

NEWSLETTER

HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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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, January 12, 2012** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please mark this date on your calendar now and plan to join us.

Our guest speaker will be **Dr. Marcia Driscoll, Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Dermatology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine**. She is currently president of the Maryland Dermatologic Society.

Dr. Driscoll is a graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy, earned her Doctor of Pharmacy Degree at the University of Texas and her Doctor of Medicine Degree from the University of Connecticut.

Her primary interests are in general dermatology and skin cancer, particularly in the most deadly form of skin cancer, melanoma. She has published numerous articles concerning melanoma and changes in moles during pregnancy. She resides in Ellicott City with her three children and her husband, Dr. Brian Driscoll, an otolaryngologist.

The breakfast meeting on January 12th presents an excellent opportunity for you to interact with and acquire some potentially life-saving information from a highly trained and respected expert on skin cancer, a malady frequently caused by too much exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

Come out, enjoy an excellent breakfast, some fine fellowship, and learn how to better protect yourself from developing skin cancer.

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, January 10** by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or MarthaClark at (410) 531-3455.

The cost of the breakfast continues to be \$10.00 per person, payable at the door. The speaking portion of the program normally concludes by 9:00 a.m. We look forward to greeting you on Thursday, **January 12** at the next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

President's Message

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

Well, we made it through another year. It always seems so far away when you think of something a year away and then all of the sudden it is here. When we look back at the year we just had, it's been cold, snowy, wet, dry and wet again. I guess Forest Gump's mom was right, you never know what you're going to get. We know one thing for certain though. Things will change and all of us will make the best of it, we always have. I believe that we farmers have even more capability to handle change than most others because we have always had to make changes to meet the task at hand. We can all be proud of those abilities.

We traveled to Ocean City for our annual convention in December and we are changing there also. The delegates voted to reduce the size of the State Board. We will share representation on the Board with two other counties, Montgomery and Carroll. There will be two representatives from the three counties as State Board members. Communication will be the key to making this new arrangement work. Lets all do our best and once again change will become the normal.

Congratulations to our President Pat Langenfelder, 1st Vice President Chuck Fry and 2nd Vice President Jim Steele on their reelection. Thanks to them for a job well done this past year. And congratulations to the Mullinix Brothers for winning the 3rd highest sales award for Maryland Farm Bureau Tire's.

I want to thank everyone that helped the Hudson Family over the past year. Hopefully, the Hudson's nightmarish law suit will end soon. No one deserves to be harassed that way. The Hudson's personally thanked us all at the convention dinner. Keep up the fight; it is for all of us.

A second barn was lost to fire last year. Grant Hill's hay barn was lost in mid-December. I hope that no one else has to experience such a disaster. A barn fire has got to be one of the most feared, and expensive, events to happen to anyone.

The first annual Lisbon Christmas Horse Parade on December 10, 2011 was a big success thanks to the efforts of all its organizers and participants. They did a great job to help bring back a really neat part of our past. The Carroll County and Howard County food banks benefitted the most, and that's a good thing.

I want to welcome Rhonda Winkler and Mark Martin to our local Board of Directors, and I want to thank Susan Baker and Brice Ridgley, our retiring members, for serving their terms and for doing a fine job for us.

Well I hope everyone has gotten their crops harvested and that your Holiday Season was a happy and blessed time. So as always, "Keep your plow in the ground, we're all pulling for you"

2012 Mid-Winter Ag Meeting by **Kristal McCormick** **Howard SCD**

Mark your calendars for the 2012 Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting. The meeting will be held Thursday, February 23rd, 6:30-8:30PM, at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center at Glenwood in the Patapsco Room. Registration begins at 6:15. Light refreshments will be provided.

The evening's topics include grain marketing and changes being made by the next generation on the family farm. There will also be a brief overview and an opportunity to ask questions concerning the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or EPA's "pollution diet" as well as Nutrient Trading.

Please RSVP to the Howard Soil Conservation District (410) 489-7987, or kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov, by Tuesday, February 21st. Individuals requiring special accommodations please contact the office no less than one week before the meeting.

The 2012 Mid-Winter Ag Meeting is sponsored by Howard Soil Conservation District, Maryland Cooperative Extension, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Howard Soil Conservation District, Maryland Cooperative Extension and USDA prohibit discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

Patrick Family Hosts Dairy Researchers¹⁷

According to an account prepared by Dr. Robert R. Peters, Professor and Dairy Extension Specialist at the University of Maryland in the Department of Animal and Avian Sciences, the Patrick Family of Woodbine was chosen as one of the hosts for a recent visiting multi-state Technical Committee of prominent dairy research scientists. The **Patrick Family of Maple Dell Farm** near Woodbine is one of just three **Howard County** farm families remaining in the dairying business in 2011. The

Patricks, for their many contributions to agriculture, were honored in 2008 when they were inducted into Maryland's Agriculture Hall of Fame.

The first two days of the 2011 conference were held at the Maryland 4-H Center on the UM College Park campus. The third day, the group of scientists toured several Maryland dairy farms — two of which were located in Howard County. Besides visiting the Patrick Family's Maple Dell Farm, the group also traveled to the University of Maryland's dairy facility on Folly Quarter Road near Clarksville.

The primary purpose of this conference was the regular annual meeting of Technical Committee NC 1042. This committee is composed of dairy science researchers from all over the Eastern U.S., and even beyond. On day one of the 2011 conference, a formal keynote address was presented by Dr. Rick Kohn, Professor and Extension Specialist in Animal Nutrition Management at UM. His topic focused on using the *Milk Urea Nitrogen Test* for reducing environmental impact on water quality and feed costs.

The first two days of the conference was devoted mostly to formal oral presentations and the subsequent discussion of individual research reports by the Technical Committee members. These reports covered results from various components of the group's cooperative research projects that had been conducted during the previous twelve months or more. These presentations provided an excellent opportunity to share important research data. Administrative planning also took place regarding funding and which new or more promising projects should be initiated or continued in future years.

On the third day of the conference, the group toured several representative, even unique, dairy farm operations in the area. This very important phase of the NC 1042 annual meeting is eagerly looked forward to by its members because it provides an opportunity for a closer view of how dairying across the country is conducted on the local level. The tour offers a unique and very broadening educational experience for its participants. For instance, over just the past three years alone, the group has met in widely different

dairying areas across North America such as Idaho, British Columbia (Canada) and Indiana.

The first stop on the 2011 tour was a visit to the USDA's dairy research farm at Beltsville, MD. The USDA's GrowSafe system was explained by Dr. Erin Connor of the Bovine Functional Genomics Laboratory. GrowSafe is a system in which precise measurements are taken on feed and water intake, animal weight and feeding behavior in a typical production environment. Data collected is used to help identify genetic traits contributing to efficient milk production. Another stop at Beltsville was to view UM's Dr. Stephanie Lansing's use of dairy manure in a low cost anaerobic digester to produce renewable energy while reducing environmental degradation and greenhouse gases.

Dr. Peters arranged for two excellent tour stops to be made in Howard County. Included were the University of Maryland's Dairy Facility near Clarksville. The other visitation was to the Patrick Family's Maple Dell Farm located near Woodbine.

Technical Committee members were informed that the UM dairy farm currently features 74 cows and about an equal number of young stock. The dairy portion of this nearly 1,000 acre facility is used primarily for nutrition research. One highlight at this stop was a tour of the special 20-cow-capacity research barn in which studies requiring intensive sampling protocols are being conducted.

During the second stop, Dave Patrick, served as spokesperson and personally guided the tour of his family's operation. He explained to the group that the farm is now jointly owned and operated by him, his wife, Ann, and the families of his two sons, Michael and Denny.

Dave indicated that when he first started in the dairy business as a young 4-H'er in 1941, Howard County's very popular county agent, Mr. Warren G. "Buddy" Meyers, was an especially strong advocate and enthusiast for the Ayrshire breed of dairy cattle. Consequently, like the Patricks, many small dairy farms in Howard County had the Ayrshire breed. Now, however, Maple Dell Farm has both Holstein and Ayrshire cattle. The herd at Maple Dell has grown to approximately 180 cows.

After presenting an overview of the family farm's history, Dave directed the group to the barn where

they could view the dairy cows. The visiting researchers asked many questions regarding how the herd was managed in terms of day-to-day practices, such as in feeding, reproduction and milk quality. Dave indicated that only the adult cows and young calves were kept on the home farm. Heifers were raised off-site on another farm that they own. Most of the group was very surprised to learn that at a young age of 81, Dave and his wife, Ann, still milk the cows daily at 4 a.m. and at 4 p.m.!

The final stop on the NC 1042 Technical Committee tour was at the Prigel Family Creamery and organic dairy herd located near Glen Arm in Baltimore County. According to Bobby Prigel, after surviving a long battle over zoning restrictions, the Prigels built an on-farm dairy processing center where milk produced on the farm is used to make ice cream and fluid milk is bottled for sale to the public. The farm store was finally opened to the public in the fall of 2010.

Dr. Peters summarized his written remarks with the following comments. "While these farms were just a sample of the 508 dairy farms that currently operate in Maryland, dairy researchers visiting from states throughout the U.S. were able to appreciate the State's industry challenges and opportunities."

"As in other regions of the U.S., Maryland dairy farmers are very resourceful people and in spite of the pressures of high land prices, urbanization, and environmental regulations, they continue to produce a valued and nutritious product, build on a tradition of sound environmental stewardship, maintain the beauty of the countryside as open space, and contribute to their communities and the economy."

^{1/} **Source: Dr. Robert R. Peters,
Professor and Extension Dairy Specialist
University of Maryland
Department of Animal and Avian Sciences**

Supply of Calendars Available

A supply of beautiful 2012 calendars are available at the Howard Soil Conservation District Office.

These calendars, free for the taking, were developed by the Maryland Grazers Network. Each month, the calendar offers valuable tips on good grazing techniques. The calendars are large and provide plenty of space for writing daily notes and appointments for each day.

The pictures of grazing dairy cows, beef, and the occasional goats and sheep are great. You might even learn something! Stop by and pick one up at the District office located at 708 Lisbon Center Drive, Woodbine (in the Lisbon Shopping Center). They are free, no cost to you.

Farm Best Management Practice Inventory Project by **Bob Ensor, Manager** **Howard Soil Conservation District**

A primary goal of this project is to identify all the Best Management Practices (BMP's) on farms in Howard County and make sure these are included (total number, not location) in the Chesapeake Bay Program Model. This will make sure that agriculture gets full credit for everything that counts and will help Howard County meet the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goals.

The preliminary results are showing that there are many more BMP's in place than were originally included in the Model. Most are due to farmer funded activities, self installed practices, which are not in any state or federal database. This is all private farm specific information and isn't shared with anyone outside of the District office and the landowner/farmer. This project will open a lot of eyes to the great job that agriculture is doing to keep nutrients and sediment on the farm.

A secondary goal is to run the information through the Maryland Dept. of Agriculture Nutrient Trading Tool program to see if the farm meets the baseline of the TMDL and if there are any additional credits over and above the baseline. This also is all private farm specific information and isn't shared with anyone outside of the District office and the landowner/farmer. The landowner/farmer has control of the results.

So far, all the farms we have entered in the program

have met the baseline for nitrogen with additional credits available. Most have met the baseline for phosphorus. Those that have not met the phosphorus baseline may be able to meet the baseline numbers with some small adjustments. That is good news!

If you wish to participate and have not been contacted yet, call the Howard Soil Conservation District Office at 410-489-7987.

Happenings in Annapolis by Delegate Gail Bates

As I write this article, the holidays will soon be upon us and the Legislative Session is just around the corner. Economic conditions continue to weigh heavily on the world, our nation and our state. It is difficult to keep a positive attitude under such a situation.

It is my hope and prayer that the coming year will bring improvement for all of us. Here's wishing all the best for you and yours. My family and I celebrate Christ's birth this season, another blessing for which I am grateful.

Those of us who represent farm families and rural areas have been doubly concerned with the Governor's attack on rural areas through nutrient management changes that overly burden farmers for no good reason but to appease environmentalists. Use of taxpayer funded University of Maryland law students to destroy a farm family in close proximity to waterways, if successful sets a dangerous precedent for all farmers. In addition, state usurpation of local zoning through Plan Maryland makes Glendening's Smart Growth look tame. These governmental over reaches need to be stopped and I will be joining with the other rural legislators to protect our agricultural base.

These and other issues will be on the agenda for the 2012 session. Generally the second year of a legislative session is the year when the biggest issues are tackled so that people get used to the changes by local election time. According to newspaper sources, our Governor expects to have an aggressive package of legislation at the same time as he once again faces a \$1 billion plus

“structural” deficit. A cynical person would postulate that issues such as Same Sex Marriage, Transgender Discrimination, Off Shore Wind Generation, etc. serve as a distraction from the major issues.

The budget remains a major concern. Maryland's reliance on the Federal Government for jobs and spending has put us on watch by the bond rating agencies. We are near our debt capacity due to shifting expenditures from pay as you go to 15 year bonds. Special purpose accounts funded by fees have been raided for short term budget relief and now need to be refilled with higher fees. The Transportation Trust Fund has been raided (nearly \$700 million) for the same reason and now gas tax increases or sales tax on gasoline are being proposed to refill the fund. Suffice it to say, “all the easy solutions have been used and we are left with difficult decisions.”

As the Ranking Republican member of the Appropriations Committee for the last 5 years, I have led my caucus to propose alternative budgets that limited spending increases during the recession that, if utilized, would have put us in better fiscal shape than where we now find ourselves. I am not supportive of additional taxes at a time when our taxpaying citizens are struggling to make ends meet. Continuing to grow our budget when revenues have been stagnant is poor stewardship of our taxpayers dollars. And, as anyone who watches the news knows, the Federal Bank account is empty. Our reliance on Uncle Goody has come to an end.

When we layer on top of all these issues the Legislative redistricting map that will be presented to us at the beginning of session, deals are being made as we celebrate. With our Governor off on the National stage, a Presidential Primary in April and a General Election in November, 2012 promises to be entertaining at the least. Who knows what legislation will be offered up to match a national agenda item or two.

Hold on to your seats, it could be another rocky ride. Please keep in touch on these or any other issues of concern. Have a blessed holiday season and a happy 2012.

National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operations Certification Program Training

A tractor and machinery safety training program for youth 14-15 years of age has been planned for Frederick County. The program is a joint effort of the Frederick County Office of University of Maryland Extension, Frederick County Farm Bureau, and the local tractor dealers. The program will be offered from 7 to 9 p.m. on nine consecutive Monday evenings January 23 to March 19. The skills test will be administered March 24th. There is a \$25 dollar registration fee and the registration deadline is January 9th.

This training program will enable young workers to obtain Hazardous Occupation Order in Agriculture certification, which is required for youth 14 and 15 years of age who wish to work as a hired employee for someone other than a parent or legal guardian, and operate a farm tractor that is 20 hp or greater. It is highly recommended that ALL farm and equipment operating youth attend this program even if they will only be working for a parent.

The program will provide attendees with the necessary 24 hours of instruction, including group discussion, demonstrations, field trips, hands-on activities, independent study, and field assignments. Although the target audience is 14 and 15 year olds, it is available to anyone over the age of 12, however only individuals 14 and older will be able to operate equipment and become certified. Individuals over 15 are also encouraged to attend as are adults who are new tractor operators. Preference, however, will be given to the 14-15 year olds.

To register or to obtain additional information, contact the Frederick County Office of University of Maryland Extension at 301-600-3578. A parent/guardian consent form will need to be completed with registration. This program is open to any youth interested in becoming certified for production agriculture, nursery, or landscaping employment. Participants need not be residents of Frederick County. Equal access programs/equal opportunity employers.

Planning for the Future: Maryland Farming Businesses

Like most farming families, your land and business are your largest assets. You need a plan that ensures someone, a family or non-family member, is able to successfully take over the operations according to your wishes. Learn the answers to sensitive questions, and plan for your family's future.

For more information and registration details, visit www.carrollcc.edu/instantenrollment or call (410) 386-8100.

Source: CCC/UME

Final Claims Deadline in \$1.25 Billion Pigford II/Black Farmers Settlement

What is this case about? The original *Pigford* Settlement in 1999 provided benefits to certain African Americans who farmed or attempted to farm but experienced farm loan discrimination by the USDA. But many eligible people did not file claims until after the original claims deadline. The current settlement provides benefits to some of those late filers.

Am I included? You may be included if you are African American and: 1) Experienced farm loan discrimination by the USDA between 1981 and 1996; and 2) Your late claim or request to participate in the original *Pigford* case was denied or never considered because you submitted it after October 12, 1999, the late claims deadline.

Heirs or kin of someone who died who fits this description may be included. You are not eligible for a payment under this settlement if you did not submit a request to participate in the original *Pigford* case between October 13, 1999 and June 18, 2008 or if you received a payment or a final decision in that case.

What can I get from the Settlement and how do I get a payment? You may be eligible for a substantial cash payment, USDA loan forgiveness, or both. Use the contact information below as soon as possible to find out if you are included and to be put in touch with a lawyer who can assist you at no cost to you.

The claims deadline is May 11, 2012 and this is your final chance for a payment. For information, call 1-877-810-8110 or visit www.BlackFarmerCase.com

2012 Maryland Agricultural Pesticide Conference

You are invited to attend the **2012 Maryland Agricultural Pesticide Conference**, an educational program conducted by the University of Maryland Extension for custom pesticide applicators, dealers, distributors, sales representatives, growers, agency representatives and Extension workers.

The 2012 conferences will be presented on Tuesday, February 7th at the Legends Restaurant in the Frederick Hampton Inn and on Thursday, February 9th at the 4-H Park in Denton, MD.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture will accept attendance at either full-day session for recertification in the following categories:

- 1A Agricultural, Plant
- 1B Agricultural, Animal
- 4 Seed Treatment
- 9 Regulatory
- 10 Demonstration and Research

Also, the Delaware Department of Agriculture will accept attendance at either full-day session as five hours recertification of category:

- 1A Agricultural, Plant

A pre-registration fee of **\$35 for Frederick and \$30 for Denton** is required for attendance to the conference. Registration includes lunch, break, handouts, registration materials and conference costs and must be received by **Friday, January 13th**. Please mail the form with your check or money order to the correct address listed on the form. Registrations received after January 13th will be \$50.00, no exceptions. For information, call the appropriate number below.

Confirmation of registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. on both days. The 2012 conference will be chaired by Jim Lewis in Denton and by Dave Martin in Frederick.

If you have any questions about the Denton Conference, call Jim Lewis, Caroline County Extension Agent at **(410) 479-4030**. If you have questions about the Frederick Conference, call Dave Martin, Baltimore County Extension Agent at **(410) 666-1022**.

We hope to see you at one of the conferences.

Source: Jim Lewis, Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources

Nutrient Management Specialist by **Bob Ensor, Manager** **Howard Soil Conservation District**

Bryan Harris, Nutrient Management Specialist with the Maryland Dept. of Agriculture, will be in Howard County throughout the winter and spring helping Howard County Farmers. If you have questions about Nutrient Management plans, Annual Implementation Reports or related issues, please give him a call at 301-694-9290 X 136. He can meet you at the Howard Soil Conservation District Office at your convenience.

2012 Beekeeping Class

The opening session of the 2012 Beekeeping Class will be held at the Wye Research and Education Center on Saturday, January 21, 2012 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. There will be 5 classes in the spring and 2 classes in the fall. All classes will be held on a Saturday.

For more information, please call (410) 827-9039.

Source: UME/WREC

Farm Management Classes for Women

*Reprinted from Carroll County Farm Notes
December, 2011*

The University of Maryland and Delaware Extension will conduct Annie's Project during the winter of 2012 at sites in Maryland and Delaware. Annie's Project focuses on the many aspects of farm management and is designed to empower women in

overall farm decision making and to build local networks throughout the state.

The target audience is farm owners with a passion for business, agriculture and involvement in the farm operation. Topics for the sessions cover the five areas of Risk Management – Production, Marketing, Financial, Legal Risk, Human Resources.

This course is open to anyone interested in farm management practices. The course will be 8 sessions held at a variety of sites in Maryland and Delaware. Locations include: **Carroll Community College**, Westminster MD, **Cecil County Main Library**, Elkton, MD, **Chesapeake College**, Wye Mills MD, **HEAT Center**, Aberdeen MD, **Prince George's County Extension Office**, Clinton, MD, **University of Delaware Research and Education Center**, Georgetown, DE, **Washington County Extension Office**, Boonesboro, MD, **Wor-Wic Community College**, Salisbury, MD.

Classes will begin on January 25th. The cost of the course including meals and materials is \$75. Please register by January 18th - space is limited.

For more information, visit the website www.anniesproject.umd.edu or call (410) 758-0166.

If you require special assistance to attend the classes please contact the site at least two weeks prior.

Annie's Project has been approved for FSA Borrower Training. If you require training through the FSA loan process you can attend Annie's Project and complete a follow-up workbook for your training requirement. There will be an additional \$100.00 fee for the FSA Borrower Training.

For more information, please contact your FSA loan officer.

*Source: Ginger S. Myers
University of Maryland
Extension Marketing Specialist*

D.I.Y. Wills
by **Timothy S. Barkley, Sr.**
JD, CFP, CSA
Attorney at Law

You're standing on a playing field, a ball in your hand, facing a crowd of burly guys running helter-skelter around the field. Some of them seem to be running at you. You weave and dodge. People are yelling and gesturing, and you heft the ball, then throw it where you think it ought to go. Big guys react instantly, violently, and some are thrown to the ground while others run. Spectators cheer, some jeer, and you shake your head, wondering what you just did.

You wake up with a jump, frustrated that you keep having that stress dream from high school. At least this time you had clothes on. You wish you knew what game you were playing, so you could try to learn and remember the rules.

You remember that this is Saturday, and that you were going to do some research on the Internet to find out how to draft your own will. There are just too many forms online for you to pay a lawyer. Lawyers are just so 1990s!

You find a site that promises that your document will be effective "in all 50 states." That's good, you think, because you don't really want to stay in Maryland forever. Taxes are too high here.

You start selecting options and clicking in boxes. You select "simple will" and type in the name of your kids and your executor. You know your estate can't be anything complicated. You just have a house and bank account, and a couple of IRAs.

You want everything to go to the kids equally. Except for grandpa's watch and your guns. The watch goes to your nephew, and your guns go to your niece, who's always hunted with you. There's no place to put this, so you save the will on your computer as a word processing file, pull it up, and type in your special distributions under "Distributions" right after the stuff about everything going to your kids.

You print your will, sign it and take it to your neighbor's house, and they sign it as witnesses. Then you put it in your safe deposit box. Then you die.

Your kids get out the will and find out that they are

supposed to split everything equally. The next sentence is your special distribution of grandpa's watch to your nephew, and after that is the distribution of the guns to your niece. The watch is worth \$2,200, and the guns are worth a little bit more.

If the will says "all to my kids in equal shares," and then says "watch to nephew and guns to niece," have you just contradicted yourself? Lest you laugh and think no one would do this, someone has. Other people's kids have brought that will into this office. They were wrestling with whether to give almost \$5,000 to their cousins – or just keep the watch and the guns. After all, "all" to my kids sounds a lot like everything, and "everything" includes watches and guns. Did you mean for the watch and guns to go to the nephew and niece now, or only if your kids didn't survive you? Nobody knows.

Your kids learn that your eldest daughter is a joint owner on all your bank accounts. She informs them that the bank has told her that the surviving joint owner owns the accounts, and she says you told her that's what you wanted, because she took care of you. She says that the others get nothing. They're not so sure that's really what you wanted.

Then your kids find out that the beneficiary on your IRA is still your ex-wife. Because you did your divorce yourself, there's no agreement that your kids can rely on to demonstrate to the IRA custodian that you intended to change the beneficiary. They won't make distribution to your kids without a court order. Then your ex tells the kids that she was supposed to have the IRA – that was your agreement.

It's a mess. Your kids wish that you'd learned the rules of the game before you tried to play quarterback.

**The Dynamite Blast that
Terrified our Poor Dog**
by V. Allan Bandel

The incident that I want to tell about this time took place in the late 1950's. It was during the period when my brother Donny and I were still both enrolled as undergraduate students at the University of Maryland in College Park.

At the time, our family farm operation was cooperating in a routine wetland drainage project under the supervision of the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Be assured that this project was carried out well before artificial drainage of wetlands became such a sensitive environmental issue and that later became subject to much stricter government regulations.

This event involved the adrenaline-induced excitement generated by the combined detonation of hundreds of sticks of dynamite, charges that had been placed that day by Dad and a trusted helper. The dynamite was embedded along the center line of one of our meandering pasture streams. By chance, it also turned out to be one of the last times that we used dynamite for opening ditches on our farm.

For lack of a better method in those days, the explosive force of dynamite was very useful as an excavation tool. In this case, it would help us to relocate a "lazy" wandering creek that had inconveniently "decided" to change course and was now spreading out across one of our once productive, but low-lying, cow pastures.

Donny and I both looked forward with anticipation to returning home from college on the weekends. We enjoyed helping out around the farm. On this particular spring weekend, we had arrived home late in the day on Friday. We were often delayed on Fridays by late afternoon classes. Sometimes we even had an examination or two late in the day which we were anxious to start "unwinding" from. So, we couldn't always arrive back home for the weekend at a very early hour on Friday afternoons.

When we finally "checked in" with Dad on this particular Friday, he was already busy with chores in the milking parlor. As usual, he was in the midst of the evening milking of our herd of mostly grade Holstein dairy cows. As we entered the milking parlor, we asked which evening chores might still need finishing. A sly grin spread across Dad's face, and then he told us that nearly all tasks had already been taken care of around the barn. The feeding and fresh bedding in the loafing barn were under control and the calves and other young stock had been fed. But there was just one really important unfinished task that he had left especially for us.

He went on to explain that earlier that day, he and a helper had buried a "string" of dynamite sticks in a pasture streambed near the far back end of our place,

about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away from the farm buildings. Actually, the dynamite had been embedded in an overflowing streambed at *Wavertree*, an adjacent farm that we had been renting for many years from our neighbor, Lt. Col. L.G. Shreve, USA (Ret.). Dad informed us that it had gotten late that afternoon while “planting” the dynamite and that he had run out of time. It became necessary for him to quit that project and start the evening milking and feeding chores. Since the cows had been grazing contentedly most of the afternoon in the same pasture where the problematic stream was located, he was concerned that if he had set off the explosive charge before first herding the cows out of the pasture, it would likely have frightened them badly. The unexpected loud noise and earth-shaking ground upheaval would have created too much excitement for our normally contented cows so close to milking time. Excited cows, near milking time, would have guaranteed reduced milk production from them that evening.

The “bottom line” then was that he had to cut short his excavation project in order to herd the cows out of the pasture and off to the distant barn for milking. By walking back to the barn with the cows, he had to leave our John Deere “B” tractor parked back in the field near the stream, still conveniently hitched to a two-wheeled Army Surplus trailer that he had been using that day to haul supplies and equipment to the site. The tractor was still parked a safe distance away from the actual blast site, on a nearby hillside that overlooked the pasture needing drainage.

The precise purpose of the blasting project was to lower the bottom of the streambed where it crossed the wet meadow, hopefully lowering it by at least a foot or two. In some places, because the water in the slightly meandering stream flowed very slowly, the bottom of the streambed had silted in and the level of the stream had risen higher than the grade of the surrounding stream banks. Thus, since water tends to seek its own level, in more recent years the stream had taken a notion to leave its channel in several places and had spread out across the low-lying pasture, turning part of the once productive pasture into an increasingly wet swampy area. Over time, the once normally dry and productive pasture had become less and less useful as a feed source for our dairy cows. The meandering stream had turned the land into a marshy area and had greatly

reduced its grazing value. That worsening condition had now created a serious economic problem for us.

Dad informed us that the only thing that Donny and I had to do to finish the job and detonate the dynamite was to simply “throw the switch”. This was to be done by connecting the two bare wires leading from the detonator cap to the positive and negative poles of our tractor’s 6-volt battery, thus closing the circuit.

So, somewhat excited about the prospect of setting off all of that dynamite, Donny and I walked the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile or so down across the fields to where the tractor was parked. Just as Dad had described, the tractor and trailer were sitting on a small rise behind a thin line of trees growing along the stream bank. The site conveniently overlooked the bottomland pasture below.

Our friendly old farm dog, who occasionally acknowledged the name “Dusty” when we called him, also chose to accompany us on this adventure. Mostly, he wagged his long bushy tail and ran about with excitement in a carefree manner. He often darted back and forth playfully between us, or ran ahead in ever widening circles. We assumed that he was searching for the scent of rabbits, birds, or maybe groundhogs. At the time, “Dusty” was still one happy-go-lucky, carefree “pooch”. But that mood was to be short-lived. His world changed the instant that we carefully touched those two bare wires to the tractor’s battery terminals.

In that short split second, his dog’s world must have changed from one of wonderful, bright carefree happiness to another one of deep dark impending doom and gloom. The ground suddenly shook beneath his feet as the dynamite exploded and a section of the bottomland pasture erupted in a huge geyser as a 300 foot-long curtain of dark grey and brown mud, rocks and murky water was thrown high into the air.

It is difficult to imagine just what thoughts might have gone through poor “Dusty’s” simple mind at that moment. Startled by the frightening sight and the earth-shaking blast from the explosion, he probably thought that his world was coming to an end for sure. And if we had not known better ourselves, we just might have agreed with him.

The last that we saw of a very frightened, normally slow-moving farm dog was a brown and white flash,

a virtual blur in fact, as he streaked away up the hill and across the fields heading straight for what he thought would be the familiar comfort of the barns. Once there, he must have thought that he would be safe from whatever terrible catastrophe was happening in that once bucolic pasture setting that he had known so well all of his life. His long bushy tail was tucked firmly between his rapidly pumping hind legs as he streaked at full speed for the barns.

When we also returned to the area of the farm buildings, at first, we could find no sign of poor old "Dusty". It was only after a long and tedious search that we finally discovered his hiding place. The poor wretched, and very frightened animal was shaking and subdued with terror, huddled in the darkest shadows of the machine shed, far back under a wagon load of baled hay.

After directing many encouraging, and hopefully comforting, words to him, "Dusty" finally began to calm down. With a lot of caution and uncertainty, he was slowly coaxed out of his dark hiding place far back under the hay wagon.

Fortunately, Dusty survived the "terrors" of that day, soon fully recovered from his nightmare, and regained his carefree confidence in life. He went on to live a long and pleasant life of a normal farm dog. Not that the material benefits gained from the experiences of that day mattered at all to "Dusty", his brief moments of pure terror had ultimately been worth the cost to us. The dynamite had done its job well and our formerly wandering pasture creek had been fully returned to within its original stream banks.

As has been stated previously in other tales about using dynamite during the early 20th century, an official permit was required before you could purchase and use dynamite on the farm. But a permit must not have been very difficult to obtain in those more domestically peaceful decades prior to 911 in the year 2001. Dad, and many of our neighbors, used this explosive material routinely and became quite skilled in handling it. But its useful days were numbered.

In later years, we would come to use bulldozers, backhoes, draglines, and other modern, labor-

saving machines to accomplish similar land clearing and drainage tasks. There were additional benefits to using machines instead of dynamite. The project could be completed with more precision and efficiency. Unfortunately, access to these labor-saving machines in the 1950s was not readily available to everyone. So, even though relief was coming from such "frightening" episodes as "Dusty" experienced on that "dark" day in the late 1950s, he and his animal friends were still vulnerable to some more, usually unexpected, moments of excitement and "pure terror" before happier, more relaxed days arrived for them.

Vegetable Production and Marketing Class

by **Chuck Schuster**
Extension Agent Horticulture
UME

I am in the process of developing a new program for smaller landowners who wish to produce vegetables and market them in the region. Dates for this program will be arranged in the near future. Topics will include: Marketing, Soils, What Vegetables to Raise and Rotation Schedules, Season Extension, Pests and Potential Solutions, and Cover Cropping.

I am extremely interested in offering this program to interested Howard County individuals. When the dates have been established, they will be shared through Howard County Farm Bureau, Howard Soil Conservation District and Howard County Extension Office. I can be reached at (301) 590-2807.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2012

Jan 4 **Private Pesticide Applicator Training** for a new license. 7 to 9 pm. Glenwood Community Center. Contact: Chuck Schuster at (301) 590-2807.

Jan 6-11 **American Farm Bureau Federation 93rd Annual Meeting**, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Jan 11 **Private Pesticide Applicator Test**. 7 to 9

pm. Glenwood Community Center.
Contact: Chuck Schuster at (301) 590-2807.

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

Jan 13-14 **13th Annual Future Harvest Conference.** Lansdowne, VA.
Contact: futureharvestcasa.org

Jan 18 **Nutrient Management Voucher Training.** 7 to 9 pm, Glenwood Community Center, Glenwood, MD.
Contact: Chuck Schuster at 301-590-2807.

Jan 20-22 **2012 Maryland Horse World Expo.** Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Road, Timonium, MD.

Jan 20 **Penn State Webinar Series – Dealing Effectively with Difficult Team Members.** 10:30 to 11:30 am, Sign up at www.surveymonkey.com/s/fridayfacilitatorforum or (888) 373-7232.

Jan 21 **Beekeeping 101 Session.** 9 am to noon. Wye Research & Education Center, Queenstown, MD. Contact: (410) 827-9039.

Jan 23 **National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operations Certification Program Training.** First of 9 consecutive Monday evenings. 7 to 9 p.m. For information and registration, call (301) 600-3578. See announcement in this newsletter.

Jan 25 **Planning for the Future: MD Farming Businesses.** 11 to 1:30 pm or 5:30 to 8 pm. (Also on Feb. 1). Carroll Community College, Washington Road Campus. To register, call (410) 386-8100.

Jan 27 **Central Maryland Vegetable Meeting.** Friendly Farm, Upperco, MD. For information call Anne Arundel County Extension Office at (410) 222-6755.

Feb 1 **Scholarship Applications Due.**

Feb 1 Start of **Nutrient Management Farmer Training and Certification Class.** For producers who wish to write their own NM plans. Montgomery County UME Office, Derwood, MD. Contact: Chuck Schuster at (301) 590-2807.

Feb 2 **Taste of Maryland Agriculture** legislative event. 6:30 pm, Michael's Eighth Avenue, Glen Burnie, MD. For reservations, call Gail Yeiser at (301) 405-2434, cell (410) 353-3069, or email gyeiser@umd.edu

Feb 3 **EQIP Application Deadline** (First Round).

Feb 3-5 **Maryland and Virginia Young Farmers Leadership Conference.** Leesburg, VA.

Feb 4 **Mid-Atlantic Small Flock Poultry Expo.** Carroll County Extension Office and Ag Center, 700 Agriculture Center, Westminster, MD. (410) 386-2760.

Feb 14 **Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis.**

Feb 17-20 **AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference.** Grand Rapids, MI.

Feb 17 **Penn State Webinar Series – Confidentiality, Liability and Legal Tangles.** 10:30 to 11:30 am, Sign up at www.surveymonkey.com/s/fridayfacilitatorforum or (888) 373-7232.

Feb 22 **Pesticide Applicator Re-certification Class (Winter Crops Meeting)** – 10 to 2:30 pm, Carroll County Extension Office, 700 Ag Center, Westminster, MD. Contact: (410) 386-2760.

Feb 22 **Nutrient Management Voucher Training (Winter Crops Meeting).** 10 to 2:30 pm, Carroll County Extension Office, 700 Ag Center, Westminster, MD. Contact: (410) 386-2760.

Feb 23 **Mid-Winter Ag Meeting.** 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Glenwood Community Center, Glenwood, MD.

Feb 25 **2012 Maryland Dairy Convention.** Frederick County Fairgrounds, Building #9, Frederick, MD.

Mar 7 **Pesticide Applicator Optional Training** – 10 to noon, Carroll County Extension Office, 700 Ag Center, Westminster, MD. Contact: (410) 386-2760.

Mar 14 **Pesticide Applicator Test** – 10 to noon, Carroll County Extension Office, 700 Ag Center, Westminster, MD. Contact: (410) 386-2760.

Mar 28 **Maryland Farm Bureau Washington Drive-In.**

Mar 30 **EQIP Application Deadline** (Second Round).

Oct 6 **AGNR Open House.** University of MD Central Maryland Research and Education Center, Clarksville Facility. 4240 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD. Information: www.agnropenhouse.umd.edu

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[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.

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In the Spirit of the Holiday Season, the Officers and Directors of the Howard County Farm Bureau and the Howard County Farm Bureau Women wish each and every one a very happy, safe, peaceful, healthy and prosperous New Year!

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