

Thrive

Volume 1, Issue 6
Winter 2010



Sustainable Agriculture in Calvert County

Welcome

... to **Thrive**, a 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, the Department of General Services and the Department of Planning and Zoning to promote agriculture in the County.



Three generations of the Swann family accept the Sustainable Farmer of the Year award



Sustainability Awards – Recognizing Calvert County Efforts



Swann's Farm

As Calvert County adjusts to life without tobacco, some farmers have shifted their focus to crops that can be sold at local markets, are profitable, are more diversified, and provide options for 'value-added' sales. Recognizing consumer interest in environmentally friendly practices, they are

using growing methods that enrich the soil and allow for minimal use of chemical pesticides. To recognize the efforts of farmers, markets, and restaurants helping to make 'buy-local' happen in Calvert County, the Board of County Commissioners recently presented the first ever annual Calvert County Sustainability Awards.

Nominations were accepted for "**Sustainable Farmer of the Year**". Farms that were nominated were to have had a Soil Conservation Plan in place, were to be utilizing best management practices in soil conservation, have a diversity of crops, have implemented a plan to reduce pesticide use and have sold a crop directly to consumers. Four strong applications were submitted. Nominee Spider Hall, owned by the Cox family, now produces grain and produce. It has a corn maize in the fall and has hosted the Calvert Farm Tour for the past several years. The Bourne family farm: Lamb's Quarter, was nominated for producing healthy, organically managed food and promoting farming as an honorable profession. They have operated a very successful CSA program in Calvert County for the last several years. Managed by Jeff Klapper, the American Chestnut Land Trust's Double Oak Farm crop variety includes everything from arugula to zinnias. ACLT has worked with Bill Clark of the Calvert County Soil Conservation District to provide a cover crop program to integrate with their crop rotation plan. Double Oak plants to attract beneficial insects and minimizes the application of pesticides. The "Sustainable Farmer of the Year" award was presented to Swann's Farm, a family farm owned and operated by seventh generation farmers J. Allen and Jody Swann. The nearly 400 acre farm is an active supplier of local grocers and restaurants with a large variety of vegetables, fruits and flowers. Swann's has a reputation for providing high quality products. Swann's recycles runoff onto their land through a series of catchment basins and ponds and uses it for irrigating crops in consideration of the environment.

Retailers who purchase and offer a variety of local products when in season and who feature local products in advertising and business promotions were nominated for the "**Green Grocer of the Year**" award. Businesses nominated were Chesapeake Bounty and Bowen's Grocery. Both sell a significant amount of local produce and help the local economy. Located in St. Leonard, and owned by William Kreamer, Chesapeake's Bounty offers a wide selection of local products including seasonal products, plants, local seafood, and other products like firewood, straw, local canned goods, and free-range eggs. Additionally, local crops are grown on the property, including rye, kale, etc. The "Green Grocer of the Year" award was presented to Bowen's Grocery of Huntingtown.

Continued on page 2



Owned and operated by Gordon Bowen, Bowen's Grocery was honored for buying and selling local produce. In fact, there is very little produce sold at Bowen's that is not locally grown. Bowen prominently advertises local farm items (tomatoes, peaches, corn, etc.) in the store, in newspaper ads, and signage. The grocery also features homemade items and a full deli and meat market. Bowen's recycles and supports local livestock sales.

The "Buy Local Restaurant of the Year Award" was presented to a Calvert County restaurant that buys local products when in season and advertises local products on menus and in special recipes. Special consideration was given to those nominees that offer a variety of local goods used in meals and for their uniqueness in presentation. Nominees included: Bilvil, A Beaches Café, Saphron and Dream Weaver Café and Catering. Bilvil, A Beaches Café, owned by Bil and Sandy Shockley regularly purchases produce from Swann's Farm and other local farmers. Saphron, owned by Charleen Obal and recently relocated to the Old Field house on Main Street in Prince Frederick, has turned an old home into an upscale restaurant. Charleen adapts her low country menu to utilize the many offerings of our local farmers markets. She provides local wines from Fridays' Creek, Running Hare and Perigeaux vineyards. Charleen follows a farm to table philosophy in providing her menu items. The "Buy Local Restaurant of the Year" winner is: Dream Weaver Café and Catering. Owner Trish Weaver takes pride in buying local when possible and adjusts her menu of offerings according to what is fresh. She utilizes locally grown squash, onions, tomatoes, herbs, potatoes, sweet potatoes, peaches and salad greens. Trish also uses local eggs and locally raised meat when available and economically possible. Famous for her fresh baked goods, Trish uses locally grown blueberries and pumpkins for muffins, cakes and pies. She has even found a supplier for local shiitake mushrooms. Trish recycles and uses real dishes and silverware (rather than disposables) for catering when possible. Leftover food is donated to Project Echo and Safe Harbor.



Trish Weaver owner of Dream Weaver Café & Catering winner of "Buy Local Restaurant of the Year"



The Bowens receive "Green Grocer of the Year"



Twenty Tips for Direct Marketing

Several farm families took advantage of the recent SAW workshop "Successful Marketing Strategies for Farmers". County Extension Director and Agriculture Educator, Shannon Dill (of the UMD Extension Talbot County) offered an informative presentation. Ms. Dill, who grew up active in the 4-H and Future Farmers of America on the Eastern Shore, offered helpful tips for direct marketing products at Farm Stands and Farmers Markets. Many of the tips stressed creativity by offering unique products, researching new varieties and making products stand out through use of attractive, colorful displays. Organizational tips included using legible signage and having a written business and marketing plan and following it. Emphasis was placed on the four Ps: **Product** – research what will sell, **Price** – know what the market will bear and have a strategy, **Place** – location, location, location. Where you place a product is often as important as the item. Finally **Promotion** – the need to communicate with customers and advance your product to boost sales was discussed. With this marketing mix, you can't miss. Ms. Dill's presentation is viewable at:

www.co.cal.md.us/assets/Planning_Zoning/Slideshows/Topmarketingtips.pdf



Bowens Grocery – Huntingtown



Marketing Workshop attendees



Shannon Dill



The Calvert County Historic District Commission
PRESENTS

SAVE THE TOBACCO BARNS! Tax Credits and Other Strategies



Featuring
Liz Creveling Petrella
LEED, AP
Technical Preservation
Services
National Park Service

Ms. Petrella grew up in Southern Maryland and is familiar with budget and maintenance issues facing barn owners who no longer grow tobacco.

THURSDAY, January 13, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.
St. Paul's Episcopal Church Parish Hall
on Church Street in Prince Frederick

The doors of the Parish Hall at St. Paul's
Episcopal Church will open at 6:30 p.m. –
light refreshments will be served

For more information, contact
Kirsti Uunila at (410) 535-1600 x2504 or
email UunilaK@co.cal.md.us

- Learn about Federal, state, and local programs that provide financial assistance for barn repair.



In partnership with



"Adaptive Reuse of Tobacco Barns" Booklet - A new booklet has been developed to assist barn owners in finding ways to preserve tobacco barns. Visit:
<http://www.co.cal.md.us/residents/building/planning/committees/historic/BarnsBooklet.asp>



Jonathan Kays, a natural resources specialist with the University of Maryland Extension, was the invited guest speaker at the recent **"Forestry Management Workshop"**. Mr. Kays presented materials on a variety of topics including timber harvests for lumber and firewood, custom sawmill enterprise, marketing of forest products, and streamside stabilization. Interesting statistics about Calvert County forests were discussed. For example, did you know that in 1900 forest cover in Calvert County was 30%, while in 1980 forest cover was 60%? Information was also provided from the Calvert County Forestry Board and Maryland Department of Natural Resources. You may view Mr. Kays' presentation at:
www.co.cal.md.us/assets/Planning_Zoning/Slideshows/Forestrypresentation.pdf
For more resources visit the Maryland Rural Enterprises Development Center website at:
www.mredc.umd.edu



Jonathan Kays, Natural Resources Specialist, UMD Extension

"Changing Face of Md Ag" Tool Kit Open for Comment

The Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA) has developed a draft "tool kit" to help Maryland counties support local farmers. The tool kit, "Understanding and Responding to the Changing Face of Maryland Agriculture: A Resource for Local Communities," aims to inform communities and local officials about the current context within which their farmers operate. The document outlines the most pressing concerns of farmers, as voiced in a 2010 survey presented at the Governor's Agriculture Forum, held earlier this year, and lays out the importance of the industry to Maryland. To view and comment on the draft document visit:

<http://www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/draft.toolkit.pdf>

Future Harvest – CASA Annual Conference – January 14 – 15, 2011 - Reisterstown, Maryland

This 12th annual conference is called "We Are What We Eat: Community Health Through Sustainable Farming." The schedule includes pre-conference tours, workshops, panels and networking opportunities. Tracks include sustainable fruits and vegetables, grass-based systems, value-added, urban agriculture, and sustainable communities.

Visit: http://www.futureharvestcasa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=93 for more information and to register.

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

Help the County Save Resources and Benefit the Environment –Receive this newsletter electronically. Send your request to cristova@co.cal.md.us and be sure to include your full name. We will email the link with each new edition. Archived editions are available as well at: www.calvertag.com.



Upcoming Events - Mark your calendar!

THURSDAY – January 13, 2011 – 7:00 p.m. - Save the Tobacco Barns! St. Paul's Episcopal Church Parish Hall – Prince Frederick
FREE – For more information, contact Kirsti Uunila at (410) 535-1600 x2504 or email UunilaK@co.cal.md.us

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – January 14-15, 2011 – Future Harvest – CASA 12th Annual Conference – “We Are What We Eat: Community Health Through Sustainable Farming” - Pearlstone Conference and Retreat Center in Reisterstown, MD – visit: www.futureharvestcasa.org for more information and to register

Saturday – January 22, 2011 – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Beekeeping 101 – Wye Research and Education Center, Queenstown, MD – Five sessions – every other Saturday through March. Learn about bees, beekeeping equipment, how and where to set up and establish a hive. Two final sessions for winterizing and pest control – one in September and one in October. Cost: \$110.00 includes textbook. Contact: Debby Dant 410-827-8056 x115 or ddant@umd.edu for further information. Registration deadline is January 14, 2011.

TUESDAY – January 25, 2011 – 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. – 2011 Buyer-Grower Event – Annapolis Elks Lodge, 2517 Solomons Island Rd., Edgewater, MD – The Buyer-Grower Event is a trade show style meeting where Maryland growers and producers have the opportunity to display their products and buyers have a chance to speak with them one-on-one. Contact Kate Mason at 410-841-5779 or masonkb@mda.state.md.us for further info.

WEDNESDAYS – January 26 through March 16, 2011 – 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women – Annie was a farmers wife and spent her lifetime learning how to be an involved business partner. Annie's project is designed to empower farmwomen to manage and to build local networks throughout the state. Must register by January 14th. Cost: \$75.00 per person. Location: St. Mary's Agriculture Center, 22660 Washington St., Leonardtown, MD For more information contact: Jenny Rhodes jrhodes@umd.edu (410)758-0166 or Shannon Dill sdill@umd.edu (410)822-1244 <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/Extension/agriculture/anniesProject/files/Registration%202011.pdf>

THURSDAY – January 27, 2011 – 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Southern Maryland Rural Agricultural and Business Innovation Forum – Holiday Inn Conference Center, Solomons, MD. - The Maryland Technology Development corporation (TEDCO) and USDA Agricultural Research will hold this forum to discuss current farming issues in Southern Maryland. Roundtable discussions with agricultural professionals, local farmers and growers. Luncheon and networking session for all attendees. Must register by January 25 – Registration is \$25.00 per person.

SATURDAY – February 5, 2011 – 8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. – Small Flock Short Course – Homestead Gardens, 743 West Central Ave., Davidsonville, MD – This short course is sponsored by the University of Maryland Extension. Presentation will include basic bird management, poultry nutrition, chicken breeds, diseases, and egg safety. Contact: Jennifer Timmons at 410-742-1178 x309 or by email at mdchick@umd.edu. Registration deadline is February 2, 2011.

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY – February 16-17, 2011 – Maryland Farmers' Market Conference – Baltimore County Agricultural Resource Center, 1114 Shawan Road, Cockeysville, MD – Prepare for the 2011 farmers' market season. Learn about current regulations, marketing tips and good agricultural practices. <http://www.calvertag.com/2011%20MD%20Fm%20Conference%20Save%20the%20Date.pdf> for information and to register. Contact Amy Crone croneag@mda.state.md.us or phone 410-841-5776 or 800-492-5590.

WEDNESDAY – February 23, 2011 – 7:00pm -Calvert County Farmers Market Association Courthouse Square ED Conference Room, Prince Frederick. All interested farmers are invited. For further information, contact Calvert County Department of Economic Development, 410-535-4583, info@ecalvert.com