

NEWSLETTER

HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast

by Maura Cahill

Breakfast Speaker Coordinator

The next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast is scheduled for **8:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10, 2011** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please mark this date on your calendar and plan to join us.

Our guest speaker will be **Ms. Mary Brandenburg, Lic. Ac.** Ms. Brandenburg has been a licensed practitioner of acupuncture since 1985. In 1999, she received certification from the State of Maryland to perform acupuncture on animals. Since then, her animal practice has focused on horses and dogs. In addition to her practice, she was a member of the faculty at the Traditional Acupuncture Institute (now Tai Sophia Institute) and served as the Academic Dean of the Master of Acupuncture Program from 1993 until 2002.

She and her husband John live in Glenelg with their two dogs and seven chickens. They recently returned from a trip to Benin, West Africa where their daughter is serving in the Peace Corps.

The breakfast meeting on March 10th presents an excellent opportunity to interact with a qualified expert on acupuncture. Bring your spouse, and/or a friend. Enjoy the excellent food, the fellowship and have a lively and friendly exchange of information.

Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. and the program is scheduled from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. Please **RSVP by noon, Tuesday, March 8** by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or MarthaClark at (410) 531-3455. The cost of the breakfast is \$10.00 per person, payable at the door.

The speaker's part of the program normally concludes by about 9:00 a.m. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, **March 10**, at the next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

President's Message

by **Howie Feaga, President**

Howard County Farm Bureau

Are you as ready for spring as I am? We haven't had a really bad winter yet. It just seems to me though, to have been really long and cold.

We attended the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in Atlanta, Georgia in January, and yes, it snowed while we were there. Although it only amounted to a few inches, for Atlanta, it turned into a disaster. The buses stopped running and the taxi's were off the roads. Many people didn't make it back to work the next day.

But, we had a good time and our keynote speaker, Mike Rowe from the TV show "Dirty Jobs", was a great speaker and did an outstanding job. (*See the accompanying article in this Newsletter about his message.*) He is very pro-farmer and some of his shows have been heavily criticized by the EPA and the OSHA people. But he broadcast them anyway because they represent real life. You have to like him just for that.

I congratulate Pat Langenfelder on her election to the national AFBF board of directors. I know that she will do a great job in that position and will represent Maryland very well.

The Legislative Affairs committee and all the Farm Bureau staff are back to working with all of our

new and returning representatives to try to keep all the new bills on the right track. We don't need anymore hardships to deal with than the ones that we already endure.

Locally, I am glad to see that we received a favorable vote from the Howard County Council on the Beekeeping bill. I believe we can all live with that decision. I would like to thank the Council for all of the time and effort that they put into that issue. I also want to thank the beekeepers and hope that they can now go back to their hives and keep them healthy and busy doing their very important job of pollinating crops. I hope to see all of you at the Legislative Dinner coming up later in the spring.

With spring coming on and our lives about to get really busy, try to take it easy and not hurry so much and make a costly avoidable mistake with either a piece of your machinery or with your tools. We all tend toward getting in a hurry sometimes, and that, unfortunately, can lead up to the making of a terrible accident. So slow down and remember, "Keep your plow in the ground. We're all pulling for you."

**Mike Rowe: Farmers Need to be
Their Own Advocates**
American Farm Bureau Federation
(Dairy Herd news source
Friday, January 14, 2011)

Farmers became a big part of "Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe" when Rowe took offense at the saying, "work smarter, not harder."

"What a silly way to separate knowledge from skill," Rowe told attendees at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 92nd annual meeting. Rowe decided to celebrate people who work both smart and hard and knew farmers and ranchers do both.

"It seems like every time I go to a farm, there's some type of issue," he said, recounting what happened after three farm episodes aired.

On his series "Dirty Jobs," that airs on the Discovery Channel, Rowe helped a hog farmer with an operation near Las Vegas gather leftover food from casinos, which the farmer cooked in his Rube Goldberg

invention and then fed to the hogs. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals wrote to him, concerned that the warm food was harming the animals. The Environmental Protection Agency feared gas escaping from a hose under a truck hood might be toxic when in fact it was steam.

Rowe visited a laying hen operation in Buckeye, Ariz., which he said enabled him to give an honest, fair look at caged egg production. Because "we deal with feces from every species," Rowe used a bobcat to clean up chicken manure that accumulated below the cages. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration said his skill with the bobcat — or lack thereof — had come perilously close to endangering the health of the workers at the farm.

Before a visit to a Craig, Colo., sheep ranch to assist with castrating lambs, Rowe asked the humane society about the preferred method for the procedure and was told how to use a rubber band to accomplish the task. However, he learned that the lambs recovered quickly after the ranchers' method of clipping and extracting the genitals but would be in pain for up to two days if rubber bands were used. "I saw with my own eyes that it was a kinder, gentler way to do it for the lamb," he said of the rancher's procedure.

That got Rowe to thinking: if these experts and agencies were wrong about what they saw on "Dirty Jobs," what else were they wrong about? American farmers are surrounded by angry activist groups, each with its own agenda, he said. "Our country is asking you to do more with less every single year and I see a lot of other agendas pushing at you. The rest of the country needs to understand what you guys do on a day-to-day basis. We are not sufficiently astounded that you guys feed [the world] every day."

Rather than a spokesman, agriculture needs lots of advocates, Rowe said. These advocates can each use their talents to tell their story. He cited Troy Hadrick, a Farm Bureau member in South Dakota whose You Tube video attracted the interest of a furniture company owner who now sponsors a NASCAR entry that promotes agriculture during races.

Rowe himself has produced two “brown before green” specials that showcase farmers’ work to care for the earth. “You find a farmer and scrape off the dirt and you’ll find one of the greenest people on the planet,” he said. Saying he was flattered at having been asked to be a spokesman for agriculture, he told Farm Bureau members, “I do believe in my heart of hearts that you are your own best spokesmen.”

[Re-printed from *Farm Notes*, February, 2011, Carroll County Extension]

Ag Preservation **Easement Settlements Continue**

by Joy Levy
Ag-Land Preservation Administrator
Department of Planning and Zoning

As 2010 came to a close, the Howard County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) was busy bringing additional Batch 14 properties to settlement. Within the last two months of the year, three farms became permanently preserved by an ALPP easement.

The John L. Carroll, Jr. property, located on Manor Lane (54 acres), settled on November 22. The James R. Ferguson, Sr. property, located on Frederick Road (70 acres), settled on December 21. Both of these properties applied in the Batch 14 application period and the County has purchased the development rights from the owners.

In November, a very special opportunity presented itself to the ALPP in the form of a donated easement. Calvin Murray offered to donate an easement on his 53-acre farm on Florence Road. Mr. Murray’s adjacent 166-acre home farm was the first Batch 13 applicant property to go to settlement in 2007, and the easement on another adjacent property of 125 acres was dedicated to the County in 2004 as a density sending parcel. The ALPP settled on Mr. Murray’s donated easement on November 19.

Of the seven Batch 14 properties that were made offers (does not include Murray), four are now permanently preserved. The ALPP is hopeful that the remaining three will settle within the first few months of 2011.

Is Your Conservation Plan Current?

This is just a friendly reminder from the 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 410-489-7987 to inquire.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDLs and WIPs

by Susan Overstreet
Environmental Planner
Department of Planning and Zoning

The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) set limits on the amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment that can enter the Chesapeake Bay, to ensure the Bay meets water quality standards. These limits are significantly lower than the current loading levels for these pollutants. The Bay TMDLs were developed by the EPA, as required under the Federal Clean Water Act, and finalized at the end of December 2010. Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) developed by the Bay States will contain a list of implementation measures that will achieve the Bay TMDLs by 2025, although Maryland has committed to achieving its portion of the Bay TMDLs by 2020.

The WIPs will be developed in three phases. The Phase I WIP was finalized in December 2010 and specifies statewide actions that must be taken to achieve the pollutant load reductions and maintain these loading levels in the face of future growth. The Phase I WIP also sets interim target loads for 2017. The Phase II WIP will specify how these statewide actions will be implemented at the local jurisdiction level to achieve the 2017 interim target loads. The current schedule calls for a draft Phase II WIP by June 2011 and a final Phase II WIP by December 2011. This schedule will likely be delayed due to a delay by EPA in providing local load allocations. The Phase III WIP will be prepared in 2017 and address needed reductions from 2018 to 2020.

The Maryland Phase I WIP provides strategies to address load reductions from: point sources (municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants), urban stormwater, septic systems, agriculture, natural filters on public land, and air. The majority of reductions by 2017 will occur in point source loads through upgrades of major municipal wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) to enhanced nutrient reduction (ENR). Reductions after 2017 will rely more heavily on nonpoint source reductions. EPA has indicated that increased load reductions will be required of permitted point sources and urban stormwater systems, if nonpoint source load reductions are not adequate. Addressing reductions from agriculture will be a shared responsibility between local soil conservation districts and the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

To address loads from future growth, Maryland proposes to develop and implement a system of nutrient offsets by 2013 for new loads from septic systems and land development. The proposed approach would divide the State into three areas with low, medium and high nutrient loads per capita. The system would provide incentives for Smart Growth by having the lowest offset requirements for growth in more densely developed areas that are served by WWTPs with ENR. Development in low density areas served by septic systems would have the highest offset requirements. The offsets would be based on nutrient trading systems for point to point source loads and point to nonpoint source loads, primarily agriculture.

Winter Limestone Application

by **Douglas Beegle**
Extension Soil Fertility Specialist
Pennsylvania State University

Regular liming is critical to good crop production in our soils. A common question is when is the best time to lime? The bottom line is that anytime the soil conditions are appropriate for the spreading equipment and the crop does not limit spreading, is ok. However, there are some helpful considerations for when to apply limestone. First, lime on a regular basis. If soils are regularly limed so that the pH never gets too low, then the timing of maintenance liming is not very critical. Regular liming provides

maximum flexibility to lime when you have time and the conditions are right. In our soils liming every 3–4 years will usually meet this goal.

Second, plan ahead. Even very high quality limestone takes some time to react and correct the acidity in the soil. Applying limestone at least 6 months ahead of when the desired pH is needed is a good guideline. This is especially important if the soil pH is very low. For example, if a new alfalfa seeding is planned liming should be considered the year before seeding or at least the fall before seeding.

Finally, consider the soil conditions. The main concern here is compaction from heavy lime trucks. For timing a limestone application within the year, the ideal would be to apply limestone on a dry soil. Another alternative is to apply limestone on a frozen soil to minimize compaction. There are no problems with applying limestone on a frozen soil as long as the limestone stays where it is applied. The main thing here is not to apply limestone on a frozen soil where it might be directly washed off of the field by winter rains or snow melt, such as sloping fields, especially with little or no cover.

Actually, if limestone is applied to a frozen soil or on a dry soil in the fall, there will likely be some shallow incorporation due to freezing and thawing action throughout the winter. This can be helpful in no-till or perennial crops where there will be no tillage to mix the limestone with the soil. Anytime is a good time to lime as long as you pay attention to a few important details.

[Re-printed from *Farm Notes*, February, 2011, Carroll County Extension]

2011 Horse Pasture Walk Series

Submitted by: **Dr. Amy Burk**
UM Extension Specialist
Equine Science

Visit the Equine Rotational Grazing Demonstration site (at the Central Maryland Research and Education Center, 4241 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042) on one or more of the

following dates for a tour of the pastures and an explanation of current management practices. Each pasture walk will feature a special presentation on a different pasture management issue of interest. These events are free, but advanced registration is requested. Educational materials will be provided, and refreshments will be served. All events are rain or shine.

April 21, 2011 – Renovating Pastures for a Thicker Grass Stand. 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Your pastures may be green, but is your grass stand as healthy as it can be? Learn how to assess whether a renovation would benefit your pasture and how to increase the growth you've already established.

May 26, 2011 – Using Pasture to Reduce Feed Costs. 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Horses are natural grazers and under the right conditions a healthy pasture can provide all the nutrition a horse needs. Learn how to use pasture to its full potential and keep those extra dollars in your pocket.

June 23, 2011 – Best Management Practices for Healthy Pastures. 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Knowing how and when to rotate, mow, harrow, and over-seed pastures can be tricky. Experts will discuss tips for keeping your pastures in top condition.

July 21, 2011 – Weed Identification and Control. 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. What weeds are common in horse pastures and how can you control them? Develop your skills in weed identification and learn which weeds are toxic.

September 10, 2011 – Horse Pasture Management Seminar. 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. **Cost:** \$25 per person includes all materials and lunch.

Join us for this full-day event to learn about a variety of pasture-related topics including:

- pasture management: a year-round approach
- weed control methods
- getting control of water and mud in pastures
- best suited grass species for horse pastures
- strategies for managing all that manure
- where and how to apply for money for pasture improvements
- rotational grazing

This unique opportunity will prepare you with the knowledge and resources you need to make your own managed grazing project a success.

Registration and payment for the Pasture Management Seminar must be received by September 2, 2011. For more details, please visit our website: www.ansc.umd.edu/ERG. You may also RSVP to Jennifer Reynolds at reynjen@gmail.com.

2010 Maryland Equine Census **Results Announced** **From a MDA News Release**

February 08, 2011. The 2010 Equine Census reveals an industry with assets valued at \$5.6 billion and expenditures just under \$513 million. There are approximately 81,000 equine animals in Maryland that are located in over 16,040 locations around the state. The two largest equine counties are Prince George's and Baltimore at 9,000 and 8,950 head respectively. Equine operations account for a total of 587,000 acres of which 188,000 acres are devoted to equine and 88,000 acres are enrolled in land preservation programs.

The number of equine animals in Maryland decreased seven percent from the 87,100 on hand in 2002. The value of the equine inventory on May 1, 2010, was just over \$746 million, up 10 percent from 2002. The number of equine places throughout Maryland decreased 21 percent from 2002 and includes boarding facilities, commercial and private breeding places, farms, commercial race related places and private residence where recreational equine are kept.

Race horse breeds (Thoroughbreds and Standardbreds) account for 31,300 or 39 percent of all breeds. Light breeds such as the Arabian and Quarter Horse, most commonly associated with recreational and non-racing competitive activities, make up 39,600 animals or 49 percent of all breeds. Draft breeds, ponies, mules, donkeys and burros comprise the balance of the 81,000 animals.

For a copy of the census data as presented to the Maryland Horse Industry Board, visit:

www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/equinecensus10.pdf.

[Thanks to Martin Hamilton for submitting this information to The Howard County Farm Bureau Newsletter.]

Farmer Training and Re-certification Classes

by Terry E. Poole
Principal Agent Emeritus
Maryland Cooperative Extension

Pesticide Programs. The University of Maryland Extension (UME), Frederick County Office provides classes for area farmers to receive training for the Private Applicator Exam and to obtain re-certification credits for their Private Applicators License. This license permits the holder to purchase Restricted Use pesticides.

The spring training class for the Private Applicator Exam will be held on March 2, 10 am to 12:00 noon, at the Frederick County Extension Office located at 330 Montevue Lane. This class will provide a review of the materials that will be covered on the exam and answer questions in preparation for the exam. The Private Applicators Exam will be offered on March 9, 10 am, at the Frederick Extension Office.

Once a farmer has a Private Applicators License, they are required to attend an approved 2-hour re-certification class in the third year of their three year license in order to receive renewal of their license. There will be an approved Private Applicator Re-certification Class offered on March 2, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, at the Frederick County Extension Office.

If you are interested in attending either the training or re-certification class, please call 301-600-3576 to pre-register. There is no charge for these Private Applicator Classes. If you plan to take the exam, you need to pickup the study materials at the Frederick Extension Office prior to the training class or exam. The Private Applicator Program is operated through the Pesticide Division of MDA.

Nutrient Management: Voucher Program. The Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998 requires those

farmers in the State of Maryland applying fertilizer or manure to 10 or more acres to obtain a Nutrient Applicator Voucher in order to be in compliance with this law. This applies only to those farmers who apply their own nutrients.

Nutrient Applicator Vouchers can be obtained by attending a 2-hour training session conducted by UME. Those completing this training session will be issued a voucher from MDA. This voucher will be valid for three (3) years, after which the farmer will need to attend renewal (re-certification) training.

The UME, Frederick County Office on March 15 will provide two Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training/Re-certification Classes; the times are 10:00 am to 12:00 noon and 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Each of these upcoming classes will provide the two-credit hours of training required by MDA for Nutrient Applicator Voucher re-certification. Each of these classes will also count towards the training requirement to receive a new Nutrient Applicators Voucher. If you are interested in attending one of these classes, please call 301-600-3576 to pre-register; there is no charge for these classes.

Nutrient Management: Certified Advisors and Farmers. The Water Quality Act of 1998 also requires farmers that make \$2,500 or more per year in gross farm income or have 8 or more animal units (8,000 lb or more) on their farm to have a certified nutrient management plan. Only people that have been certified by the MDA, Nutrient Management Division can write a certified nutrient management plan. MDA now has two categories of certified plan writers; these are Advisors/Consultants and Farmers. The difference here is that Certified Farmers can only write their own plan and Advisors/Consultants can write a plan for anyone.

The MDA requires Advisors/Consultants to receive 12 Continuing Ed credit hours over a three year period to receive renewal/re-certification of their license and Certified Farmers require 6 Continuing Ed credit hours for renewal of their license. The UME, Frederick County Office will provide a Certified Farmer/Consultant Nutrient Management Re-certification Meeting on March

22, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. This meeting will earn participants 4 Continuing Ed credits. An outstanding program has been assembled which should provide participants with helpful and valuable information.

If you are interested in attending any of the nutrient management classes/meeting, please call 301-600-3576 or 301-600-3577 to pre-register. The voucher classes are free; however there is a \$3.00 charge for the Certified Farmer/Consultant Meeting.

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

A brother and sister recently visited the attorney's office. "You drew up our parents' powers of attorney and medical directives. We've never needed to use them until now, and we're running into problems. Mom is in the hospital, and Dad doesn't walk very well anymore and can't get out without a walker or wheelchair, which he hates to use.

"The bank people are telling us they can't talk to us unless Mom or Dad is dead or incompetent. The hospital people are telling us the same thing. We feel stuck."

The attorney nodded sympathetically. "When your parents came to see me, they wanted what most people want – they wanted to take care of each other, and then have you take care of them if the survivor needed help.

"That's normal, and when they were younger it made sense. But as folks age, sometimes what used to work doesn't always work anymore. Planning ideas that used to be commonsense don't always make sense anymore.

"The good news is that we can fix the situation. Are your parents still competent?"

The siblings looked at each other, shrugged. "With Mom, it depends on who you ask, and when," said the brother. "Sometimes she's fine, other times she doesn't seem to know who we are. Dad is fine mentally, just very weak physically. Having Mom in

the hospital doesn't help him any – she used to kind of help him along."

The attorney leaned forward. "Here are your options," he said. "If your mother is competent, we can have them sign new documents naming you as their agents. The new documents can replace the old ones, or just supplement them. If she's not competent, we can have your father sign a 'resignation,' saying that he doesn't want to serve as her agent. He can also sign new documents with you as agent."

"But Dad's pretty weak," objected the daughter. "I remember the first time we signed the papers, and I don't think he can sign his name that many times at once."

"That's OK," reassured the lawyer. "As long as Dad directs someone else to sign his name, it's just like he signed it himself. The notary will just need to hear him say that he wants someone else to sign for him.

"We'd need to draft the signature block a little differently, but the document is still just as valid and just as binding. Because the new Maryland power of attorney statute makes powers of attorney enforceable, it's not very likely that a bank or broker will refuse the document.

"The new documents can make you both concurrent agents, so you can both do whatever is needed. That way whoever happens to be with Dad or Mom can take care of medical needs, or banking, or whatever.

"Or, you could be sequential agents, one of you serving first and the other as successor. I like concurrent agents, as long as you two get along and won't quarrel about what needs to be done."

The siblings looked at each other. "We get along OK, I guess, so you don't need to worry about that," said the sister. The brother nodded.

"While we're changing the powers of attorney and medical directives," suggested the lawyer, "we might want to update the wills. For example, you might want to be named as primary executors,

instead of the other spouse serving for the first spouse to die. That could be done by a codicil, an amendment to the will, or a whole new will could be drafted.”

There was a thoughtful silence. Then the siblings exchanged glances. “Let us talk to Dad and Mom,” the sister said, as spokesperson for the duo. “We'll get back to you soon.”

“Thanks,” said the lawyer as the three stood and shook hands. “I'll look forward to hearing from you soon.”

**Draft Regulations to Define “Local”
Foods Published in the
Maryland Register**
**Source - Carroll County *Farm Notes*,
January, 2011 Issue**

Proposed rules regulating the advertising of "local" foods are published in the Maryland Register for public comment. The regulations were drafted by MDA as part of a law signed by Governor O'Malley earlier this year which seeks to bring clarity to consumers as to what constitutes local.

With the increased interest in buying local and the current lack of agreement on defining local, we feel it is paramount that consumers have the information they need to make informed decisions about their food purchases. If advertising a food product as “local,” the proposed regulations will require businesses to disclose the origin of their product and consumers can make their own determination if a food advertised as “local” meets their standard.

The law authorizes the Secretary to regulate the use of the terms "local" or "locally grown" when used to advertise agricultural and seafood products. It aims to support Maryland farmers and provide transparency to consumers interested in purchasing local foods by informing Marylanders about their local foods purchases. In recent years, interest in locally produced foods has surged, leading to the rapid growth of farmer's markets, and the appearance of Maryland products in restaurants and grocery stores. However, there has been little agreement as to the

definition of "local" foods. A task force of farmers, retail representatives, consumer advocates, and other interested stakeholders provided input for the proposal.

The 2010 Policy Choices Survey by the University of Baltimore Schaefer Center for Public Policy found that 78 percent of Marylanders are more likely to buy produce that is identified as having been grown by a Maryland farmer.

For additional information, visit <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/MDRegister/mdregister.aspx> for a link to the Register. Comments may be sent to Mark Powell, Chief of Marketing, Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401, or call (410) 841-5775 or email PowellMS@mda.state.md.us, or fax to (410) 841-5957. Comments will be accepted through January 18, 2011. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

***Public Comments were Accepted through
January 18, 2011. Source: MDA***

**Dad’s Fantastic
“Self-Propelled Wagons”**
by Allan Bandel

While a youngster on the family farm during the 1940s and 1950s, back during those long-ago carefree years of “youthful innocence”, one reality that I for a long time had trouble understanding, was the fact that, although we always had several old farm trucks about the place, for the most part, they were literally that, both old **and** battered. I had difficulty understanding, “the reason why we couldn’t, at least just for once perhaps, acquire one of those nicer, newer, more immaculate, late-model trucks, something similar to what a few of our neighbors had?” So why couldn’t we be more like them?

Most of those old beat-up vehicles that Dad acquired had to be repaired regularly just to keep them running. They would have fit in better perhaps, in my judgement at least, on “The Beverley Hillbillies TV Show” than they did on our farm. But I eventually learned that Dad



possessed a very keen business sense, and that he knew exactly what he was doing. He bought those old trucks at bargain prices rather than spending a lot of money on shiny, dent-free, newer ones.

While young, and still very much “wet behind the ears”, I obviously did not fully understand the hardcore economics behind this business decision. Dad, who was a good businessman, patiently tried to explain to me that even if he chose to buy a nice new farm truck, one in A-1 condition, it would soon very likely display just as many dents, scratches and broken out headlights as the older “pre-stressed” models that he could so readily purchase at bargain prices. New farm trucks just tended to quickly get banged up as they inadvertently encountered various immovable objects around the farm, such as gate posts, barn doors, protruding tractor axles and numerous other solid farm machinery parts that tended to be a lot sturdier and resistant to damage than the truck’s exposed fenders, lights, mirrors, tires, etc.

I eventually came to understand the wisdom of Dad’s thought process and the basis for his apparently unorthodox decisions. In time, I gained an appreciation of his wise business insightfulness. Subsequently, Dad liked to refer to his older, frequently beat-up (or distressed) and barely road-

worthy, but nevertheless still useful trucks, as his fantastic “*self-propelled wagons*”.

The following account primarily concerns just one of Dad’s “self-propelled wagons”. This vehicle was one of the most beat-up of those old trucks that we ever had to contend with around the farm. But it was one that we used for a half-dozen years or more. This unsightly old vehicle, which for most of its life on the farm, was missing its right front fender and one of its headlights. It had no tail light or brake lights that functioned.

It was not only very useful as one of our “self-propelled wagons”, but it also provided us with many moments of haunting excitement, if not downright terror. These events were definitely highly memorable ones, moments that we would never have experienced and later enjoyed telling about if this vehicle had been in top-notch, A-1 mechanical condition. It twice caught fire on us, for instance, once in a tinder dry highly combustible field of wheat straw and stubble, subsequently burning the engine compartment and partially setting the wheat field on fire.

The antiquated truck in this tale, a 1934 heavy-duty Ford, had been used for many years by its previous owner, Mr. Earl Walker, to haul milk, ours included. Every day, it carried a load of heavy 10-gallon milk cans from the farms in western Howard County to a commercial dairy in Baltimore. This sad old Ford truck was pretty well worn out by the time that we got it. It had obviously been “over the road” for many thousands of miles. The odometer cable was broken when we took possession, so we had no idea of just how many miles it had actually traveled. The truck was definitely no longer considered to be safe for driving any distance over public roads or in heavy traffic. But we reckoned that it still had plenty of life left in it for our needs which were in the less restrictive, mostly off-road areas around the farm.

To save some money on the cost of license tags, and since this vehicle was to be used primarily off-road and not stray very far from home, Dad purchased special license tags that, obviously had a number, but also had prominent words that read

“**FARM AREA ONLY**”. In the early 1950s, these tags only cost about \$2.00 per year from the MVA. By law, we were required to restrict the truck’s use to within five miles of the farm. This was suitable and never a problem because, in reality, we just didn’t feel comfortable driving it much more than half that distance away from home anyhow.

The old truck’s noisy, nearly worn out, V-8 engine desperately needed an overhaul. It burned so much oil in fact, that we constantly carried a gallon jug of heavy thick non-detergent SAE 40 motor oil right in the cab so that we could add oil to the crankcase whenever it got dangerously low, which was frequently. When running, especially when the engine was revved up in low gear, there was usually a heavy cloud of thick blue smoke pouring out of the short rusty, broken-off exhaust pipe. Muffler? What muffler? A new replacement muffler would have looked “strangely out of place” on that old truck. And it would have probably soon gotten entangled in something immovable and ripped off well before it ever rusted out. So why bother? As you might have guessed already, instead of referring to it by some less colorful generic name, we fondly referred to this unique old “*self-propelled wagon*” of a farm truck as “**OLD SMOKEY**”.

“**OLD SMOKEY**” was not outfitted with the safety and convenience of the more modern hydraulic brake system in which a master cylinder fed hydraulic brake fluid more or less equally to all four wheels when the brake pedal was depressed. Instead, it was equipped with the more primitive style of mechanical brakes. “**OLD SMOKEY**” was fortunately equipped with a vacuum booster system which made it relatively easy to depress the brake pedal when the engine was running — frequently assisting it effortlessly all of the way to the wooden floor boards. There were no more adjustments that could be made in the rigid mechanical brake linkage to reduce the truck’s stopping distance.

When not carrying a load, the truck would eventually stop rolling when the brakes were applied. But with a modest or heavy load on board, it was anybody’s guess as to where, when, or if you could ever get that truck stopped before it ran up against something solid. The best rule to follow when in the driver’s seat behind “**OLD SMOKEY’S**” steering wheel was to

allow plenty of room between the truck’s front bumper (yes it did sport a front bumper for most of its final years) and anything else that might be in front of, or behind, it.

One summer day while guiding “**OLD SMOKEY**” down a gently sloping stretch of Triadelphia Road just west of our farm, I intended to make a sharp right turn into a farm lane that lead to one of our fields, a field of ripened wheat that Dad and the hired man were combining. Access to the field, unfortunately, was near the bottom of the long downgrade. I had reduced speed enough to safely make the turn. But just as I prepared to swing out to the left slightly in order to gain enough clearance to make the sharp right turn, another vehicle unexpectedly appeared, coming my way up the hill from the opposite direction.

Keeping far to the right then to avoid a head-on collision, I knew immediately that there was not going to be enough room to safely make that turn. Too late to completely avoid it, I noticed then that our neighbor’s metal rural mailbox was leaning out just a little too far into the road ahead. Jamming the “brake” pedal down hard, I swerved futilely, attempting to “thread the needle” between the oncoming vehicle and the mail box. The poor brakes only minimally slowed the truck, and that metal mailbox sitting on top of its crooked leaning fence post was instantly smashed and battered, acquiring an unnatural new profile.

When that old truck eventually rolled to a stop at the bottom of the hill, I hurried back to the scene of the mail box encounter, straightened the bent-up tin mailbox as best that I could using a heavy block of wood as a tool, then went hastily on my way, hoping that no one had observed what had just happened. As far as I know, our good neighbor never noticed, or at least he never once complained about the strange fact that his mailbox had one day mysteriously acquired several unnatural new dents.

Another strange feature about this old truck was the fact its six tires were ridiculously small for such a heavy-duty vehicle. A truck regularly loaded with 150 or more full 10-gallon milk cans could easily have been carrying a weight of 7 or 8 tons or more, much too heavy for those “skinny” little tires. Of

necessity, the truck's previous owner, had installed super heavy-duty rear springs at some point to support that heavy load of milk cans that he hauled into town every day. But the tire size on that old truck, when we took ownership, was just a wimpy 6.50-20, totally inconsistent with the heavy loads that the truck had routinely hauled. I believe that the previous owner must have chosen to swap-out his original, larger size 10-ply tires so that he could use them as spares perhaps, on his big new milk truck, a bright red heavy-duty Reo.

We eventually replaced those small undersized rear tires with a set of larger 8.25-20's that were much more satisfactory. The larger tires did not sink into the soft ground nearly as much as had the smaller wheels when the truck was loaded. It is hard to believe that the previous owner could have hauled all of those heavy loads of milk into Baltimore for so many years with such tiny, "skinny" little tires on that truck.

Eventually, to make "**OLD SMOKEY**" more useful at silo filling time, and following the innovative example of one of his good friends, Mr. Willis Cissel, Dad converted the truck's permanently attached, but immovable home-made flatbed stake body, into a dump bed. Dad enlisted the aid of a local mechanic, Edward R. "Junior" Frank, to help him install a used hydraulic dump truck hoist under the old 12-foot wooden bed. This was the first of several trucks that we eventually converted to dump trucks in this way.

Back then, several commercial companies, like Garwood for instance, began routinely promoting the sale of new dump hoists made specifically for farm trucks, a novel idea at the time. They were widely advertised in magazines such as *Farm Journal*. I even wrote off for literature once which resulted in a salesman calling. Dad wasn't too pleased with me when he learned that I had been the cause of this salesman dropping by and taking time out of Dad's busy schedule. Nor was the salesman happy either when he learned that he had been lured onto our farm by an inquisitive teenager.

Instead of buying an expensive new hoist for his "*self-propelled wagons*", Dad's more economically acceptable hydraulic dump choice, the hoist that we

installed on "**OLD SMOKEY**", was obtained from a Baltimore area junkyard. As I recall, Dad rarely paid more than twenty-five or thirty dollars for any of the used hoists that he purchased over the years, fifty dollars at the most. Before many other farmers began to convert their farm trucks to dumps as we were doing, used hydraulic dump hoists removed from old worn out commercial dump trucks were both plentiful and cheap to obtain.

Basically, all that was needed to complete the conversion was to install a power-take-off (PTO) gear and shaft assembly on the side of the truck's transmission case, extend the hoist's lifting rails to accommodate our truck's longer bed, and then bolt the hoist to the truck's frame.

There were usually two hand levers installed on the floor of the truck's cab to operate the hoist. One lever was used to engage the PTO-driven hydraulic pump. The other lever controlled the oil flow to the hoist cylinder so that the bed could be raised, lowered or held in any of an infinite number of raised positions. Usually these pre-owned hoists had been removed from trucks that had short dump beds of just 8 or 10 feet in length, pretty standard for dump trucks in those days. The stake bodies on our farm trucks were considerably longer, usually 12 to 14 feet in length. With the addition of four-foot high sides and a light-weight tail-gate hinged at the top, we were ready to haul silage from the field and quickly, and effortlessly, dump the load at the silo.

When installing one of those older dump hoists that had been removed from a short-wheelbase truck and putting it onto a longer-wheelbase chassis, it was necessary to extend the hoist's lifting rails in order to accommodate the longer truck bed. It was also important to recognize that when this was done, the mechanical advantage of the hoist had been seriously compromised, occasionally with disastrous results.

If too much of the load was placed too far forward on the truck's bed and an attempt was made to lift it, then one of three things was probably going to happen: 1) the dump bed would not tilt upwards at all; 2) the longer lifting rails would buckle and bend

under the extremely heavy misplaced load; or 3) the hydraulic cylinder would be damaged or destroyed, possibly twisting and bending itself out of alignment. It wasn't long before we discovered just how serious this problem could be.

When we were building our new dairy barn in the early 1950s, and were preparing to pour a concrete surface for the barnyard, we hauled numerous loads of broken pieces of waste flagstone from a quarry near Marriottsville. Those small pieces of otherwise useless flagstone (called spawls) and the "sandy" waste material quarried with it, made a good base for the concrete barnyard floor.

Dad had sold a used Eaton two-speed rear truck axle to a neighbor who had then installed it on his 1947 Ford stake body farm truck. This truck had also just been recently equipped with a dump bed by installing one of those old "junk yard" dump truck hoists, extending its lifting rails just as we had been doing. The neighbor was helping us to haul stone as a way of partially paying off his truck's "new" two-speed rear axle.

When I arrived home with a load of stone one afternoon (using another, more roadworthy, of our farm dump trucks), I noticed that the aforementioned truck was still parked in the barnyard and that the load of stone had not yet been dumped. When I asked the truck's owner if there was a problem and if anything was wrong, he responded in a very dismayed tone of voice, suggesting that I take a look under the bed of his truck.

Curious, I was astonished to discover that the long shiny nearly three-inch diameter steel piston part of his dump's hydraulic cylinder was fully extended, and neatly bent into the most uniform, curved design you could imagine, a shape very similar to that of the traditional shepherd's crook.

With too much weight placed too far forward of the dump's fulcrum, too much of a negative mechanical advantage had been created for the design of the hoist. We had no choice then but to hand-shovel the load of stone off of the truck. Needless to say, that heavy,

poorly positioned load of stone, ended the short new life of that particular old dump hoist.

We eventually created several more dump trucks on the farm. Most of them, fortunately, were more "road worthy" than "**OLD SMOKEY**". We learned a lot from experience though, and the later model conversions were much better "engineered" and considerably sturdier than the earlier versions.

Dad's unique "*self-propelled wagons*" served us well, both mechanically and economically, for many years. On occasion, they also provided us with some unique memories, exciting thrills and some really cheap entertainment as well.

Happenings in Annapolis

by **Delegate Gail Bates**

The **2011 Legislative Session** is more than one third complete, with still at least 90% of the work to be done. The **State budget** continues to occupy most of my time and energy. Despite reports that there have been "cuts" to the budget and "tough choices have been made", there has been a steady growth in the total State budget over the last six years. Federal Stimulus funds have enabled much of the recent growth, but are no longer available and the State revenue sources do not sustain the growth. As a result, we are working on suggested reductions to the budget to reduce growth and eliminate the structural deficit.

The budget is balanced by taking funds from dedicated purpose accounts such as the Chesapeake Bay Restitution Fund (flush tax), the Transportation Trust Fund and a variety of small funds that have built up a balance.

Some major issues working their way through the General Assembly this session include:

Same Sex Marriage, which was heard in the Senate last week, will probably be voted this week and then move to the House for consideration. It appears the bill will pass both houses and will be

signed by the Governor. Opponents are gearing up for a petition drive to allow the voters to make the final decision.

The **Governor's State Pension Reform** is included in the Budget Reconciliation Bill. He is making a small step in the right direction, but does not significantly address the unfunded pension liabilities. Recently Moody's reported that Pension Funding Liabilities will be included in State debt as they consider viability of State bonds. This will cause Maryland to greatly exceed our self imposed debt limit and potentially jeopardize our AAA Bond rating. This could increase our interest rates for our bonds. Long term effect will be higher property taxes.

Employee and Retiree Health Benefits are more generous than our neighboring States and are significantly underfunded. There are a number of proposals on the table, including the Governor's, which is also in the Budget Reconciliation Bill. Solutions include higher co-pays and shifting retirees to Medicare.

Collective Bargaining for home care providers is proposed to put in law an executive order regarding independent contractors who provide home personal and health care for people to keep them out of nursing homes. The bill provides for union dues and agency fee to be negotiated. Currently only 1500 of 4500 eligible people are part of the union. This is an expansion of union control in the State.

There are a number of options in creating the **Health Insurance Exchange** to implement Federal Health Care legislation. The Governor proposes a government-run plan providing insurance options, but several legislators and the insurance companies want a non-governmental non-profit to coordinate the program. Other States are fighting the health care plan in court as a violation of the 10th Amendment (protecting State sovereignty) and a Constitutional violation in which people are forced by law to purchase insurance. Maryland is working hard to be totally in compliance with the plan.

Ban on septic system "proliferation". This was

mentioned in the State of the State address and is moving forward in at least one bill. Large developments (5 lots or more) would be prohibited from using septic systems. Land owners could be limited to only one subdivision, with potential impact of forcing maximum development and accelerating growth. Each of these measures impacts the value of agricultural property and could impact financing for agri-businesses.

There are a number of **other issues being discussed** – permanently ending the death penalty, various gun laws, alcohol and gas tax increases, etc. Work is picking up and issues will be moving forward at a rapid rate. The *Farm Bureau Hot Line* is a good source of info on legislation moving through the assembly.

Please keep in touch on these and any other issues by contacting me either by e-mail at Gail.Bates@house.state.md.us or by telephone at (410) 841-3556.

**Central Maryland Women
in Agriculture Forum**
by **Kathy Zimmerman**
Agricultural Marketing Specialist
**Howard County Economic
Development Authority**

"Finding the Right Tools to Build Your Farm Business". Women have always played a major role in the agriculture industry. Today, however you will find more women as owner/operators of farming businesses. In part this is due to the change in dynamics of the family farm but it also is brought about by the change in agriculture itself. Are you a woman overseeing a farm operation or are you looking into agriculture as your life career? Learn about marketing, business management and financing at this year's Central Maryland Women in Agriculture Forum.

"Finding the Right Tools to Build Your Farm Business" is a requirement to grow an operation into the future. Marketing plans, finding

information and financing are just a few of the topics that will be covered at this year's forum. Ginger Myers, University of Maryland Extension, Deanna Baldwin, Maryland Department of Agriculture and Dru Peters, Sunnyside Farms are just a few of the speakers that will direct you in the right direction to building your farm operation.

So join us at the Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD on Thursday, March 17, 2011 for this year's Central Maryland Women in Agriculture Forum. Registration will begin at 8:30 am with coffee and pastries. The program will begin at 9:00 am and lunch will be provided. Cost is \$30 per person and registration is due by March 10, 2011.

For more information, please contact Kathy Zimmerman or Jill Joubert at Howard County Economic Development Authority, (410) 313-6500.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2011

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| <p>Feb 26 Maryland Dairy Convention. Frederick Fairgrounds, Frederick, MD.</p> <p>Mar 1 Private Pesticide Applicator Certification Training. 10:00 am to noon, Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: (410) 386-2760.</p> <p>Mar 8 Private Pesticide Applicator Exam. 10:00 am to noon, Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: (410) 386-2760.</p> <p>Mar 8 Master Gardener Spring Lecture Series: Work Smarter, Not Harder. 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: Maryanne Turner, (410) 751-1158.</p> <p>Mar 15 Master Gardener Spring Lecture Series: Introducing Sound To Your Garden. 7 to 9 pm, Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD Contact: Maryanne Turner (410) 751-1158.</p> | <p>Mar 17 Central Maryland Women in Agriculture Forum. 9:00 am until. Contact: Kathy Zimmerman or Jill Joubert at (410) 313-6500 by March 10.</p> <p>Mar 18,19 2011 Maryland/Delaware Beginning Sheep Shearing School. 9:30 to 3:30 pm, Ridgely Thompson Farm, Westminster, MD.</p> <p>Mar 22 Master Gardener Spring Lecture Series: Protecting Kids & Pets From Toxic Plants. 7 to 9 pm, CC Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: Maryanne Turner (410) 751-1158.</p> <p>Mar 25 Longaberger Basket Bingo to Benefit Howard County 4-H All Stars. Doors open 5:30 pm, Bingo starts 7:00 pm. Mt. Airy Fireman's Activity Bldg., Twin Arch Road, Mt. Airy, MD. Tickets: Marjie at (301) 829-1449 or Martin at (410) 443-8276.</p> <p>Mar 29 Master Gardener Spring Lecture Series: The Green Initiative. 7 to 9 pm, CC Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: Maryanne Turner (410) 751-1158.</p> <p>Apr 5 Master Gardener Spring Lecture Series: From Seeds To Food With Heirlooms. 7 to 9 pm, CC Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: Maryanne Turner (410) 751-1158.</p> <p>Apr 12 Master Gardener Spring Lecture Series: The Art Of Bonsai. 7 to 9 pm, CC Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: Maryanne Turner (410) 751-1158.</p> <p>Apr 12 Invasive Species Program. We are in the process of planning the program on invasive insect and disease species. It will be on April 12, 2011 at the Baltimore County Extension office,</p> |
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Cockeysville, MD. We will send out the details when the program is finalized. Contact: Suzanne Klick at sklick@umd.edu, University of Maryland Central MD Research & Education Center, 11975 Homewood RD, Ellicott City, MD 21042. (301) 596-9413.

Apr 19 **Master Gardener Spring Lecture Series: Gardening In Small Spaces.** 7 to 9 pm, CC Extension Office, Westminster, MD. Contact: Maryanne Turner (410) 751-1158.

Apr 21 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm. CMREC. See details of this event elsewhere in this newsletter.

May 26 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm. CMREC. See details of this event elsewhere in this newsletter.

June 23 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

CMREC. See details of this event elsewhere in this newsletter.

July 21 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm. CMREC. See details of this event elsewhere in this newsletter.

Sept 10 **Horse Pasture Management Seminar.** See details of this event elsewhere in this newsletter.

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