which nitrogen is applied to a crop's needs, reduces the release of excess nitrogen to the atmosphere. Cover crops give a winter cover on a field, reducing wind-blown dust.

Most farms in this area already employ many of these practices. Many are doing a fine job of reducing air pollution without even thinking of it. If you would be interested in finding out more that you could do, you may contact the Howard Soil Conservation District.

Estate Planning Pointers
by **Timothy S. Barkley, Sr.**
JD, CFP, CSA, Attorney at Law

In beginning the estate planning process, your estate planning attorney should begin by getting to know you. Planning is for people. It is not a technician's exercise in efficiency, though it must be efficient. Planning is about you and your values, not about taxes or money or assets. Your assets, money, and tax situation should be aligned with your values, and not the other way around.

Remember that probate and tax avoidance are subservient to the primary goals of estate planning: (a) providing for a surviving spouse, if there is one, and (b) maximizing the inheritance to the children or other beneficiaries. Your goals need to drive the planning.

Probate and tax avoidance only serves the second of these goals, and thus even the most elegant and tax-efficient plan will be untenable to your surviving spouse if it endangers his or her access to and use of monies and assets for reasonable needs. Other provisions, such as charitable giving, need to stand on their own feet. You should give because you want to give, not to get a tax benefit.

In getting to know you, and after exploring your values generally, your attorney will be seeking the answers to several questions that will determine the type of estate plan to use. The following is not a complete list, but is a good starting point.

First, your attorney needs to know about your estate tax situation. If your estate is greater than the amount which you can pass tax-free at your death (currently \$1.0 million in Maryland), you should consider tax avoidance planning. Tax avoidance is the totally legal means of reducing or eliminating taxes using mechanisms given us by Congress in the Internal Revenue Code. It is not tax evasion. One wag once quipped that the difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion is about ten years - in the Federal pen.

Tax avoidance planning for married couples usually requires the use of trusts at the death of the first spouse to die to avoid tax. The trust created at the death of the first spouse to die – commonly called the “bypass,” “credit shelter” or “family” trust, or “A-B trust” – holds the amount of the tax exemption of the first spouse to die. The surviving spouse receives all the income of the trust, and principal at need. This allows the trust principal to be available to the surviving spouse without being owned by him or her and thus taxed in his or her estate.

Second, your attorney needs to know whether you have minor children or disabled beneficiaries. Minor children may not receive more than \$10,000 without the interposition of a trust of some sort. If you do not write your own trust, the state, which loves you and has a plan for your money, has a trust for you. That trust, while better than nothing, is not much better, and is singularly inappropriately drafted. Families would be well served by drafting their own trust.

Disabled beneficiaries need special attention paid to their unique needs. Whether you are caring for a disabled parent or child, or a disabled spouse, your planner must take particular care to understand the personal situation of the disabled person and the family dynamics. We have said that estate planning is not a technical exercise. Special needs planning is even more so not about technique, but about the disabled person and all of the surrounding people and circumstances.

Third, your attorney must consider any special situations in your family that might mandate extraordinary planning. You might be the owner of a family business or family farm, or, on the negative side, might have a spendthrift child or one with a criminal history or a tendency toward drug use or alcoholism. Any family situation requires attention to detail and personality, but these special situations call forth the creativity and dexterity of your attorney to a great degree.

Fourth, your attorney must be sensitive to your unique desires. For example, you might want to leave a significant bequest to charity. If your planner is only doing tax planning, and not people planning, he or she might miss this important facet of what makes your plan truly your own. Make sure your attorney follows your direction, and not the other way 'round.

The War Years - Rationing, Oleo, etc.
by Allan Bandel

Because of the surprising amount of interest generated by my article in the March, 2009 issue of this newsletter concerning the World War II years and the use of German POWs on many Howard County farms, I decided to expand a little along that same theme in this issue. But in this case, the focus will be on wartime shortages of food, fuel and other commodities and how Howard County families on the "home front" coped with these scarcities, most specifically, through government rationing.

Supporting the war effort during the early 1940s and until just after 1945 resulted in major shortages of many essential items on the home front. To deal with these shortfalls and to guard against hoarding, a rationing system was established at the beginning of World War II. Rationing made life much more difficult for the civilian population. But most citizens willingly accepted those hardships as one of their patriotic contributions toward winning the war and halting the evil aggression of the leaders of Germany and Japan. Every U.S. citizen knew that they must do their part if the Allied Forces were to prevail against the Axis aggressors.

Some of the major items in short supply and were rationed during the war years included meat, lard, coffee, sugar, gasoline, automobiles, bicycles, stoves, footwear, cheese, butter, firewood, coal, fuel oil, rubber tires, medicines and many others. The list was long. It was almost impossible to buy a new car, for instance, even if you were among the fortunate few who could afford one. Potential buyers had to get their names on a long waiting list at the dealership and await their turn. For many, that turn never came until well after the war had ended.

Rubber tires were among the first items to be rationed in 1942. This was due primarily to our country's normal supplies of natural rubber being interrupted when the Japanese forcefully took control of about 90 percent of the Asian rubber plantations in the Pacific.

Gasoline was in short supply too, especially in the eastern U.S. during the early years of the war. Most of our petroleum had traditionally been delivered by ocean-going tankers. But German U-Boat activity in the Atlantic made this delivery system extremely dangerous. It wasn't until

petroleum began flowing through a couple of new trans-continental pipelines that were built from east Texas to our eastern part of the country that gasoline supplies began to improve.

In order for citizens to purchase their fair share of rationed products, and to prevent hoarding, a government-controlled rationing system was developed. Rationing books were issued periodically by the Federal government through the government's local War Price and Rationing Board. This office reported to the U.S. Office of Price Administration, popularly known as the O.P.A. The number and kind of rationing stamps issued depended upon the product, family needs, and assigned priority level as was judged essential to the war effort. Various kinds and sizes of ration books and stamps were provided by the local ration boards.

My mother once stated that for her, sugar rationing was one of the most difficult issues that she had to deal with of all the scarce food items. Out of necessity, she, along with thousands of other wartime homemakers, learned to get by with less of the real thing and to use substitutes when available. It was during this era that we were re-introduced to saccharin (an artificial sweetener), for instance, and learned to get used to it. Saccharin was not a real new product. It was invented in the late 1870s by a chemist at the Johns Hopkins University. Its use first became widespread due to the sugar shortages created by World War I.

In our home, when Mother's supply of sugar was depleted, she had to overcome two obstacles before she could purchase more. First, she had to hope that the storekeeper had some sugar on his shelves to sell. If he did, then she was required to present the storekeeper with the requisite number of sugar rationing stamps (plus cash, of course) to match the amount of sugar that rationing allowed her to buy. When all of a family's sugar stamps were used, then that household had to make do without sugar for a period of time until the local rationing board issued a new allocation of stamps.

Just like everyone else, we could not purchase any more of that scarce commodity until the next allocation of sugar rationing stamps was issued by the government. Books of ration stamps were valid only for a certain period of time. This last measure was meant to help discourage hoarding.

During the war years, butter was also in short

supply and we were encouraged to substitute margarine for it. By the 1940s, although new to most of us, margarine had actually been around for a long time. It had been in existence since the mid 1800s when it was invented in France. Oleomargarine, known as "oleo" for short, was a butter substitute made from vegetable oils. With butter largely unavailable, "oleo" slowly gained in popularity during WW II.

When "oleo" was first introduced, its color was almost a pure white. By regulation, its appearance was nothing like that of butter, and of course, it didn't taste much like butter either. The dairy industry feared the competition from "oleo" and because of its unnatural color, people were initially reluctant to try it. The consumers' main objection was the color. It just didn't look like butter.

When World War II came about though, there was a greater need to encourage its consumer acceptance. Thus, a reddish-orange capsule of coloring agent was sealed inside each clear plastic bag of margarine. Before opening the package, the instructions were to break the coloring capsule by pinching it between the thumb and forefinger, then kneading the mixture until there was a uniform butter-like yellow color mixed throughout the package of product. With the addition of color, oleomargarine became more acceptable to consumers as a butter substitute. (But I remember that even though it now looked a lot like butter, it still didn't taste much like the real thing.)

The same rules applied to all of the other rationed products. Obtaining gasoline was difficult for most people and next to impossible for some. Depending upon how their motor vehicle was used, and how critical its use was, the proper gasoline rationing sticker was issued and had to be glued permanently onto the inside bottom corner of the windshield.

There were "A", "B", "C" and "R" gasoline stickers, as well as several other categories, all designated for different purposes, and all of which had different restrictions.

In general, the "A" stickers (with a black background) were allotted to non-essential vehicles. This sticker allowed purchase of 4 gallons of gasoline per week and absolutely no pleasure driving was allowed.

The "B" stickers (with a green background) were

assigned to vehicles in which driving was essential to the war effort. This sticker allowed purchase of 8 gallons of gasoline per week.

The "C" sticker was granted to persons considered very essential to the war effort, such as doctors, for instance. For all vehicles, a 35 mph speed limit was imposed to further conserve gasoline and tires.

There was an "X" sticker which carried the highest priority and entitled the holder to an unlimited supply of gasoline. This category was reserved for persons such as Ministers, Firemen, Policemen and Civil Defense workers.

And there was an "R" sticker which was designated for use on non-highway vehicles, such as farm tractors. Finally, there were numerous other special use stickers. One of which was the "T" sticker issued to trucks used for delivering supplies, such as gasoline.

In order to obtain one of the gasoline rationing stickers, a person had to first certify a legitimate need for gasoline. The applicant also had to certify that he/she owned no more than five tires. Any tires in excess of five per driver were confiscated because of the severe rubber shortage.

The number of gasoline rationing stamps that an individual received depended upon the sticker category of his vehicle. The more vital the need to drive, the more stamps that were allowed. Our family probably received more gasoline stamps than most of our city friends because Dad was a farmer, an occupation considered to be highly vital to the war effort.

Farmers needed gasoline to operate their tractors for cultivating their crops and also for their trucks so that they could haul their farm produce to market. Although we could not use it irresponsibly or for pleasure, gasoline was not as much of a problem for us to obtain as it was for our non-farming friends. Some citizens, because they could not purchase enough gasoline to operate their cars, simply jacked up their vehicles, placed them permanently on blocks, and stored them in the garage or under a tree for the duration of the war.

Genuine natural rubber became very scarce during the war years since most of the U.S.'s supply of raw natural rubber came from plantations in the Pacific war zone. Early in the

war, Japan seized about 90 percent of the raw rubber production that the U.S. had depended upon prior to the war. Much of our scarce rubber supply was dedicated toward making tires for military vehicles. Therefore, until researchers developed a successful way to manufacture synthetic rubber, good quality automobile and truck tires became extremely scarce and were very difficult to obtain throughout the war years.

Scarce rubber was the major reason why many new farm tractors delivered during the war years came to their new owners (if they were lucky enough to even obtain one) equipped with cleated steel wheels rather than with pneumatic rubber tires. When rubber tires finally became available after the war, many of the original steel wheel spokes were cut off so that the rough-riding steel cleats could be replaced with new rims that would accommodate the more desirable pneumatic rubber tires for tractors.

Once the war ended in 1945, the availability for civilian use of many of these once scarce items gradually returned to normal. Because of continuing limited supplies though, rationing continued until 1946.

Everyone was pleased and relieved, of course, for obvious reasons, when hostilities finally ended and the war came to a close. But, they were also very happy to see the end of rationing and especially the disappearance of synthetic rubber tires, the quality of which was much inferior to that of natural rubber.

So far, since the end of World War II, we have not had to return to the hardships associated with rationing. But that doesn't mean that we can afford to become complacent and wasteful. With heavier demands upon our natural resources today than at any time in history, it is just as important now that we adopt good conservation practices and utilize our resources wisely, just as wisely as we were forced to do during the World War II years. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that scarcities won't some day return to the U.S., requiring rationing to once again be imposed upon us – and become an unwelcome, yet necessary, aspect of our day-to-day life.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2009

May 5 **How to Grow Great Tomatoes.** 7:00 pm, Glenwood Library, Howard County Master Gardeners. (410) 313-2707.

- May 9 **Spring Plowing Field Day and Demonstration.** Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club and the Maryland Draft Horse and Mule Association. Land preparation for corn planting. Living Farm Heritage Museum Grounds (Across MD 144 from the Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD. (Rain date – May 16).
- May 14 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 to 9:00 am. Dining Hall, Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD.
- May 20 **Master Gardeners Composting Demonstration.** 12:00 pm. Quiet Waters Park on the Wildwood Trail. Anne Arundel County Extension. (410) 222-6757.
- May 21 **Strawberry Twilight Meeting.** 6:00 pm until dark. Wye Research & Education Center, Queenstown, MD. Michael Newall, (410) 827-7388.
- May 30 **Maryland National Road Yard Sale.** An 824-mile-long yard sale – from Baltimore to St. Louis, Missouri. Living Farm Heritage Museum, West Friendship, MD.
- Jun 1 **Maryland 4-H Golf Tournament.** 1:00 pm. Oakmont Green, Hampstead, MD. Amanda Clougherty, (301) 314-7832.
- Jul 23 **Maryland Commodity Classic.** Queen Anne's County 4-H Park. Lynn Hoot, (410) 956-5771.
- Aug 8-15 **64th Annual Howard County Fair.** Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.
- Sep 2-
Oct 7 **Beginning a Successful Small Farm, Part I** Short Course. (6 classes). 7:00 pm to 9 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Sep 25-
Oct 11 **Howard County Farm-City Celebration.** For information on sponsorship and a schedule of events, please contact Kathy Zimmerman at (410) 313-6500. Also, visit the Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club

website at www.farmheritage.org.

- Oct 10 **University of Maryland CMREC Open House.** Clarksville Facility, Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD. For more information or to offer suggestions, contact Frank Allnut at fallnut@umd.edu.
- Oct 11 **23rd Annual Maryland Horsemen's Party.** 2:00 to 5:00 pm, Ten Oaks Ballroom, Clarksville, MD. Contact: Kristen Wilson at 301-596-9478.
- Oct 19-
Nov 9 **Nutrient Management Farmer Training Certification.** (For a license to write your own N.M. Plan) 7 classes, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Nov 4 **Private Pesticide Applicator Training.** 10:00 am to noon. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Nov 4 **Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification.** 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Nov 7 **Small Farm Cooperative's Farmer Education Day.** For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Nov 12 **Private Pesticide Applicator Exam.** 10:00 am. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Nov 27 **Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training & Recertification.** 10:00 am to noon or 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Free Registration. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.

[NOTE]: Some programs require pre-registration and/or a fee. For programs sponsored by Maryland Cooperative Extension, if you need special assistance to participate, please contact the person indicated at least two weeks in advance of the event.

Something to Smile About

In the last couple of issues of this Newsletter, we have featured a few stories, quotes and clever insults, many of which were attributed to the late Sir Winston Churchill. But there are also many other good examples "floating around" out there created by a host of famous people. They are often, but not always, from past eras when it was more fashionable for the English language, on occasion, to be used much more artfully than it is generally used today. Here are a few more memorable quotes, or more accurately perhaps, memorable insults, that were delivered with class. I hope that you enjoy them.

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure." – *Clarence Darrow*

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time reading it." – *Moses Hadas*

"He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know." – *Abraham Lincoln*

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." – *Mark Twain*

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." – *Oscar Wilde*

"I feel so miserable without you; it's almost like having you here." – *Stephen Bishop*

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope that it's nothing trivial." – *Irvin S. Cobb*

"He has the attention span of a lightning bolt." – *Robert Redford*

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go." – *Oscar Wilde*

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it." – *Groucho Marx*