

NEWSLETTER

HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

The final Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast for the 2006-07 season will be held at **8:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 10, 2007** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please join us.

Our guest speaker will be **Mr. Jim Irvin, Director, Howard County Department of Public Works**. Mr. Irvin will address Howard County's landfill policy as well as other current projects that his department is actively involved in. This meeting will provide an excellent opportunity for members and friends to learn about some of the County's important public works projects and for citizens to offer relevant input.

This should be an interesting, informative, and timely program. Bring your spouse, and/or a friend. Enjoy the food, the fellowship and a usually lively and friendly information exchange. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 AM and the program will start at 8:30 AM.

The formal part of the program concludes by approximately 9:00 AM. You may stay longer if you wish. We look forward to seeing you at the next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast on Thursday, May 10.

Please RSVP by noon, Tuesday, May 8, by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or Martha Clark at (410) 531-3455. The cost of the breakfast is \$8.00 per person, payable at the door.

President's Message

by **Howie Feaga**

Howard County Farm Bureau

On behalf of the general membership of the Howard County Farm Bureau, and especially the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Phil Jones for his five years serving as President. Finishing out his term, I am finding that this office requires quite a lot of time and energy, especially in carrying out the great job that he did for us. We wish him all the best.

The Howard County Farm Bureau also wants to express its sincere appreciation to Caragh Fitzgerald for her dedication in working with the County programs as she served with the Maryland Cooperative Extension. She is already greatly missed. We hope that her position in Howard County will be filled as soon as possible, and we look forward with eager anticipation to working with her replacement.

In spite of what the unpredictable weather seems to indicate, spring is here and the time has already "sprung" forward. The extra daylight is very helpful in catching up on all of the projects that we have to get busy with as temperatures rise, the soil thaws out and plants start to grow. Let's not forget to be always careful around the farm, especially around machinery. Always remember that there be another good day, if not tomorrow, then sometime soon. Keep your plow in the ground. We're all pulling for you.

Kidz Konvention
at Turf Valley Resort
 by **Annette Fleishell**

A fun time was had by everyone attending this year's "Kidz Konvention". It was sponsored by Turf Valley Resort on Sunday, March 11, 2007 to benefit Howard County General Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

There were special performances throughout the day, and countless exhibits of all kinds, interesting to kids of any age, not to mention their parents. The Farm Bureau Women's Committee had received a free registration from Regina Ford, Director of Public Relations at Turf Valley Resort. For the past two years Regina has been the MC of the Miss Howard County Farm Bureau Contest. With this free booth space, she afforded us the wonderful opportunity to bring agriculture to countless children.

Representing Howard County were Brooke Hartner, Miss Howard County Farm Bureau and Molly Ousborne, Little Miss Howard County Farm Bureau. They did an outstanding job in representing the agricultural youth of Howard County to everyone who visited our booth. From 11 am to 4 pm the booth was filled with "Oohs and Aahs", and "Look at the piglets" and "Can I hold the bunny?" and "Mommy come see the baby lamb". No "thank you" was needed when the children got to pet and hold and handle the little farm animals. Their smiles and big eyes and surprised expressions were more than rewarding to us!

Special thanks to Ronnie and Jack Hartner who trucked over the piglets and stayed the entire time to supervise and also enjoy the day. And thanks to Cindi Ousborne who supplied our lunches and helped Molly bring the cute black Rex bunny. Karen Fleishell supplied the little bottle lamb, who made several attempts to escape from the Pac-N-Play enclosure.

Our intent in supporting this charitable event, was to promote Howard County Agriculture,

as well as obtain interest and participation of the youth of the county, not only in agriculture, but also in the Farm Bureau. We are pleased that we generated lots of interest and several names as participants in this year's Little Miss and Future Farmer contests.

For more information about this year's Little Miss, Future Farmer, or Miss Howard County Farm Bureau contest, please contact Annette Fleishell at fleishellfarm@aol.com or telephone 410-795-6119.

Updating, Preparing for Farm Use
Changes
 by **Ginger S. Myers**
Howard County Economic Development
Authority

What will Howard County look like in the future? The answer depends on your perspective while gazing into the crystal ball. If you're involved with BRAC, it looks like a new hub of DOD activity. If you're a technology guru, it looks like Nirvana. But if you're a farmer, the answer is fraught with several more questions.

What will agriculture in Howard County look like in the future? If agriculture is defined as the science, art and business of cultivating the soil, producing crops and raising livestock and the permitted uses on agriculture land in the county is tied to that definition, then can our farmers produce value-added products such as homestead cheeses, processed fruits and vegetables and specialty meats? Will landscapers and horticulture growers be allowed to compost landscape trimmings and spent growing medium to support the green industry here or must they still haul that material to a landfill?

There's national support for producing alternative fuels from grain crops. But could Howard County farms harvest solar and wind energy to both run their operations and sell back to the grid? If farmers can harvest the

sun's energy to grow hay, which they harvest and sell to our ever growing horse industry, would a solar array be a permitted use on agriculturally zoned land? Farmers and greenhouse owners producing on-farm bio-diesel from waste vegetable oil is already taking place across the country as a way to control energy costs. This is already happening on a very small scale in the county. But how big could such an operation grow on a Howard County farm?

In 2002, County agencies and farmers met in an open forum to discuss an expansion of the permitted uses on farms. That meeting resulted in several new agricultural enterprises in the county, the most notable, Clark's Elioak Farm. With the push towards alternative energy sources, new and emerging trends in agriculture, and the county's changing demographic, it would seem timely to hold another forum for new ideas, discussion and better understanding from all stakeholders in the future of agriculture in Howard County. If you have any thoughts on this, I can be contacted at (410) 313-6500.

Farm Bureau Ag Safety Awareness

According to an announcement in the March 2007 issue of *Spotlight*, March 4-10 was designated as AFBF's "Ag Safety Awareness Week". This program is an effort to encourage everyone to become more aware of the dangers associated with farming and ranching.

Although we received information too late to include it in the last Howard County Farm Bureau *Newsletter* and actually observe the official week set aside, it is not too late to benefit from this helpful program. AFBF has established a website www.AgSafetyNow.com which everyone is encouraged to visit and take advantage of the valuable information posted there..

Baseball legend, Hall-of-Fame pitcher, Texas

rancher and Farm Bureau member, Nolan Ryan, has teamed up with AFBF President Bob Stallman to deliver the farm safety message. The theme for 2007 is "Step up to the Plate for Farm Safety". Join Nolan Ryan and make safety an important part of your spring training schedule. Begin by visiting the special website. The topics are interesting and help to identify safety and health risks associated with agriculture and rural life.

2007 Farm Bill **Proposals for Conservation** by **Jim Myers, USDA-NRCS** **District Conservationist** **Howard SCD**

The debate over the next Farm Bill has been heating up during the past year. Recently, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns, highlighted the Bush administration's Farm Bill proposals as they relate to conservation.

Currently, there are 6 main cost-share programs administered by the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These programs are run locally with the support of county conservation districts. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the primary program. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) programs also are administered by NRCS in Maryland. (The remaining three programs deal with rangeland issues so are not found in Maryland.)

Under the proposal, all six programs would be rolled into one. Most likely, going with the EQIP name, the cost-share program would include regional funding so more money could be directed to regional issues. This may mean more pasture issues addressed in the Northeast US and more irrigation or rangeland issues in other parts of the country, and so on. The proposal also eliminates duplication within management, since then, one program must be managed instead of six.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is also planned to be re-authorized under this new Farm Bill. This program is administered by the Farm Services Agency (FSA) and is proposed to continue that way. The NRCS and local districts provide the technical assistance for CRP. The proposal keeps the program's acreage nationwide at the same levels and puts some emphasis on enrollment of land that could produce biomass for future energy production. Primarily, this refers to the planting of native warm season grasses. The goal of erosion control on highly erodible cropland will continue as the main focus of the program.

The administration will also be supporting the renewal of the Conservation Security Program, or CSP. CSP was developed to award the best conservation farmers. This program has been offered for a couple of years and on a rotating watershed basis, meaning that different watersheds throughout the country have been eligible each year. In Maryland, the Choptank and Nanticoke watersheds on the Eastern Shore participated in 2006 and the Monocacy watershed (in Carroll, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties) was involved in 2005. The new proposal will offer this program everywhere every year. It will also provide new enhancement payments for doing more conservation practices.

There are currently three easements programs run by USDA. They include the Farm and Ranch Protection Program (FRPP), the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP), and the Forest Reserve Program. The new Farm Bill proposal would wrap these under one program umbrella, called the Private Lands Protection Program. The FRPP funds have been given to individual state ag preservation programs or to land trusts that preserve farmland.

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is also proposed for re-authorization. The nationwide enrollment cap would be expanded from 2.3 million to 3.5 million acres. The annual goal would be 250,000 acres to be

enrolled into the program. This program has been very successful on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) and the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) would also become one under this Farm Bill proposal. The ECP was most recently used in this area during the 2002-2003 drought. The EWP was used in some Maryland counties after Hurricane Isabelle. It was also used after the tornado hit LaPlata several years ago.

A new "sod-saver" provision would also be included in the new Farm Bill. This refers to conservation of land currently in grass or rangeland. The proposal would make any of this land that is placed into cropland ineligible for federal farm programs.

Lastly, there are provisions to increase environmental markets. These proposals would determine uniform values for conservation practices and conservation services. The values could then be used for farmers to sell environmental credits to other private entities to achieve environmental goals for watersheds, airsheds, and other geographic areas.

MD Farm Bureau Women
Bi-District Meetings
by **Merhlyn Barnes, Secretary**

There are two upcoming events that will be interesting and fun to attend. Districts 1 & 2, including Howard, Montgomery, Carroll, Frederick, Washington, Allegheny and Garrett will be meeting Tuesday, May 22, 2007, 9:30 a.m. at Cozy Restaurant, Thurmont, MD. There will be a program from 10:00 to noon, buffet lunch and a tour of Catocin Mountain Orchard. The cost will be \$8.00 per person. Please try to attend this fun-filled day. Contact Merhlyn Barnes (410-489-4465) for reservations and information.

We have also been invited to the Southern MD Bi-District Meeting which will be held Friday, June 1, 2007, 10:15 am - 1:30 p.m., at Historic London Town and Gardens. There will be a Video followed by a guided walking tour of the area and a catered lunch. Contact Merhlyn Barnes or Chris Griffith (410-741-1743) before May 18th for reservations.

2007 Howard County Farmers' Markets

Mt. Pisgah AME Church
5901 Cedar Fern Court, Columbia

Tuesdays

*May through October,
2:30 PM- 6:00PM*

East Columbia Library
6600 Cradlerock Way, Columbia

Thursdays

*May through mid-November,
2:00 PM – 6:00 PM*

Glenwood Library
2350 Route 97
Glenwood, Maryland

Saturdays

*May through November
9:00 AM - 12:30 PM*

Oakland Mills Village Center
5851 Oliver Place, Columbia

Sundays

*May through mid-November,
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM*

For information on local farmstands, pick-your-own operations and agri-tourism opportunities in Howard County, please visit www.hceda.org.

Ethanol and Energy Efficiency by Allan Bandel

On numerous occasions recently, I have been personally challenged by individuals who find it difficult to accept the premise that ethanol might be useful as a practical alternative fuel, a commodity that could be very helpful in relieving our nation's growing fuel shortage. Negative energy balance is one of the leading arguments these folks offer in opposition to the processing of field corn grain into ethanol.

If you are like me, many of us are not sufficiently familiar with the facts to intelligently debate this topic. Thus, the Howard County Farm Bureau Board of Directors was delighted when Ms. Lynne Hoot, Executive Director of the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board, agreed to speak at the January 11, 2007 Agri-Business Breakfast. She made an excellent presentation covering many current ethanol-related issues. Following her presentation, she very generously agreed to share her notes, allowing us to pass on to you, via this article, some of the highlights of her discussion.

One oft-repeated anti-ethanol argument suggests that "it requires more energy to grow, harvest and process corn into ethanol than is produced in the ethanol generated." According to Ms. Hoot's presentation, over the last 20 years, there have been at least 16 major independent studies conducted on this subject, 10 of which concluded that ethanol production from corn has a positive net energy balance.

Of the other six studies that reported a negative net energy balance, four were conducted by the same individual who, it was discovered, used outdated corn and ethanol production data and who also made some questionable assumptions regarding the value of the co-products generated as well as other factors. When all 16 research studies were combined and averaged, a net energy gain of 8,043 BTUs was realized, or a ratio of 1.11. If the four negative studies were removed from

the average, there was a net energy gain of 19,915 BTUs, or a positive ratio of 1.26.

Of the 12 peer-reviewed net energy balance studies conducted since 1995, only three found a negative net energy balance, all authored by the same previously-mentioned research team. The other nine studies conducted since 1995 showed a net energy gain of 25-30 percent.

The USDA's most definitive analysis, updated in 2004, concluded that for every 100 BTUs required to grow corn and process it into ethanol, 167 BTUs are realized in the ethanol produced – a 67 percent gain.

There are numerous other myths in circulation that question the value of ethanol production from corn. One such myth is that “increasing ethanol production will cause a long-term corn supply-demand imbalance.” In actuality though, crop statistics show that the “increasing demand for corn is being met with an increasing supply. Average U.S. corn yields, which are about 150 Bu/A today, could reach 180 Bu/A by 2015 if current trends continue. Nationwide, there is no shortage of corn.

Another myth suggests that “ethanol production will divert corn away from food and feed markets.” In fact, the USDA predicts that there will be plenty of corn available to meet these needs.

Furthermore, in addition to the fuel generated, the ethanol process creates livestock feed and food products. In the ethanol process, only starch is removed from the feed and food market, not protein. Every 56-pound bushel of corn used in the dry-grind ethanol process also yields 18 pounds of distillers grain, a valuable feed source which provides a significant energy credit. The process is also a source of protein for livestock and poultry. Very little field corn is actually used for human food. Most of it goes into livestock feed.

There is another popular myth suggesting that

“the ethanol industry’s demand for corn will cause consumer food prices to rise.” This concern was initially predicted at least 10 years ago. Even as recently as March, 2007, the USDA was projecting that prices for red meat, poultry and eggs would exceed the general inflation rate by 2010 as the livestock sector adjusts to higher feed costs. But, the USDA Livestock Marketing Information Center reports that, so far, corn demand for ethanol has had no noticeable impact on food prices. Note that the corn in a 16 oz box of corn flakes is worth less than 8¢ when corn is \$4.00 per bushel.

Then there is the myth that “ethanol production reduces the availability of affordable corn for livestock.” In fact, it is projected that corn supplies will increase over time, ensuring the continued availability of affordable corn. Many economists predict that there may be increased price volatility. But, it is also important to remember that corn and soybeans do not account for that huge a proportion of the feed ingredient costs for livestock and poultry – less than 20 percent for chickens, and, according to USDA, ERS data, less than \$5/cwt of feeder pig gain.

And lastly, there is the myth that “ethanol production will cut U.S. food exports to undernourished countries.” In reality, the facts suggest that “increased production will allow corn growers to satisfy both domestic and export demand. And the majority of corn exports feed livestock – not humans.” The U.S. is the world’s largest exporter of corn. U.S. export levels have been gradually rising over the last 25 years – in spite of the demand for corn created by ethanol.

Research data shows that most of the negative concerns about ethanol derived from corn are strictly myth. Nationwide, average corn yields are increasing, demand for non-ethanol corn is flat, distillers grains are displacing corn in feed rations and ethanol plant efficiency is gradually increasing. The current conversion rate for corn to ethanol is 2.8 gallons per bushel, up from 2.5 gallons per

bushel several years ago. It is predicted that the conversion rate may soon be 3 gallons per bushel, or even higher.

It's difficult to imagine that there would ever be opposition to the prospect of making the U.S. more energy independent. The goal can be achieved. Brazil has already set a fine example for the rest of the world by managing to become energy independent in recent years. One difference though, Brazil is using sugarcane, instead of corn, as the biomass source for producing ethanol.

In the U.S., there is no justifiable reason to be limited simply to corn grain for a biomass source. Researchers have reported that using cellulosic ethanol technologies, for instance, corn stover (the stalks, leaves and cobs left after harvest), could also be used and thereby produce more ethanol than currently produced from corn grain alone. It's been reliably estimated that 30% of the stover could be collected from the field with existing equipment and without causing undue increases in soil erosion.

Scientists at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory have estimated that if all corn in the U.S. were grown using accepted no-till technology, there would be enough biomass available to more than double the amount of ethanol currently produced from grain.

A recent study by Argonne Labs shows that a 10 percent ethanol fuel blend reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 12-19 percent. It appears that if commercially successful, ethanol production from corn would be a win-win situation for everyone – for the nation, for the environment and for American agriculture.

For further information, or if you have some unanswered questions about the efficacy of producing ethanol from corn, please contact Ms. Lynne Hoot, Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board, 53 Slama Road, Edgewater, MD 21037-1423; Telephone: 410-956-5771; e-mail address: lynnehoot@aol.com

Where's Your Will?

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

"My father just died," lamented the caller. "He said he had a will. It was done by a local attorney who passed away. We can't find it. What do we do?"

Unfortunately, the will you can't find is the will you can't administer. Because destroying a will is one means of revoking it, the legal presumption is that if the original will can't be found, it has been revoked.

If you're still alive, and don't know where your will is, it's unlikely that your loved ones will be able to find it when you're not here to help them search. If your will diverges from the State default provisions, your estate might be distributed very differently from what you wanted.

For example, if you have children from a prior marriage and have agreed with your new spouse that your estate goes to the kids, that won't happen without a will that says so. If your estate is supposed to go to your spouse, that won't happen either without a will that says that.

Yes, there are ways to salvage the situation, but those depend on everyone cooperating after your death. Don't leave your estate mired in uncertainty. Find your will.

If your attorney kept the original will, check with him or her to be sure he or she knows where it is. You might even retrieve it so that your estate plan doesn't depend on your children being able to find that attorney after your death. You can file the will with the Register of Wills in your County for safekeeping (the address and number are in the blue pages of your phone book) or lock it away in your safe deposit box.

The former option works as long as you remember to take the will with you when you

move. The latter is effective as long as your survivors know how to get into the box.

A local attorney passed away, and a local law firm took over that attorney's files. When the law firm changed hands and locations, many of the files of that deceased attorney were destroyed. Any original documents in those files may be gone forever.

If your will, power of attorney, living will or other important document was held in the files of an attorney no longer in practice, you might not have a will, or other instrument, anymore. That would be unfortunate. If you can read this article, though, you can do something about it. Call your attorney or another local attorney, such as this writer, and see if the documents can be located. Don't wait until it is too late.

This writer is privy to many such situations, and has been able to help in some. Others are beyond help.

Find your will now, while you can look for it. Be sure your plan will be carried out.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2007

- May 6 **Annual Maryland Two-Cylinder Club Show and Central Maryland Antique Tractor Club Spring Pull.** Gladhill Brothers Tractor Mart, Route 340 and Mt. Zion Road, Frederick, MD. 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
- May 10 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 AM. Dining Hall, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. (See details in announcement on page 1 of this newsletter.)
- May 20 **Rogation Sunday. Annual Service for Blessing of the Tractors and this Year's Growing Season.** Bring your tractor to church this Sunday.
- 11:00 AM, Lisbon United Methodist Church, Lisbon, MD.
- May 22 **Maryland Farm Bureau Women Bi-District Meeting.** 9:30 AM. Cozy Restaurant, Thurmont, MD. See meeting details in notice elsewhere in this newsletter.
- May 24 **2007 Wye Strawberry Twilight Meeting.** Wye Research & Education Center. 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Carmichael, MD.
- June 1 **Maryland Farm Bureau Women Bi-District Meeting.** (Southern Maryland). 10:15 AM to 1:30 PM. Historic London Town and Gardens. See meeting details in notice elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Jun 4 to
Jun 29 **Cover Crop Program Sign-up Period.** Contact: the Howard Soil Conservation District, 708 Lisbon Center Drive, Suite E, Woodbine, MD 21797. Telephone: (410) 489-7987.
- Aug 4-11 **62nd Annual Howard County Fair.** Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.
- Sep 13 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 AM. Dining Hall, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. (Tentative date and speaker to be announced.)
- Sep 25 to
Oct 6 **Howard County Farm-City Week Celebration.** Official Kick-off - September 25. For information, contact Ginger S. Myers, Howard County Economic Development authority. (410) 313-6500.
- Sep 28-30 **12th Annual Howard County Farm Heritage Days.** Howard County Living Farm Heritage Museum Grounds. Located on

Route 144 opposite Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD.

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

Something to Smile About

A smiling young farm boy asked his teacher, "What do you call a cow that sits on the grass all the time?"

Unable to come up with the answer, his teacher said, "I don't know, what?"

He smiled and said, "Ground beef."

* * * * *

Then there were the two farmers who were overheard talking at the Farm Bureau

meeting. One farmer asked the other what kind of farm he ran and the fellow told him that he raised sheep.

"How many sheep do you have?" the curious farmer asked.

"I don't know," he said. "Every time that I try to count them, I fall asleep."

— from: Country Chuckles, Cracks & Knee-Slappers
Edited by Mike Lessiter

* * * * *

and finally ...

Here is what the late Will Rogers (1879-1935) had to say about the Farm Bill -- almost a century ago.

"Just read the Farm Bill. It's just a political version of Einstein's last theory. If a farmer could understand it, why, he certainly would know more than to farm – he would be a professor at Harvard."

— from: The Best of Will Rogers
by Bryan Sterling