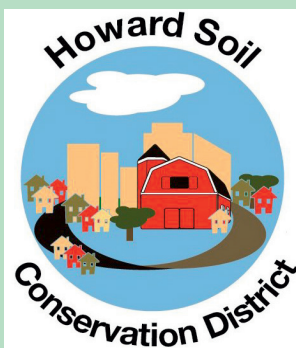


Howard Soil
Conservation District
14735 Frederick Road
Cookeville, MD 21723
410.313.0680
www.howardscd.org

Conservation Matters



OCTOBER 2022

CALENDAR

HSCD Office Closures:

November 11: Veterans Day
November 24 and 25:
Thanksgiving Holiday
December 26: Christmas
January 2, 2023: New Years
January 16: Martin Luther
King Jr Day
February 20: President's Day

Cover Crop Dates:

October 15: Last Day to
Plant Barley and Ryegrass;
Last Day to Plant Cereal
Rye, Triticale and Wheat
Using Broadcast Stalk Chop
or Broadcast Cultipacker

November 5: Last Day to
Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale
and Wheat Using No-till or
Conventional Methods

See Page 2 for More Im-
portant Dates & Infor-
mation

March 1: MDA Nutrient Man-
agement Annual Imple-
mentation Report Due

March: Howard County Mid-
Winter Ag Meeting (Date
TBD)

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Small Acreage Cover Crop Program to Support Small-Scale and Urban Agriculture

A Small Acreage Cover Crop Program has been created to support small farm producers and urban agriculture. The pilot program is operated by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and aimed at helping historically underserved farmers and communities build healthy soils, increase yields, sequester carbon, and improve local water quality. Financial assistance for this program is capped at \$1,000 per grower, per year.

Maryland's Small Acreage Cover Crop Program is the first in a series of statewide financial assistance programs to be introduced by MDA's new Small Farm and Urban Agriculture Program. It will provide needed financial and technical assistance to support small-scale farms located in urban, peri-urban, rural, and suburban areas. The goal of the program is to increase community access to healthy foods by helping farmers adopt environmentally sound practices.

Small-scale producers who may not qualify for traditional cover crop programs are encouraged to apply for these grants. Program highlights include:

- Urban agricultural growers and small farmers who plant five or fewer acres of a cover crop may apply for cover crop grants.
- Eligible species to be planted include cover crop seed mixes or single cereal grains.
- Cover crops may be planted in open plots,

raised beds, or a high tunnel following the harvest of a production crop (vegetables, herbs, flowers, sorghum, soybeans, hemp, millet, or tobacco).

- Growers should plant fall cover crops following seed company recommendations, but no later than November 30, 2022.
- Growers will be reimbursed based on paid receipts with a maximum payment of up to \$1,000 per growing season.

The Small Acreage Cover Crop Program is funded by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund and managed by MDA's Conservation Grants Program. Growers who want to apply for these grants should contact Bill

Tharpe, Program Administrator for the Small Farm and Urban Agriculture Program, at bill.tharpe@maryland.gov or 410.841.5869.

For additional information, please visit https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/Small-Farm-and-UrbanAgricultureProgram.aspx



Interior of a high tunnel with straw used as a mulch.
Photo Credit: USDA NRCS

Help MDA Better Serve Small-Scale & Urban Farmers

The Maryland Department of Agriculture is working to adapt their existing programs and create new programs to assist urban and small-scale farmers. If you are a small-scale or urban farmer MDA invites you to share your input and experiences by taking the following survey, so they are better able to serve you. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfpSGyhLqGdimq-RVQa3_YEdR_5k505zmAsfrZILg4QTiGGXA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Federal Cost-Share Opportunities

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a mission statement of helping people help the land. They offer landowners and farmers technical assistance as well as financial assistance in some cases. They have financial assistance programs to help agricultural producers and landowners address resource concerns relating to soil health, water quality, crop productivity, animal health, wildlife habitat, and more.

These federal financial assistance programs cover over 100 best management practices addressing several different natural resource concerns. Some funded practices include, cover crop, high tunnels, erosion control practices, pasture/grazing practices, and wildlife practices.

These programs run on a yearly schedule, while the specific dates change from year to year the order does not change. This time of year, we like to get that process started. This is when landowners and or producers should reach out to NRCS at the Howard Soil Conservation District where we will set up a meeting with them. At the meeting we will review any resource concerns and discuss goals for the

operation and property. If it seems like our conservation programs would be a good option for you, we can help set up farm records at the Farms Service Agency (FSA). Once records are established, we will request you complete a financial assistance application. While we take applications all year, we have a cutoff, usually around the first week of January where we will no longer take applications for 2023. After the cutoff date, NRCS ranks applications among others in the county or state. The applications with higher rankings will then be selected for funding and the contract is developed. It is important to note that it can take months from the first contact until the time the contract begins so if interested it is best to get the process started early.

If you think you may be interested in conservation programs or would just like more information feel free to reach out to the Howard Soil Conservation District, 410.313.0680.



2022-2023 MDA Cover Crop Program

Maryland Department of Agriculture's Cover Crop Program is a key component of the state's plan to reduce the amount of nutrients that reach the waterways – creeks, streams and rivers – that eventually reach the Chesapeake Bay. The program incentivizes farmers to plant a cover crop to take up and hold nutrients over winter, as well as prevent soil loss.



A field of cover crop planted with a species mix to promote soil health.

Sign-up for the 2022-2023 program resulted in 14 approved applications for 4155 acres. Planting and fall certification is currently underway.

Some reminders for those participating in this year's program ...

- Seed tags for purchased seed and seed tests for home grown seed. The seed tags need to be signed by the Operator and any seed tests not in the Operator's name shall also be signed.

- All Custom planted acres including Aerial and Aerial Ground require an FSA map signed and dated by the applicator, designating which fields were planted.
- The applicant will also need to provide signed documentation, for all aerial or aerial ground seeded acres, certifying previous crop, crop planted, seeding rate.

Important Dates ...

- October 10: Last Day to Aerial Seed; Incentive Planting Deadline for Incorporated Methods
- October 15: Last Day to Plant Barley or Ryegrass; Last Day to Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using Broadcast Stalk Chop or Broadcast Cultipacker
- October 17: Certification Deadline for Aerial Planting and Oct. 10 Incorporated Planting Incentive
- November 5: Last Day to Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using No-till or Conventional Methods
- November 12: Certification Deadline for MACS Base 11/05 Planting
- November 6-15: Late Planting of Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using No-till or Conventional Methods for a **Reduced Payment** of \$45 per acre
- November 22: Certification Deadline for MACS Reduced Payment for Late Planting

Questions please contact Kristal McCormick, 410.313.0680 or kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov

MDE's New Small Pond Review Policy

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is moving forward with finalizing a small pond approval policy that aims to address the gap in technical review capability resulting from NRCS Bulletin 210-21-01, which states that "NRCS will no longer provide technical reviews of storm-water management (SWM) pond designs for compliance with the Maryland conservation practice standard for Ponds, MD-378." Without continued NRCS oversight, SCD's are left without the technical assistance and support of experienced professionals. As the state's regulator of dam safety, MDE is therefore establishing the new policy to ensure districts maintain their authority to review and approve "certain small ponds" which are of low-hazard, as currently delegated within COMAR (Code of Maryland Regulations) as an acceptable alternative to obtaining an MDE issued dam safety permit. The new policy references additional guidelines, record-keeping and reporting that

MDE will require for SCD's to approve design and as-built plans, including tweaks to the MD-378 specification under which ponds are designed, and associated breach analyses.

Note that small ponds designed and maintained for the co-operating agricultural community will continue to receive oversight and approval by NRCS engineers. Only non-farm related ponds have been released from NRCS review.

MDE's small pond approval policy is scheduled to be followed by local Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) starting January 1, 2023. Accordingly, the local engineering and design community, as well as dam and small pond owners should familiarize themselves with the policy, in anticipation of SCD's adherence thereto. A copy of the policy and associated appendices will be posted when made available, so keep your eye on the MDE and SCD websites for further notice.

HCEDA Agricultural Innovation Grant

Howard County Agricultural Innovation Grant, from Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA), is a grant funding opportunity to encourage Howard County's agricultural producers to expand or diversify their business operations. Eligible applicants must be a crop or livestock producer or processor, agricultural cooperative, seafood processor, or primary or secondary timber products processor.

Applicants can receive grants from \$1,000.00 up to \$10,000.00 for research and development, production buildings, major fixtures, processing facilities, etc. The applicant must provide funds and/or materials of an invested value equal to the grant received. Grant applications will be accepted no later than November 15th for the next round.

Applications must be accompanied by:

- a Schedule F, Form 1120S, or Schedule C
- a business plan, with budget, detailing the planned use

of the requested funds and the expected outcome. Please visit www.agplan.umn.edu for assistance in writing a business plan.

Grantees must agree to the following:

- At least one member of the grantee's business will actively participate in a HCEDA small business development program
- Submission of program status reports on a schedule, and in a format, determined by the HCEDA, after consultation with the grantee.
- This is a reimbursable grant, which means the HCEDA will only provide awarded grant funds upon receipt of a request for reimbursement including verifiable substantiation of a planned program expenditure by the grantee.

Applications can be found at www.hceda.org/farm-agriculture/grants

Howard County Envirothon

The Envirothon is a fun and exciting way for high school students in grades 9-12 to learn about the natural world around us. Envirothon teams are made up of 5 students who work together to study Maryland's natural resources over the course of the school year. Topics are hands-on and include practical skills. Topics include Aquatics, Forestry, Soil, Wildlife and the "5th Topic", a current environmental issue. The 2023 Current Environmental Issue is "Adapting to a Changing Climate."

The Howard County Envirothon will be held in April at the Howard County Conservancy's Mount Pleasant Farm.

Training videos and kits are available. Assistance and support is available for teams requesting help training. Spring trainings are currently being planned. To learn more about this unique and amazing program contact Howard County Envirothon Coordinator, Kristal McCormick, 410.313.0680 or kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov



A team from Wilde Lake HS works together to complete the Wildlife station.

Howard Soil Conservation District's 2022

The Howard Soil Conservation District hosted the 2022 Cooperators Dinner at Penn Oaks Winery in Cooksville on September 15, 2022. Penn Oaks Winery provided a perfect venue for celebrating the conservation efforts of farmers in Howard County, and a wonderful opportunity to educate the general public and elected officials about the importance of natural resources stewardship. County Executive Calvin Ball and County Council Members Christiana Rigby and David Yungmann were in attendance to celebrate conservation in Howard County.

Penn Oaks Winery, owned and operated by Jan Luigard and Maura Cahill and their family, is the first and only on-farm winery operation in Howard County. Participants were able to sample some of the delicious wines and enjoy a personal tour of the vineyards with the hosts. There was also a reception area where attendees could learn about Howard SCD's history and enjoy a slide show including old photos of conservation practices through the years. There were also educational displays about the conservation efforts of local farmers and how the practices they implement help improve our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

One of the focal points of the Cooperators Dinner is to present conservation awards to individuals that have made significant commitments to protecting natural resources and promoting conservation. The Howard SCD Vice Chairman



Above: Attendees listen attentively during the awards ceremony as the Cooperator of the Year is recognized.

John Dove and District Manager David Plummer presented a conservation award to this year's Cooperator of the Year. This year's award was a little different than past years in that the District recognized a landowner who has been very accommodating in allowing conservation practices to be implemented on their property.

This year's Cooperator of the Year award went to the Franciscan Fathers of the Shrine of St Anthony, located in Ellicott City, MD. They own about 230 acres of farmland that is predominantly farmed by the Cunningham Family. Attempting to implement conservation practices on rented land can present a variety of challenges for farmers—short lease periods or uncertainty of future access, landowner skepticism about participating in long-term programs, conflicting opinions among property family members, etc. However, the Franciscan Fathers have worked with Howard SCD, in cooperation with the Cunningham Family, to establish a variety of conservation practices. Some of the practices they have implemented include fencing off streams and wetlands, installing watering troughs and heavy use areas, constructing trails and walkways, planting cover crops, and establishing a rotational grazing system.

On top of all these conservation practices the landowners also established a small scale vegetable operation which has grown, harvested and donated over 23,000 pounds of produce to those in need. In addition to the Cooperator of the Year Award from Howard SCD, the Franciscan



Sam Engler, NRCS District Conservationist, (left) presents the Conservation Award to Matt Jones, Franciscan Fathers representative (right).



Attendees taking in the beautiful view and weather with a guided tour of the vineyard during the Cooperators Dinner.



Cooperators Dinner and Education Outreach Event

Fathers also received a Secretary's Citation from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and a Conservation Award from USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Joe Rutter (right), receives his Governor's Citation from Adam Lyon, MDA Patuxent Regional Coordinator (left).

The District also presented an award to our former Supervisor, Mr. Joe Rutter. Mr. Rutter served two 5-year terms as the County Executive appointee on the Board of Supervisors, starting in 2011. Mr. Rutter's experience with the planning process, having been the former Director of Planning and Zoning for Howard County, and his insight regarding county government operations and policy

were instrumental in bridging the relationship between the District and the County. Mr. Rutter received recognition for his time on the Board at last year's Cooperators Dinner, and was presented this year with a Governor's Citation from the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONSERVATION SPONSORS:

**Larriland Farm
Penn Oaks Winery
Walnut Springs Nursery, Inc.**

*Special Thanks to Penn Oaks Winery
for hosting the 2022 HSCD Cooperators
Dinner & Education Event!*

Howard SCD Receives Awards at Statewide Meeting

At their summer meeting, Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) recognized Districts, organizations and individuals from across Maryland for their conservation efforts. Howard Soil Conservation District is honored to have received the second place MidAtlantic Farm Credit Outstanding District Award and the Outstanding Newsletter Award.

The MidAtlantic Farm Credit Outstanding District Award emphasizes planning and organizing to provide service to the agriculture community, and evaluating district activities. MidAtlantic Farm Credit, now Horizon Farm Credit (created through their merger with AgChoice Farm Credit) sponsors this award and grants the top three placing Districts with a cash award to further their conservation efforts.

Right: Howard SCD Supervisor Chuck Schuster (second from left) and Howard SCD District Manager David Plummer (far right) are presented the second place MidAtlantic Farm Credit Outstanding District Award by Kurt Fuchs, Horizon Farm Credit Senior Vice President of External Affairs (second from right) and MASCD President Bruce Yerkes (far left).



Howard SCD was also awarded the Outstanding Newsletter Award for their continued efforts to bring up-to-date conservation and agricultural information to their community through their newsletter. The newsletter is an extension of their educational outreach efforts to support the agriculture community and citizens of Howard County.



Above: Howard SCD Supervisor Chuck Schuster (left) and Howard SCD District Manager David Plummer (right) accept the Outstanding Newsletter Award presented by MASCD President Bruce Yerkes (center).

MASCD Recognizes Chuck Schuster



Chuck Schuster, HSCD Supervisor (left) and MASCD President Bruce Yerkes (right) during the MASCD Awards Ceremony.

The Howard SCD is excited to announce that HSCD Supervisor Chuck Schuster was recognized by Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) with the receipt of their Outstanding Contribution by a New Supervisor Award. Chuck Schuster is a retired University of Maryland Extension Educator. He served Howard and Montgomery Counties as an Extension

Agent specializing in the horticultural industry. Prior to coming to Extension work, Chuck taught high school vocational agriculture in Westminster, Maryland and farmed for twenty years raising cattle, field crops and vegetables. Though retired, Chuck still actively teaches, participates in a variety of industry organizations, and coordinates various training sessions and workshops.

While an Extension Educator, Chuck served on the Howard Soil Conservation District Board as the Extension representative. In 2021 Chuck was appointed by the County Executive to serve as the County appointed representative Supervisor position on the Howard SCD Board.

Chuck supports the District's education and outreach efforts in a number of ways, and was extremely active in 2021. Chuck played a major role in the District's 2021 Mid-

Winter Agricultural Meeting. Chuck was involved in the decisions concerning topics, helping to line up speakers, providing technical support for the on-line / virtual format, and teaching and presenting. He has been involved in making the meeting a success every year, but his efforts were especially critical in 2021 when we held our first virtual meeting. His guidance and expertise made the 2021 Mid-Winter Ag Meeting a success.

Chuck provides input and feedback for community outreach events where the focus includes farming, conservation, soil health and more. Chuck is always willing to share his knowledge, whether it be one on one, as a small group, or a large group of 50+. This keen interest in educating the public was evident during the District's Fall Farm and Conservation Tour. This Tour included 4 of the 5 County Council Members and half of the Howard County State Delegation and their staff. The Farm Tour is an opportunity to educate elected officials about the challenges and opportunities facing the agricultural community.

Chuck also keeps abreast of current legislation that could impact the agricultural community. During discussions among Board members, he provides a scientific based point of view concerning proposed or introduced bills. Chuck reaches out to elected officials on his own and in conjunction with other Supervisors or the District Manager.

Not enough can be said concerning Chuck Schuster's dedication to conservation and the agriculture community, or what an asset he is to the District. His accomplishments and commitment have gone above and beyond the call of duty!

Farm Stress Management

Farm families are the backbone of America, Maryland, and Howard County, providing important commodities like food and grains, and they are a significant component of our national economy. Having healthy farms and healthy farm families promotes environmental stewardship, cultural legacies, and rural community growth.

But farm families are feeling the pressure of an inconsistent and unreliable economy. Finances, legal issues, and physical and mental well-being are all at the forefront of agricultural concerns. Farmers have been forced to parcel off their land, file for bankruptcy, deny their children inherency rights, and take secondary jobs off the farm to provide health insurance and supplemental income to make ends meet.

These stressors can lead to mental and emotional distress, substance abuse, anxiety, depression, and even suicide.

Because of the critical role of farmers in our state and across the nation, the University of Maryland Extension has prepared a selection of assets to help farm families navigate the numerous resources available online and provide timely, science-based education and information to support prosperous farms and healthy farm families.

Choose from Financial Resources, Stress Management, or Legal Resources to find a variety of online information, guides, and tools developed to help in each of these areas. As more tools are developed, the pages will be updated to reflect current information and serve as a support for highlighting future workshops and programming.

To access the above resources and for additional information visit: extension.umd.edu/programs/agriculture-food-systems/program-areas/integrated-programs/farm-stress-management

Farm families are being offered six free therapy session either in person or teletherapy. University of Maryland Extension will help you set up the appointment, connect with the provider and access the session. Complete the intake form at www.go.umd.edu/qYB and they will reach out to you.

Ag Pres Landowners: Is Your Conservation Plan Current?

This is a friendly reminder from the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) that all properties within the County and State ag land preservation programs are required to have a current (less than 10 years old) Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan. If you are unsure how current your plan is, please call the Howard Soil Conservation District at 410.313.0680 to inquire.

MDA Nutrient Management Annual Implementation Reports

Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) documenting nutrient applications for **Calendar Year 2022** are due to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Nutrient Management Program by **March 1, 2023**. For details on how to complete & submit the AIR visit: https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/air.aspx

HoCo Pesticide & Nutrient Management Meetings

All meetings will take place from 6:00-8:00pm at the HSCD office. To register, visit go.umd.edu/hcfall2022 or call Kelly at 301.590.2807.

October 31: Pesticide Recertification *This meeting will offer pesticide credits for those who already have a private applicators license.*

November 14: Pesticide Private Applicator Exam Training (optional)

November 21: Pesticide Private Applicator Exam

December 12: Nutrient Management Voucher Training *This meeting will provide nutrient management credits.*

In Need of a Nutrient Management Plan?

Are you in need of a nutrient management plan for your agricultural operation? The University of Maryland Extension (UME) develops no-cost nutrient management plans, minus the cost of analyses.

Nutrient management plans are required for all operations that make or exceed \$2,500 gross annual income and/or have 8 or more animal units (1 animal unit = 1,000 lbs.). Animals raised for 4-H are not exempt from this requirement, other than the monetary aspect of children receiving money from the sale of their animals. If an operation has 8 or more animal units and the animals are all raised for 4-H, a nutrient management plan is required. Please feel free to contact Krista Mitchell, Nutrient Management Advisor, with any questions or to request a nutrient management plan. Krista can be reached by email, kristaw@umd.edu, or phone, 410.313.2709 or 443.328.4894 (can receive texts).

So that UME may assist as many producers as possible with nutrient management plans for their operations, here are some recommended dates for nutrient management plan development, depending on your specific type of operation:

Prior to December 15th: Operations that utilize commercial fertilizer only (no manure or organic nutrients) should aim to have their nutrient management plan in-hand by this date. Contact your nutrient management advisor in the fall to get started.

Prior to March 1st: After January 1st, plan-writing focuses on operations that utilize manure or other organic nutrient sources, which require a manure sample collected as

close to application time as possible. Please submit all necessary analyses by December 31st to ensure your plan can be in-hand by March 1st.

Nutrient management plans must be completed prior to planting and nutrient applications. March 1st is the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) regulatory date of when spring nutrient applications may begin, assuming the ground isn't frozen, saturated, or covered with snow greater than one inch.

Many farmers need nutrient management plans in order to receive payment for participation in the Cover Crop Program. Producers risk fines from MDA, the agency tasked with enforcement of the nutrient management regulations, if they apply nutrients in absence of a nutrient management plan and cover crop payments can be held up if a producer does not have a current nutrient management plan. To ensure an operation has a nutrient management plan in place, please reference the above dates.

For soil sampling instructions and a list of labs that analyze soil and manure, please visit: go.umd.edu/testing-lab-comparisons. Please note, the soil sampling instructions provided here are different from most soil testing lab's sampling instructions. Be sure to follow the soil sampling instructions provided on the UME website to ensure they can develop your nutrient management plan and for crop nutrient recommendation accuracy. Soil sampling probes are available to borrow at the University of Maryland Extension office. Contact Krista for more details.

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**HOWARD SOIL
CONSERVATION
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