

# District Digest

Spring 2024

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## DISTRICT MANAGERS MESSAGE

Spring has sprung in Frederick County! As we enjoy watching the flowers bloom, trees bud out and small grain crops growing into lush green fields, we are also experiencing changes at the District office. The Frederick County Soil Conservation District was formally recognized by the Maryland Secretary of State at the end of January and the new Board of Supervisors held their first official meeting in February. Our work to review erosion and sediment control plans and to assist farmers with conservation planning and implementation of best management practices continues in earnest. You may notice the changes to our website, social media, and logo over the next few months, but our level of service will remain consistent.

In this issue we hope you will help us celebrate our cooperators of the year for 2023, enjoy reading about some of our winter activities, and make note of upcoming opportunities that may be of interest to you.

- Heather Hutchinson  
District Manager



## Cover Crop

Spring cover crop reporting is open! Remember that late planted cover crops (planted between 11/6-11/15) must not be terminated prior to May 1, 2024! If late planted cover crops are terminated prior to May 1st, no payment will be issued.

Are you ready to report your termination? Call the office at (301)-695-2803 ext. 3 or contact your planner directly to report your termination. The last day for reporting is June 3, 2024.

2024-2025 Cover Crop sign ups have not been announced yet, but you can expect an announcement at the beginning of June! Stay tuned to a future issue for more information or follow the district on Facebook @FrederickCountySCD for the most recent information.

## FREDERICK COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

92 Thomas Johnson Drive  
Suite 230  
Frederick, MD 21702

Phone: (301)-695-2803 Ext. 3  
Email: soil.conservation@comcast.net  
catocinfrederickscd.com



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# 2023 CATOCTIN COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR

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## Richvale Farm– the Ahalt Family



Richvale Farm is a 6th generation family farm in Middletown. They raise beef in addition to growing hay, corn, soybeans, and wheat. With a nod to building soil health, they utilize no-till practices and plant cover crop each fall. The Ahalt family has installed conservation practices such as grass waterways, stream fencing and crossings and implemented prescribed grazing. Manure storage allows for optimal timing of nutrient applications and roofed heavy use areas protect pastures during inclement weather. The Catocotin Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors is pleased to recognize this family for their commitment to conservation.



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# 2023 FREDERICK COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR

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## Thomas Albaugh and Family

The Frederick Soil Conservation District is pleased to recognize the conservation efforts of Thomas Albaugh and his family. Located in Union Bridge, The Albaugh's farm around 300 acres. They raise beef cattle utilizing a well managed prescribed grazing system. A roofed heavy use area provides space for cattle confinement to protect pastures during inclement weather while manure storage enables optimal timing of nutrient applications. In addition to their beef operation the Albaugh's grow hay, corn and soybeans and plant fall cover crops.



# DIGGING DEEPER INTO SOIL HEALTH

Thank you to all who joined us for our third annual Digging Deeper into Soil Health event on February 28th at the Great Frederick Fair Grounds. Attendees heard talks on carbon farming, cover crops, weather proofing your farm, and year round pasturing. If you are interested in purchasing one of Dales books you can go to <https://www.regenerativewisdom.com/books-page>.



## Meet the speaker, Dale Strickler!



Dale Strickler grew up on a farm and ranch near the small town of Colony, Kansas. He attended a small high school with 29 members in his graduating class and then received BS and MS degrees from Kansas State University in Science Education and Agronomy. Dale taught agronomy in higher education for 15 years, then entered into private industry. He has worked as an agronomist for Land O' Lakes, Star Seed, and Valent USA before landing his current role with Green Cover Seed, the nation's premier cover crop-specific seed company. He has developed highly effective grazing systems for numerous ranches with a range of often challenging climates and soil types. Dale also designs crop rotations and advises on cover crop planning to improve soil, maximize crop yields, and reduce the need for expensive crops inputs. He currently serves as lead agronomist for Green Cover Seed and is a featured speaker at many conferences and grazing schools around the country and globally.

# MARYLAND BAY-FRIENDLY FARM

Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming is a program of the Maryland Association of Conservation Districts (MASCD). The voluntary program recognizes and certifies farmers who demonstrate outstanding stewardship.

## What are the benefits of certification?

- Three year waiver from state nutrient management inspections as long as no formal complaints are received and timely annual reports are submitted.
- A metal sign to post on your property recognizing you as a Bay-Friendly Farm.
- Recognition on the MASCD website . If your farm sells directly to the public you can provide product and contact information.
- Access to free promotional items (stickers, table tents, shirts, etc.)
- Receive a stewardship notebook that contains information about new conservation opportunities.



## Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming

Interested in more information or becoming a certified Bay-Friendly Farm? Contact the MASCD Bay-Friendly Farming Program at (443)-359-3478 or by emailing the program at [info@bayfriendlyfarms.com](mailto:info@bayfriendlyfarms.com).



# Coloring Contest

## Eligible Classes to Participate:

- Class A- Kindergarten & 1st Grades
- Class B- 2nd & 3rd Grades
- Class C- 4th & 5th Grades



- Coloring by the participating child ONLY.
- Wax Crayons are the only medium that can be used!
- Back of page must contain the Child's name, address, age, grade, class (A, B, or C), and home phone number.
- Due to the SCD Office by **MAY 6TH!**

The coloring page and more information can be found at [www.catoctinfrederickscd.com/in-the-news](http://www.catoctinfrederickscd.com/in-the-news). Submissions can be mailed to our office at 92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 230, Frederick, MD 21702



# MANURE TRANSPORT & INJECTION

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Manure Transport Program helps to offset the cost of injecting and/or transporting manure to farms with low phosphorus fields. Cost-share grants are available to transport dairy and livestock manure to qualifying fields, covering up to 87.5% of eligible costs. Operations may receive up to \$45/acre for costs associated with injecting liquid manure.

To qualify for transport/injection assistance:

- Manure must be transported more than 1 mile from the sending source (transport requirement only).
- The soil test P-FIV on receiving fields must be less than 100 (transport requirement only).
- Legumes crops (containing >25% legumes) are eligible for injection costs only.
- A current nutrient management plan is required at time of application.
- Manure may be applied after March 1st with the last day to haul of December 15th.
  - \*Farmers who are planning to transport dairy or livestock manure this spring and summer are advised that all projects must be completed by September 9th with all applications to MDA by October 9th.
- Only operations receiving the manure may apply for transport grants.
- Grants to transport dairy and livestock manure are based on the following maximum application rates: 6,000 gallons per acre for liquid/slurry manure or 10 tons per acre for solid/semi-solid manure.

Applications are available to complete online by visiting—

[https://mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Pages/manure\\_management.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/manure_management.aspx)

For questions related to the Manure Transport Program or assistance, please contact the District for more information.

## Small Acreage Cover Crop Program



The Maryland Department of Agriculture has announced the sign up period for the 2024 Small Acreage Cover Crop Program.

- Open for applications from **March 25 to April 30, 2024.**
- Small farms and Urban Growers are encouraged to apply!
- Growers who plant less than ten (10) acres of qualifying cover crops— including cereal grains or cover crop seed mixes— may apply for these grants.
- Cover crops may be planted in open plots/fields, raised beds, or a high tunnel.

Interested growers should contact Bill Tharpe, the Program Administrator for the Small Farm and Urban Agriculture Program, at [bill.tharpe@maryland.gov](mailto:bill.tharpe@maryland.gov) or (410)-841-5869.



# Frederick County

*Soil Conservation District*

*92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 230  
Frederick, MD 21702*



Follow us on Facebook!

@FrederickCountySCD

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David Huffer, Urban Technician  
David Stonesifer, Urban Technician  
Kendra McAfee, Soil Cons. Coordinator

### **MDA Staff**

Holly Boyer, Planner  
Emily Doney, Planner  
Cassidy Marquis, Planner  
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Jason Watt, Engineering Tech  
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### **NRCS Staff**

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