

Thrive

Sustainable Agriculture in Calvert County

Volume 1, Issue 9
July 2011



Welcome

... to *Thrive*, a quarterly newsletter focusing on sustainable agriculture in Calvert County, Maryland.

The Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County formed The Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup with members from the Soil Conservation District, the Department of Economic Development, the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Office, the County Health Department and the Department of Planning and Zoning look for way to promote agriculture.



Greg Bowen retires.

Planning & Zoning Director

Greg Bowen started the County's internationally recognized Agricultural Land Preservation program over 30 years ago, and helped start the Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup, and the citizens Calvert Eats Local group. Thank you for 32 years of supporting agriculture in Calvert.

2011 Buy Local Challenge

July 23 – 31 2011

Think Global. Eat Local.

Find out more at

www.buy-local-challenge.com



Will you take the challenge? Will your family?

Will your friends? **"I pledge to eat at least**

one thing from a local farm every day during Buy Local Week!" Take the official pledge at www.buy-local-challenge.com and then head out to a local farm, farm stand or farmers market to stock up on nutritious, delicious local food. Don't forget our local wineries and SoMD SoGood restaurants that feature local farm fresh food. Supporting local farms promotes fresher air, cleaner water, healthier families, stronger economies, safer food supplies and a greener, cleaner planet.

The Buy Local Challenge was conceived and launched in 2007 by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) to highlight the benefits of buying local to Maryland's economy and environment. SMADC and agricultural marketing specialists across Maryland work together to bring the Buy Local Challenge to many Maryland Counties.

This year the Buy Local Challenge features a new contest: "Take the Buy Local Challenge to the Workplace!" If you work in Maryland, find a creative way to take the challenge as a group, document it with a picture and description and enter to win a catered lunch for up to 20 people. Email buylocalchallenge@smadc.com or enter at www.facebook.com/marylandbuylocalchallenge.



SMADC promotes diverse, market driven agricultural enterprises seeking to preserve Southern Maryland's rural character while keeping the region's farmland productive and economy vibrant. Visit www.smacd.com or phone 301-274-1922 to learn more.



Sustainable Agriculture Awards 2012

The county is accepting nominations for outstanding achievements in agricultural sustainability. Categories are:

- **Sustainable Farmer** – diverse crops, selling direct to consumer, best management, soil conservation plan
- **Green Grocer** – buys and sells local in season, variety of products and methods used to advertise local
- **Buy Local Restaurant** – buys local products in season, advertise local products, variety, amount & uniqueness considered
- **Sustainable Meat Producer** **NEW** – animals are raised, transported and processed humanely, not fed animal by-products or growth implants, sold locally and clear information provided to consumers, best management

All nominations must be received by August 31, 2011

Information & application form at www.co.cal.md.us

Upcoming Events – Mark your calendar

Horse Pasture Walk – Weed Id & Control Thursday, July 21, 2011; 6-8pm; CMREC 4241 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD. Learn to identify weeds, which are toxic and how to control them. Contact Jennifer Reynolds 301-405-1547.

Buy Local Challenge: July 23-31, 2011, Register to take the Challenge at www.buy-local-challenge.com and then be sure to eat at least one thing from a local farm every day. Brought to you by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission.

Potato Twilight Meeting, Tuesday, July 26, 2011, 6:00pm – 7:00 pm at East New Market Rhodesdale Rd, Hwy14 in Dorchester; Growers can learn the latest research on types and techniques of potato production from UMD Extension. RSVP: Rhonda at rbarnhar@umd.edu or 410-228-8800

Annual Field Crops Research Twilight Barbecue & Ice Cream Social: Thursday, August 4, 2011; 4:30 BBQ 5:30 Ice Cream 6:30 Wagon Tour; UMD Central Maryland Research and Education Center Upper Marlboro Farm; 2005 Largo Road; Highlight of field crops, agronomic and horticultural research projects occurring at CMREC. RSVP Required 410-222-6759

Aronia Twilight Tour: Tuesday, August 23, 2011; 5:30 pm at Wye Research and Education Center; 211 Farm Lane, Queenstown MD; Aronia (chokeberry) is an alternative crop – learn varieties, densities, yield and production. RSVP Debbie Dant at ddant@umd.edu or 410-827-8056x115

Calvert County Fair: Wednesday, September 28 – Sunday, October 2, 2011; Calvert County Fairgrounds. It's never too early to plan your exhibits and mark your calendar for our County Fair! <http://www.calvertcountyfair.com/index.php>

State Cover Crop Enrollment Period is Almost Over!

The State Cover Crop Program's enrollment period runs from June 21 to July 15. To date Calvert County has 6 farmers participating who have enrolled over 3,500 acres in the program. Last year the Calvert County Soil Conservation District was recognized with an award for having the highest percentage of available acres in the cover crop program in Maryland. They are striving to make that goal again in 2011 demonstrating how Calvert County Farmers are dedicated to taking care of their farms, their communities and the environment.

Maryland's Cover Crop Program has about \$16 million in funding. The program gives grants to farmers to plant cover crops in the fall. The cover crops absorb extra nutrients and reduce soil erosion to protect water quality in our creeks and in the Chesapeake Bay.

Please contact the Calvert County Soil Conservation District for more information about the State Cover Crop program and for other ways to protect your top soil while benefitting the environment.

<http://www.calvertsoil.org/>

Phone (410) 535-1521 ext.3



Sowing Cover Crops with SCD's Great Plains 7 foot No Till Planter

New Law for “Local” Agriculture Products

Veronica Cristo, Planning & Zoning

A law passed in 2010 by the Maryland General Assembly and Gov. Martin O’Malley went into effect on June 27, 2011. The new law requires point of sale signage that tells a product’s state of origin and applies to agricultural products that are advertised as local or locally grown. It affects fruits, vegetables, raw meat, eggs, fish, shellfish and processed dairy products. It does not apply to honey or processed food other than dairy. The law only requires the notification where the sale is occurring if it is being advertised as local. A newspaper ad that states “local produce” does not need to identify the types of produce or the states they are from; however, a sign advertising, for example, local peaches at a farm stand or grocery store would need to add “from Maryland” either on the sign or with an adjacent placard.

The law came about in response to concerns about consumers not getting clear information on what they were buying. Local to one supermarket meant anything grown on the east coast of the United States. That’s probably not what most consumers had in mind. More information can be obtained from the Maryland Department of Agriculture’s FAQ sheet or by calling 410-841-5770. The Maryland Department of Agriculture will investigate any complaints called in by citizens and warn the business. If warnings are ignored they could be fined up to \$500.

“A recent study found that 78 percent of Marylanders are more likely to buy produce that is identified as having been grown by a Maryland farmer,” according to Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. It’s a powerful marketing tool for a farmer to have in their arsenal. People want to support their own community, so make it easy for them to choose you. They will choose Maryland produce over another state’s; Southern Maryland over a different region; Calvert over another County; and a friend’s farm over any other farmer. A decision to buy local is often a statement about lifestyle choices and personal values. Help consumers feel connected to your farm with pictures, information and stories to build up loyalty. Customer loyalty is the reason that Nick’s of Calvert grocery store in Prince Frederick advertises “Swann Peaches”, not just “peaches” or even just “local peaches” - and it works.



Swann Farm Peaches *photo by Kirsti Uunila*

Resources - **UMD Extension newsletters** - stay current with new research and techniques.

The BARN <http://agmarketing.umd.edu> The "BARN" is a combination of the Ag Marketing newsletter and the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center. See also www.mredc.umd.edu

Mastering Marketing <http://agmarketing.umd.edu> Important seasonal ag marketing information.

Maryland Grazers’ News <http://agmarketing.umd.edu> The benefits of grass-fed beef, dairy, and sheep.

Vegetable & Fruit Headline News gbrownin@umd.edu Help profits in commercial fruit & veg industry.

Agronomy News www.mdcrops.umd.edu or rbarnhar@umd.edu Various ag topics especially grains.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Agronomist Newsletter www.mdcrops.umd.edu

Index of grape newsletters <http://www.grapesandfruit.umd.edu/Grapes/Newsletters.htm> by Joe Fiola

**Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
c/o Board of County Commissioners
175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678**

Help save resources and the environment – request this newsletter electronically. Send an email to cristova@co.cal.md.us . You can also view current and past editions at www.calvertag.com .



Under Quarantine! Firewood should stay within the County

As of July 8, 2011, the Maryland Department of Agriculture has placed Calvert, along with all the Maryland counties west of the Chesapeake Bay, under a quarantine that prohibits the movement of ash trees and the movement of all firewood out of the quarantined area. The culprit is the Emerald Ash Borer, a little beetle first found in Prince George’s County in 2003 and since found in Charles, Howard, Allegany, and Anne Arundel Counties. Infestations generally kill an ash tree in three years. Ash trees are one of the most common and important landscaping trees in Maryland and are common in western Maryland forests.

MDA is asking consumers to help. Primarily by **Not Moving Firewood – Buy It Where You Burn It**. Hauling firewood is the most common way for damaging plant pests to be moved from one area to another. In addition, the state quarantine prohibits anyone from moving hardwood firewood or any other ash tree materials out of the regulated area. For information about the emerald ash borer and the quarantine, please visit www.mda.state.md.us/plants-pests/eab/ or call 410-841-5920.

Firewood producers should focus on selling locally and be prepared to identify where the wood is coming from. Consider adding “Calvert County Firewood” to your advertising. If you are interested in starting to produce firewood, you must have a Maryland Forest Products Operators License issued by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. See application at http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/fpo_search.asp DNR will add you to their searchable database to help consumers locate you – Calvert currently has four listings for firewood. As always, please check with your forester and make sure you have proper permits before beginning any timber harvest to avoid fines. See forestry info at: DNR Forestry Service Calvert Office 410-535-1303 or also see the Calvert Forestry Board at <http://calvertforestry.org/index.php>

