NEWSLETTER
HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU
VOL. 21, NO. 3 MAY, 2011
HOWIE FEAGA, PRESIDENT, (410) 531-1872;
JAY RHINE, VICE-PRESIDENT, (410) 442-2445;
MERHLYN BARNES, SECRETARY, (410) 489-4465;
DONALD BANDEL, TREASURER (410) 531-7918;
ALLAN BANDEL, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, (410) 489-7875
WEB SITE - *www.howardfarmbureau.org*

Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast

by **Maura Cahill**
Breakfast Program Coordinator

The next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast is scheduled for **8:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2011** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please mark this date on your calendar and plan to join us.

Our guest speaker will be **Pfc. Nicholas P. Bingham** of the **Howard County Police, Traffic Enforcement Section.** Officer Bingham is a recognized expert in collision reconstruction, drug recognition, commercial motor vehicle inspection, and hazardous materials transport. He is certified in the use of all speed monitoring devices used in the county. He has concentrated his career efforts on traffic safety.

Officer Bingham grew up just over the line in Baltimore County. After serving four years in the Air Force, he served on the Baltimore City Police Force until 2004 when he joined the Howard County Police Force and has been with the Traffic Enforcement Section since 2006.

The breakfast meeting on May 12th presents an excellent opportunity for interaction with an expert on dealing with the increasing traffic problems in Howard County, e.g., how can we deal with all those drivers who no longer seem to know how to recognize common sense "rules of the road" (such as running stop signs and traffic lights, speeding, passing stopped school buses, etc.). What must we know about safely using trailers and securing loads?

I am sure that you will have many other questions and concerns. So, bring your spouse, and/or a friend. Enjoy the excellent food, the fellowship and join in for a lively and friendly exchange of useful information.

Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. and the program is scheduled for 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. Please **RSVP by noon, Tuesday, May 10** by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or MarthaClark at (410) 531-3455. The cost of the breakfast is $10.00 per person, payable at the door.

The speaker's part of the program normally concludes by 9:00 a.m. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, **May 12**, at the next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

President's Message

by **Howie Feaga, President**
Howard County Farm Bureau

Well here we are into May already, can you believe it? Seems we were hoping to get out of winter without too much more snow, and now here it is spring. This is a great time of the year especially for farmers, we start to see everything grow, and we are planting our crops. There is no better thing then to be a farmer in the spring time.

We had a great Farm Bureau visit to Washington, DC. This year, we had quite a few people go along to try and help persuade our legislators to understand our point of view on some of the bills that were being considered. Somehow, I think that we helped even though we don't always see things that way. I do think that our efforts make a small difference some of the time and that is a start.

The Legislative dinner a couple of weeks ago was a big success, we had a lot of elected officials present. They were at least willing to visit with us and give us their perspectives on our government, even though it isn't always what we want most to hear. The dinner and the fellowship were great and I thought that overall, we had a good evening. We look forward now to seeing everyone in the fall when we have our annual dinner.

Congratulations to Brent Rutley and Martha Clark Crist, among others, who were appointed to the General Plan Task Force. I would encourage everyone to let our Task Force representatives know of anything that you feel needs to be addressed in revising this document. It is your chance to make a difference.

Well, try not to work too hard or to fast, and enjoy this time of the year. Once again, "Keep your plow in the ground, we're all pulling for you."

Are YOU Interested? In Participating in these Exciting Howard County Farm Bureau Contests?

Miss Howard County Farm Bureau
Howard County Future Farmer
Little Miss Howard County Farm Bureau

- All three contests will be held on Sunday, August 7th at the Howard County Fair.
- Contestants will ride in the opening day parade.
- There will be cash awards to all contestants.
- Gifts and scholarships will be awarded to the winners.
- The family must be a member of, or join, the Howard County Farm Bureau.

It is a fun and rewarding experience for all 4-H members. But contestants must be carrying an agriculturally related 4-H project.

Age requirements for participants:

Little Miss* and *Future Farmer: 8 to 11 years as of August 1st.

Miss Howard County Farm Bureau: 16 to 19 years as of the Maryland State Fair.

Are YOU interested? Then call or email:
Annette Fleishell at (410) 795-6119 or *leishellfarm@aol.com*
Mary Jean Coles at (410) 489-4717 or *cmjcoles4@aol.com*

Are YOU interested? Then come to the contestant meeting on Thursday, June 23rd at the Howard County Fairgrounds 4-H Building:
6:00PM for Little Miss and Future Farmer
7:00PM for Miss Howard County Farm Bureau

Comments from Lynne Hoot Executive Director: Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts & Maryland Grain Producers Association

[Editor's Note: The following informative testimony was offered by Ms. Lynne Hoot on March 16, 2011 at a hearing before the House Ag Committees - Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy and Forestry on the Chesapeake Bay.]

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, my name is Lynne Hoot and I serve as the Executive Director for the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts and the Maryland Grain Producers Association. My task here today is a pleasant one – to discuss what Maryland farmers have done to support the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay.

My time working on this issue goes back to the early 1980's when I was working for the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the first EPA report on the Chesapeake Bay, commissioned by US Senator Mac Mathias, was released. Under the leadership of Governor Harry Hughes and Secretary of Agriculture Wayne A. Cawley, the Maryland agricultural community came to the table, accepted they were part of the problem and would be part of the solution. Farmers have been at the table since that time with the same mantra and their efforts are evident in the landscape.

If we wind forward 25 years, I am proud to announce the progress agriculture has made and is verified in the latest Chesapeake Bay model run. With state and federal support, as of 2007, Maryland farmers had reduced nitrogen loads by 62%, phosphorus loads by 73% and sediment loads to the Bay by 59%. We know our fellow farmers across the Bay watershed have been working towards the same common goal. In fact, the agriculture industry has consistently outpaced most other sectors in reducing nutrient loads.

In 2010 alone, Maryland farmers matched $17 million in Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS) funds and $14 million in Federal (EQIP & CBWI) cost-share funds with roughly $5 million of their own money to install 2,300 conservation projects on their farms to prevent 1.2 million pounds of nitrogen, 41,000 pounds of phosphorus and 17,000 tons of sediment from entering the Bay. This fall, Maryland farmers broke all records and installed roughly 400,000 acres of cover crops to protect water quality. This practice alone will achieve 2.4 million pounds of nitrogen reduction, but as with many practices, it is an annual practice, and farmers must maintain a significant level of performance every year.

Maryland passed the Water Quality Improvement Act in 1998, requiring farms with over $2,500 gross income or more than 8 animal units to develop and implement a nutrient management plan. Although the first deadline for nutrient management planning was 2001, livestock and poultry producers had until July 2005 to prepare for nutrient applications based on soil phosphorus levels. In 2010, more than 99.9% of farmers had nutrient management plans for 1.3 million acres and 97.2% filed an Annual Implementation Report (AIR) documenting use of nutrients and compliance with the law. Maryland Department of Agriculture conducts field audits of 8-10% of regulated farm operations annually.

Best management practices (BMPs) installed on farms are currently documented when they are implemented using federal and state cost-share funds. The information we do not have at present relates to the water quality benefits of BMPs that farmers across the Bay region have installed on their own, at their own cost, as a result of their strong stewardship ethic. Not all of these practices meet Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specification and therefore they do not have an established nutrient reduction value for purposes of EPA Model accounting. For example – a 10-foot buffer along one of the many farm ditches on Maryland's Eastern Shore or an electric fence keeping animals out of a Western Maryland stream will both improve water quality; but as neither meets NRCS standards and specifications, they have not been assigned a nutrient and/or sediment reduction value. Why does this matter? EPA does not recognize BMPs that do not meet NRCS standards and specifications – in fact at this point, they do not recognize any BMPs that were installed without federal or state assistance because currently we have no mechanism by which to collect this important contribution to Bay water quality.

In 2009, the Maryland Department of Agriculture developed *Conservation Tracker,* a geo-referenced database system to record the location of BMPs installed on Maryland farms and to calculate the nutrient reduction credits. District staff across the state scoured every soil conservation and water quality plan (SCWQP) in their offices and entered the data into *Conservation Tracker* on all the BMPs that have been installed with public support and are still functional. The system has the capacity to track farm data on all BMPs regardless of their funding source and whether or not they meet NRCS standards and specs. Maryland is piloting a method to track this information with funding from an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant and is working with the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), who is actively engaged across all six-Bay states, to determine a method to collect this data so it meets EPA requirements of accountability and verification.

It is imperative to our farmers that EPA accepts this information and provides credit in the Bay model for ALL farm BMPs, not just those funded with public cost-share and that they provide nutrient and sediment reduction values for these BMPs. We recognize that BMPs that do not meet NRCS standards will have reduced nutrient reductions –

but they must be counted. Without a true accounting in the Bay model of what has already been achieved – there cannot be an accurate determination of what more can, or needs, to be done.

Maryland's Phase I Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) has been approved by EPA to meet the Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) allocations. We believe that the agricultural BMPs identified in Maryland's Phase I WIP and the two-year milestones are reasonable if, and only if, farmers and conservation agencies are provided with adequate technical and financial resources. We are concerned that the current economic decline and its impact on federal and state budgets will reduce the necessary level of support. What happens then? We have concerns with EPA's indication that they will expand NPDES/CAFO requirements to smaller poultry and livestock producers if implementation lags and that they will try to regulate other agricultural operations. This creates inequities between Chesapeake Bay farmers and farmers in other states and impacts their competitiveness in national and international markets.

As we enter Phase II, Maryland must develop 58 WIPs, for every county and for all Bay sub-watersheds in each county. Yet EPA has not provided allocation information for these plans to be developed and has indicated that this information will not be available until July. Allowing less than 6 months to develop Phase II WIPs is unrealistic. In the meantime, Maryland's soil conservation districts are establishing agricultural working groups to get feedback and develop consensus among farmers that any proposed WIP II agricultural BMPs are reasonable.

We believe this process is impacting the willingness of the next generation to continue farming. The average age of farmers is 58; as the next generation looks at the new regulations facing their parents, the development pressure on farmland, and are bombarded by the negative rhetoric in the press, many are deciding against a future in agriculture. This is a major concern as farmland provides local food security and offers the best and most cost effective means for protecting Bay water quality.

To ensure the viability of agricultural enterprises in the Bay region, Maryland grain farmers have spent $2.9 million, of the $12.5 million Checkoff funds collected since 1991, to fund research on projects to explore management, new products and technologies that support agricultural production and water quality. The funds are collected through the Maryland Grain Checkoff program from farmer contributions of one-half of one percent (0.5%) of their net income from grain. The Checkoff funded research has enhanced the state's cover crop program, reduced fall fertilizer use on small grains, assessed the value of slow release fertilizers, and evaluated the use of new equipment like vertical tillage to incorporate poultry litter in no-till cropping systems and GPS with variable rate nitrogen applicator equipment, such as the GreenSeeker™ to apply crop nutrients at different levels throughout each field. This farmer funded research shows our commitment to clean water and will help the state reach the goals set out in the WIP.

Conservation practices like no-till have costs and benefits to the farmer. Maryland boasts having over 80% no-till cultivation, which is one of the higher adoption rates of any state in the country. Other conservation measures such as stream buffers, diversions and grassed waterways take land out of production and add implementation and maintenance costs as well as reducing income producing land. While farmers are committed conservation stewards, expansion and continuation of these efforts will require federal cost-share programs and technical assistance.

We commend you for your past support and encourage you to continue to support the allocation of conservation funding for the Chesapeake Bay as well as conservation programs and operating funds to support technical staff as part of the next Farm Bill. The country is watching us; we want to prove that agriculture can do what is necessary as long as it is reasonable, science-based and we are provided with adequate technical and financial assistance. Thank you

Rotation, Rotation, Rotation!!!

by **Dr. Bob Kratochvil,**
Extension Agronomist,
AGNR, UME

[Editor's Note: The following article is re-printed from the April 12, 2011 issue of The Delmarva Farmer and the April 15, 2011 issue of University of Maryland Extension's Agronomy News. The rotation theme discussed here, which goes far beyond the narrow concept of crop rotation, also applies to a variety of other agricultural practices where a lack of diversity can lead to the development of resistance, tolerance, or intolerance in plants, animals, microbes, insects, etc. The consequences can eventually be a seemingly hopeless infestation of difficult to control weeds, diseases, insects, and other maladies. Rotation is a very important crop management practice and should be taken very seriously for a variety of reasons. Please carefully consider the wider implications of Dr. Kratochvil's words.]

Two newsworthy events during the past few years have been reason for agronomists to remind farmers that the single best production practice is rotation, rotation, rotation. The first was in 2007 when corn acreage increased by nearly 20% over 2006. This was in response to higher corn prices; a direct result of the increased demand for corn created by the ethanol industry. Most of the additional acres were corn following corn. Agronomists reminded farmers that in almost all cases, continuous corn (whether it is the second or the fifth year) has been shown to yield about 10% less compared to rotation corn. Farmers also were reminded that this yield drag was not overcome with more fertilizer or other inputs. The continuous corn yield drag response serves as the "poster child" for crop rotation. Explanations offered for the benefits received by rotating crops focus upon interruptions in disease, insect, and other pest cycles that occur. One would think that the growing number of GM (genetically modified) hybrids may have changed this continuous corn yield drag, but it has not.

The rotation, rotation, rotation mantra is not just directed at crop rotation. The recent approval of Roundup Ready alfalfa renewed the debate about the rapidly growing overuse of glyphosate and Roundup-Ready crop technology. Claims have been made that glyphosate overuse is damaging crop production on a number of fronts; it is decreasing nutrient availability to crops; it is reducing nutrient content of food and livestock feed; it is increasing plant susceptibility to disease; and it is contributing to an increase in more than 40 plant diseases that may also effect human and animal health. These claims have been thrown about with no evidence presented to the scientific community for evaluation. Unfortunately, facts often do not matter because public opinion is generally influenced by the initial statements. Agronomists at Purdue University aptly responded to the many unsupported claims that have been made. You can read their response by visiting *www.btny.purdue/weedscience/*. The article is titled: "Glyphosate's Impact on Field Crop Production and Disease Development".

What this recent affront does have right is that yet again, good rotation is not being practiced. In this case, it is rotation of herbicides. The addition of Roundup-Ready alfalfa to the list of crops with this technology is not the culprit. In fact, the use of glyphosate to manage weeds in alfalfa will likely help alfalfa producers. The culprit is that more glyphosate will be used. We already have a growing list of glyphosate tolerant weeds with marestail being the most notable in this region. During 2010, use of Roundup-Ready technology for soybean and corn is estimated to have been 93% and 70% of the U.S. acreage, respectively. My guess is that these use estimates were similar on the Delmarva. In fact, glyphosate is so commonly used that it has surpassed the use of atrazine. Used in rotation with other herbicides, glyphosate is a wonderful tool for farmers to have in their weed management tool box. However, continued overuse will only add more weeds to the tolerant list. And, it will provide more opportunities for the anti-glyphosate community to attack it. Next stop will be defending it in front of a legislative committee similar to what recently occurred in the Maryland legislature for atrazine.

Frederick County Farm Bureau Safety Camp 2011

Frederick County Farm Bureau is proud to offer the 16th annual Safety Camp. This year we have planned an exciting 3 day 2 night camp, open for any child from the ages of 8 - 13. With the camp theme of SAFE: Staying Accident Free Every day campers will enjoy classes that are tailored to personal hygiene, plant, pool/sun, fire and animal safety. Demonstrations will be given on power-take-off (PTO) and K-9 units.

This year, safety camp will be open to campers from other counties. Registration will be open January 1, 2011 for Frederick County campers only. Registration for Montgomery, Washington, Carroll and Howard County opens March 1, 2011. Registration will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Registration will not exceed 80 campers. Deadline for registration is June 1, 2011. All payments ($20.00 per camper) must be postmarked by that date.

Safety Camp will start the evening of June 23, 2011 and will end in the morning on June 25, 2011. Please see the tentative schedule for more camp details.

The camp will take place at the Frederick County 4-H Camp and Activities Center. The camp center provides four cabins that sleep twenty five campers. Each cabin has a bathroom with showers. They also have exhaust fans to help keep us cool. The camp center also has a nurse's office. Safety camp will have on staff a registered nurse to assist with medical issues. Campers will enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities.

Campers need to bring weather related clothing, bathing suit, towels, personal hygiene materials, bedding for a twin bed (most campers bring a sleeping bag with a blanket), pillows, suntan lotion, bug spray medicine and a flashlight. Campers will also need to bring a white t-shirt to decorate while at camp. Medications will be given to the nurse for safe keeping while at camp. Campers should NOT bring any weapons, alcohol, matches/lighters or valuables. Frederick County Farm Bureau is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

For registration information, or if you have any questions, please contact Amy Jo Poffenberger at *amy7538@gmail.com* or by calling (301) 676-6732.

Cover Crop Sign-Up set for June 21 - July 15

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has announced that sign-up for the 2011-2012 Cover Crop Program will be held June 21 through July 15 at soil conservation district offices statewide.

Farmers are asked to mark their calendars and check with their soil conservation districts in upcoming weeks for this year's program requirements and highlights.

In addition, program details will be mailed in May to farmers who participated in last year's program.

Planted after the summer harvest, cover crops are used to control erosion and reduce nutrient runoff during the fall and winter. They are a key feature of Maryland's Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) to protect the Chesapeake Bay. Last fall, Maryland farmers planted 400,331 acres of cover crops on their fields – the largest cover crop planting in Maryland history.

Howard County farmers can contact Kristal McCormick at the Howard Soil Conservation District, (410) 489-7987, or *kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov*

Agsploration Summer Science Career Institutes

The AGsploration team is excited to announce that we will be offering three AGsploration Summer Science Career Institutes this summer. This will be a two-day, one-night event for middle school aged youth.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn about the Science of Maryland Agriculture through hands-on activities and classes utilizing the AGsploration curriculum, network with guest speakers from the Agricultural Industry during the roundtable discussion time, tour and visit Agricultural Enterprises in the state, and have an opportunity to learn about potential educational and career opportunities based in agro-science and STEM fields.

The AGsploration Summer Science Career Institutes will take place at:

Frederick 4-H Center (Frederick, MD) – June 27 & 28, 2011

Patuxent River 4-H Center (Upper Marlboro, MD)– June 29 & 30, 2011

Thendara 4-H Center (Hurlock, MD) – July 14 & 15, 2011

Registration cost will be only $35/participant. Registration materials will be sent out shortly. For now, please save the dates.

For more information, please contact Kristen M. Wilson, Extension Horse Specialist, University of Maryland Extension, 11975 Homewood Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042
Ph: (301) 596-9478
Email: *kswilson@umd.edu*

2011 Horse Pasture Walk Series

Visit the Equine Rotational Grazing Demonstration site at Central Maryland Research and Education Center, 4241 Folley Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21046 for a tour of the pastures and an explanation of current management practices.

Each pasture walk will feature a special presentation on a different pasture management issue of interest. These events are free, but advanced registration is requested. Educational materials will be provided, and refreshments will be served. All events are rain or shine.

May 26, 2011 6:00 pm—8:00 pm. Using Pasture to Reduce Feed Costs. Horses are natural grazers and under the right conditions a healthy pasture can provide all the nutrition a horse needs. Learn how to use pasture to its full potential and keep those extra dollars in your pocket.

June 23, 2011 6:00 pm—8:00 pm. Best Management Practices for Healthy Pastures. Knowing how and when to rotate, mow, harrow, and over-seed pastures can be tricky. Experts will discuss tips for keeping your pastures in top condition.

July 21, 2011 6:00 pm—8:00 pm. Weed Identification and Control. What weeds are common in horse pastures and how can you control them? Develop your skills in weed identification and learn which weeds are toxic.

Registration Information. To register for horse pasture walks, simply RSVP to Jennifer Reynolds at (301) 405-1547 or email *jenreyn@umd.edu.*

Medicaid Update

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

This writer often has the privilege of advising families of elders in or anticipating nursing home care. These families often suffer from a few misconceptions.

First, upon admission to a nursing home, the State or the facility do not simply take all of the resident's assets. Rather, the resident is expected to pay for care until assets are exhausted, with some exceptions, before Medicaid pays for care.

Second, children are not responsible for the cost of care, under most scenarios. This result could differ if (a) the child voluntarily agreed to be liable for the parent's cost of care, or (b) the child were the recipient of significant parental assets prior to admission.

In the former case, the child must know that he or she is agreeing to personal liability for the cost of

care, and in general must sign a separate document to that effect. The latter case has not arisen yet, but this writer anticipates that the states, strapped for funds, will proceed against recipients of funds in such a situation.

The Maryland Code provides, in section 13-102 of the Family Law Article, that an adult child cannot refuse to provide a destitute parent with "food, shelter, care and clothing." This provision can be enforced by the State's Attorney in Court. The provision of "food, shelter, care and clothing" can occur in a nursing home. Certainly it would not be unethical to require that the child support the parent, at least to the extent of assets received by that child from the parent.

The "look-back" period on the Medicaid application for gifts from a Medicaid applicant is now sixty months prior to the date of application, and the period of disqualification now runs from the date of Medicaid qualification (but for the gift). Any gift over $1,000 within that 60-month period will produce a period of disqualification equal to the amount of the gift divided by the imputed monthly cost of care, $6,300, rounded up.

That means that if a senior had given her grandchild $20,000 to help with college tuition one year ago, became ill shortly thereafter and spent down her available resources on the cost of care, she would be disqualified for Medicaid for a period of four months ($20,000 divided by the $6,300 monthly cost of care, rounded up). Further, this period of disqualification from Medicaid payment would start to run from the date of transfer.

Because the date of qualification is not necessarily the date of application, it can be difficult to plan a transfer that will not create a disqualification. Again, due to this uncertainty, it can be difficult to assure anyone that a gift will not create a period of disqualification.

One answer is for the couple to purchase long-term care insurance to cover at least the period of disqualification; another is for them to retain enough to privately pay for care for the duration of the look-back period, currently 60 months (but subject to change). Thus, no application would ever be made in a period during which the transfer will be discovered.

However, future changes to the law extending the look-back period might not grandfather prior transfers. It becomes difficult, then, to plan with any assurance.

The public policy of this country is becoming more and more explicit. For all but the very poor, the purchase of lifetime long-term care insurance is all but mandatory. Congress has made it clear that long-term care funding is more important than a comfortable retirement or even any retirement at all.

The national and state budgets simply do not contain enough dollars to pay for publicly funded long-term care. And, given the experience of citizens in countries where medical care is publicly funded, perhaps that is not a bad result.

Hay Making in the 1940s

by **Allan Bandel**

Historically, haymaking has always been a dirty, dusty, back-breaking, job, even as recent as the 1940s. Hay making back then was not highly mechanized. Most of it was not baled, but was cut, cured and stored loose. Since most of the work had to be done by hand, by manual labor, haymaking was mostly a dirty, unpleasant experience. The widespread use of labor-saving auto-tying pick-up balers equipped with kickers, modern bale elevators, hydraulic bale wagons and stackers, and other labor-saving devices were still many years into the future.

Fortunately, for members of my generation, because we were still quite young during that era, we were spared much of that extreme hardship. During the 1940s, our generation was too small physically to be of much assistance helping with the heavy side of hay making. It was more a time of excitement for us. We were often allowed to ride along in the cab of the truck during haymaking, or to participate in other, less physically demanding, yet very important, jobs. We were spared the heavy work, but were sometimes assigned the important task of carrying a

tin cup and a covered bucket of ice water out to the field to help satisfy the thirst of tired workers toiling under the hot sun.

According to my earliest memories, after the hay had been mowed and allowed time to cure, Dad used a horse-drawn dump rake to gather the hay into rough windrows. This usually took place several days after mowing because hay conditioning equipment that is now used routinely to hasten the drying process was still unknown. If the hay was slow to cure because of a heavy crop or high humidity, then before raking, Dad might harness his team to a hay tedder. This simple machine "fluffed up" the hay with a series of rear-facing two-pronged forks that kicked backwards as the tedder was pulled forward. This "fluffed" the hay more loosely to improve air flow through it, thereby hastening drying. As you might expect though, this not-too-gentle procedure was not conducive for saving most of the important, but fragile, hay leaves that were prone to break off and drop to the ground. Finally, once dried and raked, laborers used two- or three-pronged pitch forks to manually gather the hay into small stacks for later hauling into the barn.

After bunching the hay into small piles, we used our flat-bed farm truck or a steel-wheeled wagon equipped with tall racks front and rear to haul the loose hay to the barn. Often, when no one else was available, Mother was recruited to drive the truck from pile to pile. She didn't like this job, but once Dad learned that she could drive the truck, then there was no chance of her avoiding that dirty job.

Later, when my brother and I were big enough to help more, Dad often set the truck in its lowest gear, adjusted the hand throttle on the dash just fast enough to prevent the engine from stalling, and then he would leave the cab and have one of us steer between the piles while he and a hired man tossed the hay onto the truck. At first, before our legs were long enough to even reach the pedals, we gripped the steering wheel from a kneeling position on the seat. Since we were unable to reach the pedals and stop the truck's forward motion, excitement in the cab sometimes reached a "fever pitch" as the truck approached a fence corner or a steep ravine.

The worker(s) on the ground had to pitch the hay onto the truck using three-pronged pitchforks equipped with extra-long-handles. The long-handles were necessary so that the hay could be lifted high up onto the top of the load. Upon occasion, there was excitement, especially for the person(s) up on the truck, when a long shiny black snake that had taken refuge under the hay pile, was inadvertently tossed aboard with the pitchfork full of hay. When this happened, there were usually some wild exclamations out of the worker(s) up on the load, accompanied by their quick descent by way of the front, side, or back of the truck, whichever route afforded the quickest path to the ground and away from that snake. In their haste, fear of falling was not much of an issue. Fortunately, such incidents were rare, but they were definitely memorable.

When no more hay could be piled on the truck, Dad normally took over the driving and headed back to the barn. Here, an old-fashioned double-harpoon style hay fork that was attached to one end of a long heavy-duty rope was plunged into the loosely stacked hay, then hoisted into the mow. Eventually, the smaller 2-prong harpoon was replaced with a higher capacity 4-prong grappling hook which significantly sped up the unloading process. Sometimes, if the four curved, pointed arms were properly placed, nearly half of the load of hay could be lifted into the mow at one time.

Initially, elevating the hay into the mow was accomplished by harnessing a horse or mule to a "single-tree" which was attached to the end of that long, ¾- to 1-inch diameter heavy-duty rope. The long rope from the horse to the hay fork passed through a series of strategically placed heavy-duty wooden pulleys that were securely attached to the frame of the barn. Sometimes, we kids were allowed to ride bareback on the horse to "guide" him while he struggled to pull the hay up into the mow. It wasn't long though before the horse learned exactly how far to pull the rope before turning back to the starting point. Thereafter, the horse required very little input from us. But, riding on him was still a lot of fun.

Later, when tractors became more available in the community, a small tractor replaced the horse in this job. To prevent the tractor wheels from running

over, snagging and possibly breaking the rope when backing up after each pull in preparation for hoisting up the next load, one of us kids was given the important task of keeping the rope safely away from the tractor wheels.

There were times when neither a horse nor a tractor was available for pulling the hay up into the mow. At those times, one of our neighbors sometimes offered the use of his family car. I remember one such elderly neighbor, a retired farmer whose health had declined to the point where he could no longer help much with a physically demanding job. But he still wanted to be a part of the hay-making crew. He assisted by attaching the tow rope to the rear bumper of his 1936 Chevrolet sedan.

Family cars were obviously not designed to do the heavy work of farm tractors or horses. Low gear in the car was not nearly powerful enough for lifting those heavy loads of hay off the wagon and up into the mow. Therefore, to keep the engine from stalling, the driver had to "slip-the-clutch" much of the time. Considering how some of those old cars were frequently abused this way, it is not much wonder that many of these over-worked vehicles did not survive for more than a few thousand miles before they were ready for the repair shop, or more often, the junk yard.

The harpoon or grapple hook-load of loose hay was lifted slowly off the truck and elevated to the peak of the barn roof where there was a large open door leading into the mow. At its highest point, the fork automatically engaged with the hay mow "carrier", or "car" which was temporarily locked in position over the wagon below. As soon as the load was raised and it engaged the "carrier", the "carrier" automatically unlocked itself and rolled along a steel track on flanged wheels. It rolled into the depths of the mow, supported by this special steel track that was suspended just beneath the ridgepole of the barn's roof.

From the moment that the fork engaged the carrier, the load of hay moved swiftly along the track and into the barn, sometimes traveling almost to the far end. When the trolley reached the point where workers in the mow wanted the hay placed, they signaled the person outside on the truck who gave a sharp tug on a light-duty "trip" rope. This released the fork's grip, allowing it to drop its load of hay.

The person driving the tow vehicle also had to be signaled to stop to prevent the trolley and its load of hay from traveling too far along the track. If everything worked properly, the fork released its load of hay and could then be manually pulled back along the track with the "trip" rope until it was outside the barn. Once outside the mow, the carrier locked automatically in place, the fork pulley disengaged, and the grapple tines or harpoon fork could descend, mostly by gravity, and be positioned for lifting the next load.

The pile of hay falling from a height near the peak of the roof always created a minor "wind storm" inside the mow, stirring up a swirling cloud of hay dust. After spending a short time in the mow, workers learned what to expect. The wise ones turned their backs to the falling hay, held onto their straw hats and covered their faces for protection against the dust.

For a few years during the 1940s, adding salt (sodium chloride) to the new hay as it was stored in the mow was a standard practice on many Maryland farms. I clearly remember helping to hand spread several hands-full of loose finely ground salt over the hay after each load was placed in the mow. The purpose of the salt, theoretically, according to the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, was to inhibit bacterial fermentation and molds. Extensive experimentation eventually proved that unless applied in excessive and physiologically harmful quantities, salt was ineffective for this purpose. If more than 20 pounds of salt per ton were applied, it was actually found to be objectionable to the animals.

Although it was once theorized that salt might also reduce the possibility of spontaneous combustion and subsequent barn fires, it was eventually learned that salt was not really effective for this purpose either. In small amounts though, it was found that salt did tend to promote a slightly better color to the hay, gave it a more pleasant aroma, and made it more tasty for the cattle. With the benefits rather questionable though, this practice soon died out.

In the early 1940s, Dad took a giant step forward in modernizing haymaking on our farm by purchasing a new hay loader from the Montgomery Ward store on Monroe Street in Baltimore. At that time, in addition to the many household and personal items listed in its sizable mail order catalogue, Montgomery Ward also sold a variety of farm supplies which included tools, equipment, tires – and even tractors and attachments.

Before we could make use of this marvelous new labor-saving piece of equipment though, we also had to acquire a new kind of hay rake, a side-delivery rake. This rake replaced our old-style dump rake. Our first side-delivery rake was probably a used McCormick-Deering model, originally horse-drawn, that had been converted to tractor use. It had a seat on it that was once needed for driving the team of horses. The side-delivery rake was characterized by a slanted frame and curved teeth on rotating rake bars designed so that the hay flowed smoothly off the rear end of the rake.

As was typical of most horse-drawn rakes, our first rake was equipped with only three revolving rake bars in its floating "cylinder". Later, when the more efficient, heavier duty tractor-drawn side-delivery rakes became popular, they were equipped with four, or even five rake bars in the "cylinder". More rake bars greatly reduced the amount of hay that might otherwise have been missed by the teeth and left on the ground. The additional bars also allowed more gentle handling of the hay and reduced losses of the highly valuable and fragile hay leaves.

Each rake bar had many closely-spaced spring-loaded teeth. The vertical attitude in which the teeth came into contact with the hay was adjustable, but was usually set in a near vertical position with a convenient hand lever. Our first tractor-drawn side-delivery rake was a steel-wheeled John Deere model 594 purchased new in the late 1940s from the Ramsburg Supply Company in Ellicott City. It was similar in style to traditional horse-drawn side-delivery rakes, but had no seat, and was a 4-bar model. It was equipped with two large yellow steel wheels at the front that powered the revolving rake bars. Two much smaller bright yellow "crazy" wheels supported the rear end of the rake's "cylinder".

Making loose hay in the 1940s utilizing one of the era's more marvelous labor-saving tools, a hay loader. This one was sold by Montgomery Ward.

Before our new hay loader could be used, the cured hay had to be raked into long, continuous windrows. The hay loader was then hitched behind the truck with a short length of chain, then guided along the windrow so that its wheels straddled the hay so that the hay loader could elevate the hay onto the truck.

The tall bright-red Montgomery-Ward hay loader had two large yellow steel wheels in the front to carry most of the weight and provide power to operate its pickup cylinder and its six lifting rails. Like the rake, there was another pair of smaller "crazy" wheels at the rear which supported the back of the loader. The wide ground-driven reel at the base of the hay loader, rotated counter to the direction of travel. It was equipped with several bars of teeth that lifted the hay off the ground so that it could be picked up by the six rake-bars that were attached to a rotating shaft that was shaped like an engine's crankshaft. This uniquely designed shaft enabled the rake bars to engage the hay and drag it upwards along the smooth back of the loader, eventually depositing it on the back of the truck.

The finished load was usually piled considerably higher in the front than at the rear of the truck. When the truck bed was filled to capacity, one of the workers on the load signaled the driver to stop. If the driver had the windows rolled up to keep loose hay leaves and dust from falling into the cab, and could

not hear the signal, then the worker might "thump" on the top of the truck's cab with the blunt end of his wooden pitchfork handle. For anyone inside the cab, the resulting clamor probably sounded much like being trapped on the inside of a bass drum during a rousing Sousa March. Regardless, the loud racket sent a message to the driver to stop, to unhitch the hay loader, and to take the load of hay to the barn.

As you might expect, the mechanical hay loader proved to be a great improvement over hand loading of loose hay. Nevertheless, making hay still demanded much hard, dirty, manual labor. Fortunately, affordable family farm-size pick-up balers with automatic twine or wire-tying knotters would arrive on the scene in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Development of the automatic pickup baler and portable bale elevators further helped in taking much, but by no means all, of the heavy physical drudgery out of hay making on the family farm. Eventually, with numerous labor-saving advances in mechanization, such as automatic pick-up balers with bale kickers, hydraulic bale wagons and stackers, and many more innovations, the hay making process ultimately became an unbelievably efficient one-man operation.

Farmer's Cut of Food Dollar: 11.6 Cents

Source: Delta Farm Press, Matt Hartwig, Renewable Fuels Association.
Re-printed from The Barn, UME

"Energy intensive activities like food processing, transportation, and packaging gobble up nearly three times the value farmers receive. And as oil prices continue to rise, an even larger share of every dollar spent on food is paying for the higher energy costs facing the entire supply chain."

American farmers and agribusinesses receive just 11.6 cents of every dollar spent on food in the U.S., according to recent analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

That is down from the nearly 20 cents USDA calculated, using a different method, in the past and undercuts arguments that farm prices for commodities and feedstuffs like corn are driving higher retail food prices.

"American farmers continue to produce more and more food and feed, yet they are receiving less and less of each dollar spent at the retail level," said Geoff Cooper, Renewable Fuels Association vice president of research and analysis.

"Energy intensive activities like food processing, transportation, and packaging gobble up nearly three times the value farmers receive. And as oil prices continue to rise, an even larger share of every dollar spent on food is paying for the higher energy costs facing the entire supply chain."

With news reports of food prices going higher, driven largely by dramatic mark ups in the price of fresh fruits and vegetables and meat products, many
are seeking to blame farmers and biofuel producers for the run up.

This USDA analysis, as well as a review of recent speculative activity in commodity markets, once again proves that volatile energy prices and Wall Street speculation are the primary factors driving food prices higher.

According to USDA, the second largest contributor to food prices — only trailing labor costs — is the combination of food processing, packaging, transportation, all of which are highly energy-intensive activities.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2011

May 7 **HCIBH Race Meet.** Pleasant Prospect Farm, 4389 Jennings Chapel Road, Brookville, MD 20833. For questions call: (410) 549-1669.

May 7-8 **38th Annual Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival.** Howard County

Fairgrounds,West Friendship, MD. Contact: Chris Anderson, (301) 314-7187.

May 12 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 to 9:00 am. Dining Hall, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.

May 26 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm. CMREC. Contact: Jennifer Reynolds, (301) 405-1547.

Jun 4 **Historic National Road Yard Sale.** 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. 824 miles of yard sale stretching from Baltimore to St. Louis, MO. Living Farm Heritage Museum Grounds, West Friendship, MD.

Jun 21 – Jul 15 **Maryland Cover Crop Program Sign-Up for the 2011-2012 time period.** Howard County Farmers can contact Kristal McCormick at (410) 489-7987. See announcement in this newsletter.

June 23 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm. CMREC. Contact: Jennifer Reynolds, (301) 405-1547.

June 27-28 **Agsploratiion Summer Science Career Institute.** Frederick 4-H Center, Frederick, MD.

June 29-30 **Agsploratiion Summer Science Career Institute.** Patuxent River 4-H Center, Upper Marlboro, MD.

July 14-15 **Agsploratiion Summer Science Career Institute.** Thendara 4-H Center, Hurlock, MD.

July 21 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm. CMREC. Contact: Jennifer Reynolds, (301) 405-1547.

Aug 6-13 **66th Annual Howard County Fair**, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.

Aug 11 **Iron Chef Cook-off**, Howard county Fair, West Friendship, MD.

Sep 19-Oct 2 **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*.

Sep 23-25 **16th Annual Howard County Farm Heritage Days.** Living Farm Heritage Museum Grounds, West Friendship, MD.

Sept 24 **Western Maryland Goat Field Day & Sale.** Washington County Ag Education Center, Boonsboro, MD.

Oct 9 **25th Annual Maryland Horsemen's Party.** 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Ten Oaks Ballroom, Clarksville, MD.

* * * * * * * * * *

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