

# District Digest

Fall 2023

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## DISTRICT MANAGERS MESSAGE

Welcome to the fall edition of the District Digest! Fall is a busy season for our office and for everyone working in the fields. Harvest is happening, cover crops are being planted, staff are surveying and walking farms to gather information they will need to continue their design and planning work through the winter months, and our friends at extension are busy planning educational programming (see page 5).

If you have signed up to participate in the cover crop program please make sure you are reporting your planted fields to the office. The last deadline to plant is November 15th. If you have any questions about programs please give the office a call and we will be happy to help.

This is a friendly reminder that now is the time to start thinking about your nutrient management plan for spring. The Nutrient Management Advisor position at the University of Maryland Extension office in Frederick is currently vacant. If you are hoping to have your plan written by Extension you should initiate that process soon. On page 4 of the newsletter there is information on how to request a plan. Please keep in mind that MDA requires a nutrient management plan that covers an entire year to qualify to participate in cost share programs like the cover crop program.

Our Annual Cooperators Banquet is coming up on November 16th. This year we will be holding the banquet at the New Midway Volunteer Fire Company serving a meal of turkey, ham and fried shrimp. Call the office for tickets and enjoy an evening celebrating the conservation work happening throughout the county. I hope to see you at the banquet.

With warm regards,

Heather Hutchinson  
District Manager

## CATOCTIN & FREDERICK SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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# BOARD MERGER

The referendum to consider combining the Catoctin and Frederick Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) was held July 10<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> at the SCD office and monitored by staff of the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC). 226 ballots in total were received, of which: 171 ballots were “In Favor” of combining the SCDs, and 55 ballots were “Against” combining the SCDs. At the September 21, 2023 meeting of the SSCC, the committee heard information about the history and current organization of the Catoctin and Frederick SCD offices prior to taking a vote on whether combining into a single conservation district was administratively feasible pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Agric, § 8-401 – the motion passed unanimously.

Each SCD will continue to operate until the Board of Supervisors of the new Frederick County SCD is appointed and the articles of incorporation are issued. The new board will consist of one appointment from the Frederick County Government, one nomination each from Farm Bureau and University of Maryland Extension, and two at large selections. We will introduce you to the new supervisors in a future issue.



## Mingle with Mark Townsend– UME Frederick Ag Agent Associate

Crisp temperatures and combines rolling signals the arrival of autumn and marks the end of another growing season. Though the pleasant, and slightly wetter weather is a welcome reprieve from the summer, this year was nothing short of a challenge.

Regional weather had a profound effect on crop conditions as the drought this summer significantly altered yield expectations and outcomes, all dependent on whether or not a few raindrops fell in one’s area. No less, between the peaks and valleys of commodity prices, northbound interest rates and seemingly ever changing input costs, this season was (and still is) a remarkable challenge.

All this to say; congratulations on weathering the storm. Though there are a few clouds lingering on the horizon, it’s quite a nice sight to see this year in the rearview mirror. Here’s to timely rains and good conditions in 2024!

Here at Extension, we’ve had a few storms come our way this last growing season. The dynamic state of the Agricultural Nutrient Management Program was, and continues to be a challenge. Yet, we have landed on a bit more solid ground in the recent past as the program will continue to remain with the University of Maryland now with some hopefully meaningful alterations. The first of which is that the program will now be housed in the ranks of Extension. This may come as a surprise to some to learn that it previously was housed in another department on campus, yet the transition to Extension will provide greater efficiencies relative to previous cross-department administrivia.

The program has found new oversight from farmers with the creation of a Nutrient Management Farmer Task Force in addition to an improved Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. At the local level however, there remain gaps in the hiring process—including Frederick County. Currently, the University of Maryland Extension is accepting applications for Frederick and other counties without Nutrient Management Advisors. If you or someone you know is interested, please refer them to <https://go.umd.edu/FC-NMP>. The good news is that in the relatively near future (Q1 2024), the Frederick County Extension Office will have a local plan writer to offer plan writing services to growers. (Continued on Page 5)

## COVER CROP

Fall Harvest is happening in different parts of the county and cover crops are being planted. Cover Crop Program planting deadlines are looming and below are some highlights:

- Cereal grains must be planted by November 5, 2023 to qualify for incentives
- Mixes containing legumes, forage radish, canola/rape, or oats must have been planted by October 1, 2023
- Aerial seeding deadline was October 10, 2023, with some species having earlier deadlines
- Late planted cover crops must be planted by November 15, 2023 using an incorporated planting method and one of the following cover crops: rye, triticale, or wheat to receive \$45/acre. Late-planted cover crops may not be terminated before May 1, 2024 and are not eligible for the delayed termination incentive.



To receive payment, farmers must certify their cover crops with the district within one week of planting. Crops planted by November 5 must be reported by November 13, 2023. Late-planted cover crops must be reported by November 22, 2023. Seed tags must be signed and submitted to the district at the conclusion of reporting to be eligible for payment.

Eligible cover crops may be grazed or chopped for on farm livestock forage after becoming well established. Manure produced on farm may be applied in the fall complying with the Maryland Nutrient Management regulations.

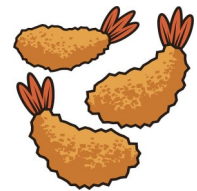
### Annual Cooperators Banquet

*Join us and your fellow Frederick County farmers on Thursday, November 16, 2023 at the New Midway Volunteer Fire Company for a night of conservation recognition and fellowship.*



*6:30-7:00pm- Social Hour*

*7:00pm- Dinner of Turkey, Ham, and Fried Shrimp*



*Tickets: \$20.00 per person for adults and children over 10 years old. \$10.00 per child between 5-10 years old. Children under 5 years old are free.*

*For information or for us to save you a seat, please call the district by November 3rd.*

*(301)-695-2803 Ext. 3*

# Welcome, Devon!

Join us in welcoming Devon Griffin. She joins us as Technician with the MD Department of Agriculture. Devon is a Frederick County native and obtained her Bachelors degree at Clemson University in Plant and Environmental Sciences. Devon previously was a county program technician at the Montgomery/Howard FSA office. In her free time she enjoys riding horses and competing at local horse shows.



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## **Do you need a nutrient management plan for the 2024 growing season?**

Despite not having an Advisor in the local extension office, The University of Maryland Extension is positioned to provide plan writing services through the network of UME plan writers across the state. Interested farmers should complete the “Nutrient Management Plan Request Form” at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County webpage at <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/frederick-county/agriculture-and-food-systems> to begin the process. After completing the form, you will be contacted with instructions about providing your operation’s information to a local contact. An advisor will write the plan at no cost to the farmer. Please be aware that demand is high and this may delay completion of you plan.

Individuals that require a plan in the immediate future may be best served to contact a private plan writer. A list of plan writers are available at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Nutrient Management Program website at [https://mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Pages/farmer\\_information.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/farmer_information.aspx) on the right-hand side of the page under the “Farmer” subheading. These individuals offer plan writing services for a fee.

# Mingle with Mark Townsend continued....

## Upcoming Training Opportunities

If you are a plan writer or holder of a Nutrient Management voucher in need of continuing education credits, please attend one of our upcoming winter meetings:

**Central Maryland Nutrient Management Voucher Training:** Tuesday, December 6th, 2023 6-8 pm at the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company, 1008 Twin Arch Rd, Mt Airy, MD 21771.

**Central Maryland Forage Conference:** Thursday, January 18th, Location and Time TBA.

**Manure Management Workshop:** Wednesday, January 24th, 2023, 9 am - 3 pm. 12019 Woodsboro Pike, New Midway, MD 21775

**Central Maryland Agronomy Update,** Wednesday, February, 21st, 2024, 9 am - 3 pm. Urbana Fire Hall, 3602 Urbana Pike, Frederick, MD 21704.

Similarly, if you are in need of Maryland Pesticide Applicator credits, please visit one of our upcoming trainings:

For those seeking an initial Private Pesticide Applicator Certification:

**Private Pesticide Applicator Training and Exam:** November 6th & 13th, 2023, 6 - 8 pm, Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD 21702. Training will be held on the 6th and attendees take the exam on November 13th, 2023 at the same time and location.

**Private Pesticide Recertification Training:** December 13th, 2023, 6 - 8 pm, Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company, 1008 Twin Arch Rd, Mt. Airy, MD 21771.

**Commercial Applicator Recertification Training:** February 6th, 2024. 9 am - 3 pm, Frederick County 4-H Camp and Activities Center, Inc. 3702 Basford Rd, Frederick, MD 21703

Additionally, The University of Maryland Extension Frederick County will continue to host a bi-weekly (every-other) meeting to discuss current topics in commodity grain markets for producers looking to improve their grain marketing strategy and stay informed about current market conditions. The meeting is an open, informal discussion; not a lecture or presentation. In this, any and all members of the agricultural community/those interested in learning more about commodity grain markets are invited to attend. Currently, meetings will be held at the Cracker Barrel in Frederick located just off Rt. 85 at 7408 Shockley Drive, Frederick, MD 21704 on Friday mornings from 7:30 am - 8:30 am. The meetings will be held over a delicious breakfast, however attendees will be responsible for purchasing their own meals. The next meeting will be held on Friday, November 3rd, 2023 and will continue every-other Friday morning after.

Thank you for your continued support as we look to continue supporting agriculture in Frederick. Stay safe this harvest season and best wishes to all.

Yours in the field,



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*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

# SOIL SMART FARM TOUR

On September 8th local and state legislators, County Executive Jessica Fitzwater, and many others joined the SCD, Frederick County Farm Bureau, and Horizon Farm Credit to tour four farms that represent the agricultural diversity throughout Frederick County. This is the third year the tour was offered. The tour started in Middletown with a stop at Chis and Jamie Derr's Valley-Ho Farm, where Jamie spoke about her cut flower operation and ways they have diversified their farming operation. The group then headed to Knoxville to meet the Pry Family of Needwood Farm. Here participants learned about a heavy use area and manure storage best management practice as well as prescribed grazing. They Pry's also discussed the Frederick County Economic Development Office's Ag Innovation Grant which helped them to purchase a walk-in freezer that allowed them to expand their freezer beef sales to the public. Calico Land LLC was the next stop on the tour. The Sweeney family, like other farms on the tour, have installed best management practices that include two covered heavy-use areas, stream fencing, crossings and riparian buffers. The final stop of the tour took the group to Mayne's Tree Farm in Buckeystown. Merle Mayne spoke about his experience with agri-tourism and the challenges and opportunities he has faced. It was a great day spent discussing local agriculture and we look forward to next years tour.



## Conservation Stewardship Program– CSP

CSP is a 5-Year program that enables producers to expand their conservation efforts by implementing new practices and enhancements. These activities aim to improve natural resources and enhance overall operations. For instance, farmers already planting cover crops might explore options like multi-species cover crops or deep-rooted varieties to address soil compaction.

To apply for CSP, producers undergo a consultation with a conservation planner who assesses their current management practices and land resources to determine eligibility based on a "stewardship threshold." Selected applicants receive funding for implementing new conservation practices and enhancements, with CSP offering annual payments for these efforts on top of support for maintaining existing conservation initiatives.

New CSP applications must be received by **December 15, 2023** to be considered for this funding period. For more information regarding this program, please reach out to the district and we will be happy to get you in touch with an NRCS employee!

# OUT & ABOUT

## Where we've been and where we're heading!

It has been a busy summer in the office. Check out some of what we have been up to and where you can find us this Fall!

In August, staff and board supervisors attended the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts summer meeting .

Staff spent time educating students of Frederick County Public Schools on soil health at their booth at the Great Frederick Fair (Right from L-R: Heather Hutchinson, Marshall White, Bill Rawlings, and Devon Griffin).

On October 26th staff discussed the role of cover crops in building soil health with students at the Sabillasville Environmental School for their Harvest Days school event.

Join us at the New Midway Volunteer Fire Company on November 16th for our Annual Cooperators Dinner. More information can be found on page 3.



**Maryland  
Bay-Friendly  
Farming**



## HAVE YOU HEARD?

The Maryland Farm Stewardship Certification and Assessment Program is now the Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming Certification Program.

#MarylandBFF is the new FSCAP!

The Bay-Friendly Farming program recognizes farmers who demonstrate outstanding conservation and invite everyone to take pride in and support their efforts. Farms that apply for certification are evaluated based on measures related to soil health, water quality, nutrient management, and other criteria.

Interested in learning more about Maryland Bay-Friendly farming and seeing the farmers who are already certified?

[www.bayfriendlyfarms.com](http://www.bayfriendlyfarms.com)



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*The Catoctin and Frederick Soil Conservation Districts prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.*