

COVER CROP 2013-2014



Farmers throughout Maryland have been using winter cover crops as one way to reduce the amount of nutrients that end up in the Chesapeake Bay. Cover crops planted in the fall usually consist of cereal grains like wheat, rye, spring oats and barley which continue to grow during the winter months. Once established, cover crops take up excess nutrients in the soil and reduce erosion from rain, snow, and wind.

This fall, Montgomery County Farmers spent many days harvesting vegetables, corn, soybeans, and sorghum as well as planting cover crops consisting of wheat, rye, barley, and triticale. Our farmers set a new benchmark by planting over 15,000 acres as part of the Maryland Department of Agriculture Cover Crop Program. **Looking ahead, spring certification begins March 1, 2014.**

As a reminder, kill down or suppression of the cover crop may not occur prior to March 1st unless you intend to plant an early season vegetable crop. Approved end of winter management methods include green chopping of the cover crop (on farm use only), plowing under, or killing by using a burn down herbicide. **No nutrients (organic or inorganic) may be applied to acres enrolled in the Cover Crop Program prior to March 1, 2014.** Potash and lime may be applied at any time. Spring spot checks will occur between February 1st and March 1st. These acres will be randomly selected by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. If you have questions, you may contact our office at 301-590-2855 or you can visit the Maryland Department of Agriculture cover crop web page at

http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/cover_crop.aspx

Thank you to all who participated in this winter's program. Even with the variable weather conditions we had a record year!

WELCOME ABOARD!



Please help us welcome Jim Myers, as the new NRCS District Conservationist for Montgomery and Howard counties. Jim has worked for NRCS for over 25 years. He spent the first 11 years of his career at NRCS as a Soil Conservationist working out of the Cumberland Soil Conservation District in

Pennsylvania. He became the District Conservationist for that district in 1998, a position he held for 3 years before transferring to the Howard Soil Conservation District in Maryland in 2001. After 8 years working in Howard County, he became the District Conservationist for the Frederick and Catoclin Soil Conservation Districts in 2009. Jim looks forward to assisting farmers with their conservation initiatives in Montgomery County. Welcome aboard, Jim!

WELCOME BACK

Brandy Gibbons has worked for NRCS for 16 years. Brandy spent 6 years working for the plant materials center in Beltsville, MD, before being hired as a Soil Conservationist for the Howard and Montgomery Soil Conservation Districts. She was transferred from Montgomery County to work exclusively in Howard in 2008. Brandy has recently accepted the opportunity to return to the Montgomery Soil Conservation District where she will continue to assist agricultural producers with conservation planning and Federal programs. Welcome back, Brandy!

WEED WATCH

Golden Bamboo

Phyllostachys aurea

Golden Bamboo is thought to have first been introduced to the United States from China in 1882. Since then, its range has expanded to include most of the states in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic. It is a highly invasive evergreen

grass which can grow up to 40 feet tall. Individual stems, called *culms*, live for an average of 10 years. Culms emerge in early spring and will continue being produced as long as the soil remains warm.

Golden Bamboo is often planted as a noise barrier or visual screen, and is still sold in nurseries today, despite being identified as an aggressive invasive.



James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service

Though it flowers infrequently (often just prior to culm death) and produces seeds, propagation is mostly through rhizomes. Golden Bamboo prefers full sun, but can become established in partial shade and a wide range of soil types. Once established, Golden Bamboo easily crowds out native vegetation, often creating such dense shade that virtually all undergrowth is killed. Golden Bamboo has virtually no ecological value and a devastating impact on biodiversity.

Persistence and a long-term plan are needed to control Golden Bamboo, which is done through a combination of vigorous mowing and the application of herbicides. It can take several years to eradicate. A native alternative to Golden Bamboo is *Arundinaria gigantea*, also called Giant Reed or River Cane, which tolerates partial shade and grows well in wet soils. River Cane is noninvasive bamboo which grows up to 20 feet tall and is consumed by a variety of native wildlife.

SOURCES:

http://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_argi.pdf

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_010270.pdf

EQUINE SEMINAR



SAVE THE DATE

January 21, 2014

(snow date January 23)

7:00 PM

Agricultural History Farm Park

18410 Muncaster Road

Derwood, MD

“Identifying Poisonous Weeds”

David Gordon, UME

Eddie Franceschi, MSCD

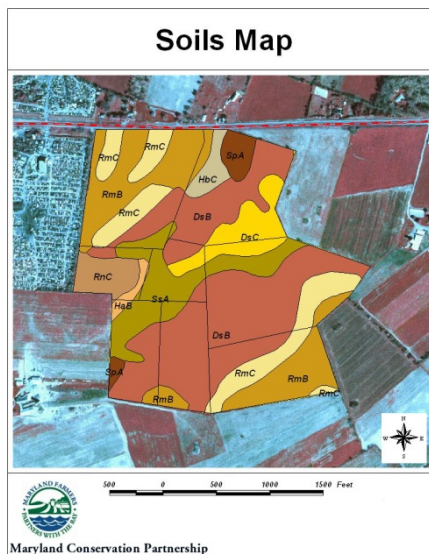
“Equine Dental Health”

Joel T. Nupp, EqDT



The Montgomery Soil Conservation District is partnering with the University of Maryland Extension Montgomery County to host an equine seminar this winter. There is no cost to attend, but please let us know if we can expect you by registering with Karen Walker at 301-590-2855 by January 17th. The seminar is sponsored by Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit. The featured guest speaker is Dr. Joel Nupp, an equine dentist and owner of Friendship Equine Dental Services, LLC.

CONSERVATION PLANNING – WHO, WHAT, WHEN, AND WHY?



options designed to help farmers get the most from their land while protecting it for future generations. Farmers and landowners have the final say as to what best management practices they adopt. Please call the Montgomery Soil Conservation District at 301-590-2855 if you are interested.

SOIL JUDGING



Montgomery County was the host for two major soil judging events this fall. The statewide Future Farmers of America (FFA) Land Judging Competition was held at the Agricultural History Farm Park on October 18, 2013. The Land Evaluation competition included FFA teams from across the state and was won by the team from Clear Spring High School in Washington County.

A week later, on October 22-24th, Ag History hosted the East Regional Collegiate Soil Judging Training Sessions. As the host college, the University of Maryland chose the Farm Park as their training site, and colleges from all over the east coast studied soils at the facility for several days. It was quite an honor to host these two prestigious events and it would not have been possible without the support of Ag History Farm Park Manager, Ted Trey; Doug Ludwig, Rock Creek Region Park Manager III; and Montgomery SCD Board Member Robert Stabler. Mr. Stabler's management style and dedication to land stewardship made this site the perfect location for these events.

A Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan, often referred to simply as a "Conservation Plan," is a document as well as a tool that can be used to assess the natural resources on your land as well as the productivity and profitability of your operation. A Conservation Plan is very different from a Nutrient Management Plan. Nutrient Management Planning is often a requirement and focuses on nutrients and crop production. Conservation Plans address the entire farming operation and are voluntary unless required by a specific program in which you are a participant. Conservation Plans are intended to help the cooperator make management decisions regarding the land as well as create a timetable for completing practices. Plans are used to recommend best management practices for the land. This may include crop rotations, conservation tillage options, buffers and grassed waterways, waste storage options, as well as many other practices which can be utilized on the farm to increase productivity and profitability as well as protect our natural resources.

Conservation Plans are developed free of charge. If you are interested in completing a plan or updating a plan for your farm, you are encouraged to contact the Montgomery Soil Conservation District. Even if you already have a Conservation Plan, it may be out of date. Plans that are more than 10 years old should be revisited to make sure that all needs are being met.

Conservation Plans are not a form of government regulation. The plans simply contain a set of



The MSCD 2013 Cooperators Dinner was held at Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard, 18125 Comus Road, Dickerson, MD 20842. The facilities, grounds and scenery provided the perfect atmosphere for the Cooperators Dinner. It was a great opportunity for people to learn about the burgeoning wine industry in Maryland and to honor farmers that have been so dedicated to conservation. Approximately 150 people attended the dinner, including several local and state policy makers.

Attendees were treated to wine tasting and wagon tours of the vineyard. There were displays from the National Collegiate Champion University of Maryland Soil Judging Team and the Montgomery County Weed Control. Dr. Joe Fiola of the University of Maryland shared information on viticulture in Maryland and the challenges and opportunities facing Maryland wine makers. Both Mike McGarry, co-owner of Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard, and Robert Butz MSCD Vice-Chairman, shared information on growing grapes for the wine industry and provided examples from their own operations. MSCD Agricultural Resource

Conservation Specialist J. Harne presented ideas on installing Best Management Practices on agricultural operations.

One of the highlights of the evening was the winery tours hosted by Sales Manager, Ms. Susan Reed. Ms. Reed explained the nuances of wine making and the equipment and operations of the winery to attendees.



MSCD District Manager, David C. Plummer presented the 2013 Cooperator of the Year Award to Neal Brown

The 2013 Cooperator of the Year award was presented to Mr. Neal Brown. Mr. Brown has beef cattle and horses on his farm in Barnesville,

Maryland. He has implemented a variety of Best Management Practices to protect natural resources and improve his operations, including fencing the animals out of the stream and establishing a forest buffer. He also worked with MSCD staff to install watering troughs that will allow for rotational grazing of the pastures.



Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Buddy Hance presented J.G. Warfield with an MDA Certificate of Appreciation.

The 2013 Contribution to Agriculture Award was presented to J.G. Warfield. The MSCD recognized Mr. Warfield for his lifelong commitment to improving agricultural production and conservation in Montgomery County and throughout the state. Mr. Warfield worked for NRCS for 24 years and was the District Conservationist in Montgomery for over 20 years. His tireless promotion of conservation has not only benefitted water quality and other natural resources but it has also helped farmers throughout the county to be better stewards of the land. Senator Karen Montgomery of District 14 and the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, Earl “Buddy” Hance also presented Mr. Warfield with awards.



The agricultural community valued J.G.’s knowledge and experience and relied on his guidance for conservation practices and programs. We all wish J.G. the best in his retirement.

Tim McGrath, MSCD Associate Supervisor was presented with the 2013 Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) Associate Supervisor of the Year Award. The award was originally presented at the MASCD summer meeting in July, but Tim was not available to attend the meeting due to other commitments. Tim has been an Associate Supervisor with MSCD for 10 years and he is well respected in the agricultural community. He owns a 25-acre horse operation and has always been willing to help educate the agricultural community on a variety of conservation topics. He has hosted several pasture walks on his farm and also uses his pumpkin chunkin cannon, “Chunkin-Up” to increase interest in agriculture. Tim competes in National Pumpkin Chunkin competitions and has been featured in documentary programs on the sport.



MSCD District Manager, David C. Plummer presented Tim McGrath with the 2013 MASCD Outstanding Associate Supervisor of the Year Award.

The MSCD would like to offer special thanks to all of our sponsors and those that help make the Cooperators Dinner such a success: Marchwicki Excavating Co., Farm & Equine Business Services, LLC, Air View Farm-William E. Barnes, Butler’s Orchard, Willard Agri Service of Frederick, Inc., J. David Mullinix & Son, Inc., Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, Beallsville Valley Farm, Good Choice Farm and Mike McGarry and Susan Reed of Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard.



EQIP Applications are accepted by NRCS on a continuous basis, but cut-off dates for evaluating, ranking, and selecting applicants are established each year. Fiscal year 2014 cut-off dates are December 20 and February 21, as funding allows. If you are considering installing conservation practices on your farm, please contact a member of our staff to help determine your eligibility for EQIP or other cost-share programs that may provide financial assistance for the project.

NEW NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS – STREAM SETBACKS

The Maryland Department of Agriculture's (MDA) revised nutrient management regulations are gradually being phased in over several years. Effective January 1, 2014, setbacks for agricultural practices are to be established adjacent to surface water and streams. This does not include ephemeral streams which only flow in direct response to precipitation. Setbacks apply to any land which is part of a farm operation that requires a Nutrient Management Plan. A Nutrient Management Plan is required for any operation that produces over \$2,500 in gross revenue or contains 8,000 pounds of animal weight.

- 35-foot setback for broadcasting fertilizer applications on crop fields, even if the fertilizer is incorporated afterward.
- 35-foot setback for pasture and loafing areas which contain less than 75% grass or grass legume mix. This setback shall be achieved with fencing or other BMPs recommended by the local Soil Conservation District.
- 10-foot setback for applying fertilizer on crop fields when "directed" application methods, such as manure injection, are utilized.
- 10-foot setback for pasture and hay fields. This setback shall be achieved in pasture areas

with fencing or other BMPs recommended by the local Soil Conservation District.

As an alternative to establishing the setback on pasture land with fencing, a person may work with the local Soil Conservation District to determine whether alternative BMPs will work as well as fencing. This determination can be done by developing a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan that is equally protective of water quality and stream health.

Anyone working with the local Soil Conservation District to implement BMPs may be granted a grace period for installation of approved BMPs which extends beyond the January 1 deadline. Land which is found to be in violation of these setback regulations may no longer be eligible for CREP or other conservation grant programs.

These regulations were established by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and will be enforced by MDA, not the Soil Conservation Districts. The MSCD is available to provide technical assistance and guidance to anyone that needs advice regarding compliance with these new regulations. We can also explain cost-share programs that may provide financial assistance to help implement some practices.

NEW NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REGS – PHOSPHOROUS MANAGEMENT TOOL

Effective November 15, 2013, The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has withdrawn the requirement for Farmers with fields that have a Fertility Index Value of 150 or greater to use the new Phosphorus Management Tool to determine phosphorus rates for Nutrient Management plans.

For more information on the New Nutrient Management Regulations, visit [MDA's Nutrient Management Website](http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/nutrient_management.aspx).
http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/nutrient_management.aspx

Farmers interested in these regulations should also be aware of the potential for legislation pertaining to PMT during the coming General Assembly session in Annapolis.

MANURE INJECTION GRANTS ARE BACK FOR A SECOND YEAR

Grants will be offered this spring to help farmers cover the cost of injecting or incorporating manure into cropland. The funding will be allocated to hire custom operators and rent or lease vertical tillage or secondary tillage equipment. Details will be posted on the MDA website in the spring of 2014. Incorporation of manure is now a requirement for some operations under the new Nutrient Management Regulations.



Cost Share Caps Raised for Dairy Manure Transport



The Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Program (MACS) has raised its cost share funding limits for dairy, beef and other non-poultry producers. Eligible dairy farmers may now qualify for up to \$15,000 per season or \$30,000 per year in cost share assistance to transport manure. There are no maximum funding levels for poultry growers. The manure transport program helps poultry, dairy, beef and other livestock producers with excess manure comply with their nutrient management plans. Animal operations with high phosphorous level soils or not enough land to apply their manure, may apply for cost share grants to transport excess manure within their operation or to other farms that can utilize it in an environmentally safe manner. Some restrictions apply. All sending and receiving land must be managed under a current nutrient management plan. Farmers may apply for this program at the Montgomery Soil Conservation District Office.

2013 - 3rd Place Envirothon Winners



Militant Platypodes from Richard Montgomery High School

A team of five juniors from Richard Montgomery High School represented Montgomery County in the Maryland State Envirothon held on June 19th and 20th at the Western Maryland 4-H Center in Bittinger, Maryland. The Richard Montgomery team did a fantastic job, and finished in 3rd place out of 17 participating counties. At this year's competition the Harford County Harford Christian School scored 461 points out of a possible 500. They were followed by teams from Carroll (430 points), and Montgomery (429 points). The Harford County team went on to represent Maryland at the International Envirothon Competition held in Montana.

Members of the top three teams were awarded scholarships ranging from \$200 to \$500 through the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board Scholarship program. In addition, winning team members received a wildlife print, Maryland Envirothon shirt and other prizes.

Each year, teams of high school students test their environmental knowledge by competing against each other in five subject areas - soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and a 5th environmental issue which changes yearly. The 5th issue for 2013 was Rangeland Management. The 2014 Envirothon State Competition will be held at Camp Pecometh in Centreville, Maryland on June 18th and 19th. Congratulations to team "Militant Platypodes" from Richard Montgomery HS, and hopefully we will see you again in 2014.

Montgomery Soil Conservation District
18410 Muncaster Road
Derwood, MD 20855-1421
Phone: 301-590-2855
Fax: 301-590-2849
<http://www.montgomeryscd.org>

**You Can Receive
This Newsletter by EMAIL!!!**

Enjoy a full color version emailed to you
as soon as it is posted to our website.
Register for our email group by calling
301-590-2855 or emailing to
Karen.Walker@montgomerycountymd.gov

EQUINE SEMINAR January 21, 2014 – Details inside.

Montgomery Soil Conservation District

Staff

David C. Plummer, District Manager
Jim Myers, District Conservationist
Karen Walker, Administrative Aide
Melbaliz Santiago, Soil Conservationist
Paul Meyer, Engineering Technician
Travis Gorleski, Regional Equine Planner (Grant)
Eddie Franceschi, Equine Resource Conservationist
J.Harne, Resource Conservation Specialist
Brandy Gibbons, Soil Conservationist

MSCD Board of Supervisors

Board Members

George E. Lechliden, Chair
Robert Butz, Vice Chair
Wade F. Butler, Treasurer
Robert Stabler, Member
Pam Saul, Member
Allen Belt, Associate Member
Robert Butts, Associate Member
Tim McGrath, Associate Member

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