

NEWSLETTER

HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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Howard County Agri-Business

Breakfast

by **Maura Cahill**

Breakfast Program Coordinator

The next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast is scheduled for **8:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 8, 2014** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please plan to join us.

Our guest speakers will be *Messrs. William Pons and Paul Goeringer*, representing the University of Maryland Law School's **Agricultural Law Education Initiative**. The speakers conduct training and outreach for the Initiative and will be prepared to answer questions about the program. They will provide an overview of the Initiative, their programs, their website and other useful contact information.

Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. and the program is scheduled for 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. Please RSVP by **noon, Tuesday, May 6th** by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or Martha Clark at (410) 531-3455.

The cost of the breakfast is \$10.00 per person, payable at the door. The program normally concludes by about 9:00 a.m. we hope to see you on Thursday, **May 8th** at the next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

Message to Members

by **Howie Feaga, President**

Howard County Farm Bureau

The winter is finally over and was it ever a long one. To get us through, we had to buy hay this year, the first time in decades. But now the grass is greening up and by the time that you read this, you have probably even had to mow your lawn.

It was good to see everyone at our Annual Legislative Dinner on April 10. We were happy to welcome six of our elected legislators and invite them to speak as well as to field questions from the audience. As usual, it is always good to interact with our legislators to help make them more aware of our concerns and perhaps help them to better understand some of our unique interests and problems.

It was also our first time for awarding scholarships to our youth. We hope that the scholarships will give them an opportunity to demonstrate just how much they understand about agriculture and that they have a strong desire to become more involved.

We also awarded our sponsorships for the Young Rider and the Adult Rider categories. Congratulation's to all of our young people. There will be more later about these awards in a later edition of the newsletter.

At 8:00 am in the morning of the second Thursday in May, May 8th, we will have the final Agri-Business Breakfast of the season. It will also be the last actual breakfast in this series of educational meetings. After our meeting on May 8th, we will be starting a slightly different format, one that we will initially refer to as "Breakfast for Dinner". The first such meeting following the new schedule will convene on September 25, 2014 at 7:00 pm. Location will remain unchanged, i.e., the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Watch for additional details.

Although attendance has generally been very good overall for the traditional bi-monthly early morning agri-business breakfasts, in an effort to encourage even better attendance numbers, starting in the fall, we will be asking our speakers to meet with us in the evening for dinner rather than for a morning breakfast. We hope that even more folks will thus be available to attend in the future. We want everyone to know that we will soon be having "Breakfast Menu at Dinner-Time" meetings.

We struggle sometimes to consistently come up with good, timely topics and find speakers to address them. If you know of topics that would be both interesting and helpful when

addressed, and of course, can suggest a speaker to address them, then please let us know.

As always, in addition to the speaking part of the program, you can count on being part of an excellent, and helpful, learning experience at these programs. And you can also count on enjoying dinner and having a pleasant visit with friends. Instead of the traditional breakfast, arrange to take a break now for dinner. Beginning in September, watch for more details in both this Newsletter and the reminder card.

So, now as the fields dry out and the temperatures get back to more normal levels, I know that we will all be getting busy with planting and hay making. Be sure to try and work safely. Don't get in such a hurry that you make careless mistakes. Mistakes sometimes lead to accidents. So, slow down! Enjoy what you love to do, and do it safely.

So once again, let me remind you to "Keep your plow in the ground. We're all pulling for you!"

Patrick Family Honored at Maryland Dairy Convention

February 22, 2014. At the Holiday Inn and Convention Center by the Francis Scott Key Mall near Frederick, the Maryland Dairy Industry and the Maryland Dairy Shrine proudly honored four outstanding Maryland dairy farms. The farms were designated as ***Dairies of Distinction***. We are extremely proud that one of those family farms was from Howard County, the David Patrick Family of Maple Dell Farm, Inc.

The four farms honored this year included 1)

Leptor Farms of Kennedyville, operated by Anna Leptor and brothers Ernie, Willie and Fred; plus Kenny Leptor and Tim Bishton. **2)** Maple Dell Farm, Inc. of Woodbine, operated by David, Mike, Denny and Derek Patrick; **3)** MD-Delight of Westminster, operated by Gary and Crystal Dell and Family; and **4)** St. Brigid's Farm of Kennedyville, operated by Judy Gifford and Robert Fry.

Maple Dell Farm consists of 550 owned and 380 rented acres. The Patrick Family's Maple Dell Farm boasts an outstanding purebred herd of 43 Ayrshires and 129 Holsteins. The Ayrshires have a rolling herd average of 18,796 pounds of milk and the Holstein herd average production is a very respectable 23,776 pounds of milk. The Patricks are renowned for their high quality breeding stock and for their marketing of Ayrshire and Holstein embryos. They also have several quality bulls at stud.

This is by no means the first time that the Patricks have been honored for their remarkable achievements. Because of their outstanding contributions to Maryland Agriculture, the Patrick Family of Maple Dell Farm was inducted into the Maryland Governor's Hall of Fame in February, 2008, the first Howard County family to ever receive this outstanding honor.

Among other awards, David Patrick has previously received the Master Farmer Award and the All-American Dairy Show's Obie Snider Award. The family has received the Maryland Spring Holstein Show banner numerous times and has exhibited grand and reserve grand champion Ayrshire cows at the World Dairy Expo. In 2010, Maple Dell received the Master Breeder Award at the National Ayrshire Convention.

All of those farms honored this year were recognized for, in addition to helping to beautify Maryland's rural countryside, being noted for the production and sale of quality consumer products. To mark their outstanding achievements, each farm was also presented with a handsome *Dairy of Distinction* sign and an attractive framed farm photo.

New MFB Field Representative

Source: **MFB *Spotlight* of
April, 2014; Issue 0003**

Jennifer Richards of Brandywine has been hired as the new MFB Field Representative for Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Calvert Charles and St. Mary's counties. She began her role on March 24, 2014. Jennifer's predecessor in this position, Laura Ruhlman, will stay on, but has been promoted to Director of the Division.

Ms. Richards earned a two-year degree from the College of Southern Maryland and is continuing to pursue her bachelor's degree in communications/public relations. She has experience working for Parks and Recreation in program development and also as a Deputy Sheriff.

She has been active in the Prince George's County Young Farmers participating in state events, is a 4-H volunteer and has crated a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) venture. She is a native of Prince George's County and is looking forward to her new responsibilities with MFB as the Central/Southern Maryland Field Representative.

**Howard County Farm Bureau
Contests - Are YOU Interested this
Year In Participating?**

**Miss Howard County Farm Bureau
Little Miss Howard County Farm Bureau
Howard County Future Farmer**

Contests are sponsored by the Howard County Farm Bureau Women and will be held on Sunday, August 3, 2014 during the Howard County Fair.

- Contests will be held on Sunday, August 3rd at the Howard County Fair.
 - Contestants will ride in the Opening Day Parade.
 - Cash awards to all contestants
 - Gifts and scholarships awarded to winners.
 - Family must be a member of, or join, the Howard County Farm Bureau.
 - Fun and rewarding for all participants.
 - Must carry agricultural-related 4-H project.
 - Must be age-eligible to participate:
- Little Miss & Future Farmer Contests: 8 to 11 years of age as of August 1st.
 - Miss Contest: 16 to 19 years of age as of State Fair Contest.
- Miss Howard County Farm Bureau stage portion of contest is held 3:00 pm in the Show Pavilion.
 - Future Howard County Farmer and Little Miss Howard County Farm Bureau presented during intermission of Miss Contest in Show Pavilion.

Age-eligible contestants who belong to the Howard County 4-H Program will receive a detailed letter regarding these contests in early June.

Are YOU interested? Do you know someone who might be interested?

- Please call or email either: Merhlyn Barnes at (410) 489-4465, Merhlynbarnes@aol.com
OR
- Dawn Watkins, (301) 253-2921 for **Miss Contest.**
- Mary Jeanne Coles at (410) 775-7431 or cmjcoles4@aol.com for **Future Farmer or Little Miss Contest.**

Junior Showmanship Show

Sponsored by:

**Howard County Farm Bureau
Chairperson - Rhonda Winkler**

Saturday, August 2nd, 1:00 PM

Howard County Fair Show Pavilion

- Age Requirements: 6, 7, 8 & 9 year-old youth
- Purpose: To promote, educate and support our future leaders of agriculture by teaching them how to show livestock
- Animals to be worked with at workshop and the animals that the youth will show at the Howard County Fair:
- Dairy
- Swine
- Meat Goats
- Sheep
- Workshops: In order to show at the Fair, the youth must attend at least one (1) of the two (2) workshops:
 - Sunday, June 29, 2014 at 3 pm
 - Sunday, July 13, 2014 at 3 pm
- Place:
 - Steel Fire Farm, 2980 Woodbine Road, Woodbine, MD.

For more information about the program, please contact: Rhonda Winkler at

steelfirefarm@yahoo.com or 410-489-9369.
Face Book Group: Junior Showmanship with
Howard County Farm Bureau.

An Invitation to Howard County
Farm Bureau Members
by **Barbara Wasserman**

Please join us at one of the nine Howard County elementary schools scheduled to participate in Days of Taste, an educational program that the Howard County Farm Bureau has generously agreed to support in 2014.

Fourth graders will experience the good taste of fresh fruits and vegetables under the guidance of a local chef as well as learn where their food comes from during a visit to a local farm. Efforts to encourage elementary school students' selection of fresh foods over processed foods is one way to improve their eating habits and reduce the problem of overweight/obesity which affects 1 in 4 Howard County children under the age of 18 years.

A special experience which Days of Taste is able to fund with the Farm Bureau's support is the students' opportunity to pick and eat produce from the field during the farm visit. In addition to the base rate of \$175 for the tour, farmers receive \$1/student to pick field produce. Particular favorites during the 2013 Days of Taste farm visits included strawberries, asparagus and garlic. A survey conducted before and after participation in Days of Taste suggested that students were more willing to try new fruits and vegetables after taking part in the program.

My colleague, Riva Kahn, the national program director for Days of Taste, and I

invite Farm Bureau members to join us as an observer or as a volunteer during one of the Days of Taste sessions at any of the participating elementary schools listed below. It would be a real honor to have you see firsthand how Farm Bureau funding makes a real difference in the way fourth graders learn about food and where it comes from. Contact Riva (reichner01@earthlink.net; 410-252-0082) or Barbara Wasserman (bpwasserman@jhu.edu; 301-854-0033) to arrange a visit. Sessions 1 and 3 take place in the classroom; session 2 takes place at the farm listed in parenthesis.

HOWARD COUNTY SCHEDULE
SPRING 2014

Bryant Woods –

Thursday, May 29, Tuesday, June 3 (Bupperts),
Thursday, June 5

Cradlerock –

Tuesday, April 29, Tuesday, May 6 (Gorman),
Tuesday, May 13

Ducketts Lane-

Monday, April 28, Monday, May 5 (Gorman),
Monday, May 12

Guilford -

Tuesday, May 6, Tuesday, May 13 (Gorman),
Tuesday, May 20

Swansfield –

Wednesday, April 30, Friday, May 9 (Gorman),
Wednesday, May 14

Talbott Springs -

Monday, May 5, Wednesday, May 7 (Myrtle
Woods), Monday, May 19

Thunder Hill –

Monday, May 5, Monday, May 12 (Myrtle
Woods), Monday, May 19

Triadelphia Ridge –

Tuesday, May 27, Monday, June 2 (Bupperts),
Tuesday, June 3

West Friendship -

Wednesday, May 14, Wednesday, May 21
(Bupperts), Wednesday, June 4

Impact of Cold Weather on Insects

by **Stanton Gill, Extension Specialist,
University of Maryland Extension**

At least the extended cold is good for something! We have received many emails and calls asking if the extended and deep winter cold has impacted insect populations. The impact on most insect species will probably be minimal.

Many insects overwinter in the ground where the insulation of the ground buffers extreme cold weather conditions. Freeze tolerance in insects refers to the ability of some insect species to survive ice formation within their tissues.

All insects are ectothermic, which can make them vulnerable to freezing. Insects that have evolved freeze-tolerance strategies manage to avoid tissue damage by controlling where, when, and to what extent ice forms. Many insect species alter their biochemistry and metabolism and synthesize what are called cryoprotectants as polyols and sugars, which reduce the lethal freezing temperature of the body. Several polyols are produced by insects including sorbitol, mannitol and ethylene glycol. The cryoprotectant that is produced in largest quantities (more than 20 % of body weight) by insects is glycerol. Glycerol is distributed uniformly throughout the head, the thorax, and the abdomen of insects and it protects them from freezing in winter.

No doubt, the cold has evidently had some impact on some of the invasive species, but unfortunately not on all. Tom Kuhar, entomologist at Virginia Tech, had his technicians place 100 brown marmorated stink bugs (BMSB) in 5 gallon buckets with

insulation tubes to overwinter the BMSB for lab trials this winter. One hundred stink bugs were placed in each bucket. After going through the cold weather of January (-4 F) for two days they counted the number of live and dead BMSB and they found mortality of up to 95%. Other researchers are predicting winter mortality of 50%.

Generally, BMSB overwinter in house attics and unheated structures. It may be a slightly different story in people's houses where they are heating the structure and the temperatures did not reach this low threshold temperature. We did receive several reports of BMSB moving about in people's homes in January and February when the single digit temperature range was occurring outdoors. As the attics and outer walls got colder, it appears the BMSB moved into the warmer inner-core of the houses.

While in my unheated metal barn in Westminster on March 1 and 2, I found large numbers of overwintering BMSB dead on the floors. I did not have a count of the original overwintering adults, but there were well over 300 – 400 dead BMSB on the floor. The interesting thing is that there were also large numbers of the multicolored Asian lady bird beetles overwintering in the barn and thousands were dead on the wood loft floor. Temperatures in the unheated metal barn reached close to ambient air temperatures which were -4 °F in January.

We pulled samples of Indian wax scale from plants in a Columbia landscape last week. We examined 12 samples of Indian wax scale: 4 from the top of the holly, 4 from the middle part of the holly, and 4 from low in the holly crown. The Indian wax scale taken from the tip growth and middle of the shrubs were dead.

The Indian wax scale in the lower, protected part of the shrubs were still viable. The winter cold has had some impact on the Indian wax scale that are on more exposed parts of the plants.

It is always tricky to precisely predict the impact of weather on insects, but at least for these three insects, BMSB, multicolored Asian ladybugs, and Indian wax scale, it does appear there was some negative impact from the extended cold period this winter, at least in unheated structures for BMSB and multicolored Asian lady bird beetles.

We are interested in your observations of insects that were negatively impacted by the cold. Send comments to Stanton Gill at sgill@umd.edu.

Bonus Hotline Update

from: *MFB Hotline*
received April 04, 2014

This week in Annapolis, many bills have passed both chambers and now head to the Governor's desk to be signed. Maryland Farm Bureau is pleased to announce the passage of Senate Bill 771.

This bill creates a permit system implemented by the Maryland State Highway Administration to implement that would allow six axle trucks hauling milk to weigh up to 95,000 pounds on state roads. This bill would also allow five axle trucks hauling milk to weigh up to 88,000 pounds on state roads for two years.

This two year period is meant for milk haulers to retrofit their trucks to six axles. The permit system would be in effect from March 1 until

June 30th , and only for the hauling of raw liquid milk, that is loaded from bulk milk storage tanks at one or more farm locations.

In conclusion, data must be collected to complete an annual report that will be reviewed by the State Highway Administration and the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association.

MFB would like to thank Manis, Canning & Associates for their hard work to get this bill passed. MFB would also like to thank Senator Robey for introducing the bill and for Delegate Malone's leadership on the House side.

Nutrient Management: **4R Nutrient Stewardship** by **Jim Myers, USDA-NRCS** **District Conservationist** **Howard SCD**

Recent years have brought an increased emphasis on managing nutrients on farmland, often through the use of regulations. Sometimes, these regulations seem ridiculous and are mainly perpetrated by those far removed from agriculture. The insistence for regulation comes at the national and state level, often driven by environmental interests.

The world is dependent on agriculture to meet an expected 50 percent increase by 2050 in the demand for food, feed, and fiber. Improvements in the science of agriculture are vital to the success of meeting this challenge.

As a result of the need for increased nutrient demand and the regulatory pressure, the fertilizer industry, agriculture universities, progressive farmers, and others have become proactive in nutrient management . They are

supporting an easy to understand slogan for Nutrient Management – the 4 Rs. Through the 4Rs, the hope is to meet the goals of increasing crop production, increasing farm profits, enhancing environmental protection, and promoting sustainability.

The 4Rs are using - the RIGHT fertilizer source, at the RIGHT rate, at the RIGHT time, and at the RIGHT place. Examples – Right source includes the use of right formulation of fertilize. Right rates are balanced with crop needs and soil test results. The right time includes the use of nitrogen inhibitors and stabilizers for the slow release of nitrogen fertilizers. The right place includes the banding of fertilizers at planting and the use of precision technology.

The 4Rs are a way of “optimizing” the effectiveness of crop nutrients. Nutrient supply in the soil is more closely matched to crop requirements. This is especially important with higher fertilizer costs. Of course, better profits should be an outcome. In addition, when watching over nutrients, farmers tend to pay more attention to crop growth in general, finding other issues more quickly. This attention often leads to higher yields as better management happens overall.

The environment benefits from the use of the 4Rs. Basically, a greater percentage of applied nutrients are used by the crop, reducing field losses from leaching and runoff.

Other best management practices enhance the use of the 4rs of nutrient management. No till planting disturbs less soil, reducing nutrient runoff potential. Cover crops curtail erosion and take up nutrients that otherwise may escape the field over winter. Crop rotation with nitrogen-producing crops and nitrogen-

using crops help balance this nutrient in the soil. Waste storage structures allow manure nutrients to be applied at more optimum times for plant uptake. Terraces and diversions also reduce erosion and the effects of excessive runoff.

Much about the 4Rs is not new. They are just a different outline to crop nutrient management.

Farm Bill - 2014

by **Jim Myers, USDA-NRCS**
District Conservationist
Howard SCD

After 2 years of partisan wrangling, a new Farm Bill became reality in February of this year. Though some aspects of this legislation were hotly debated, there was much more agreement on the conservation sections. The conservation title of the Farm Bill is a small percentage of the overall law, however, the included programs have a huge impact on opportunities for farmers and landowners to install conservation on their land.

One outcome of the newly constructed Farm Bill, is that the number of conservation programs has been reduced. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and some other regional programs have been consolidated with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, (EQIP). EQIP, of course, is the main program for conservation financial assistance.

EQIP offers assistance with the usual suite of best management practices, including those involving erosion control and prevention such as grass waterways, diversions, and terraces. There are also the more glamorous productions such as waste storage systems, composting, and agriculture chemical mixing facilities. There

are also many agronomic practices through this program in areas like pasture management, pest management, and nutrient management. Lastly, wildlife projects are offered including, grass or forest riparian buffers, field borders, and many others.

EQIP also continues an emphasis on small farms and the historically underserved. The historically underserved include minority farmers, beginning farmers, limited resource farmers, and (under this Farm Bill) veterans. According to USDA, the definition of a beginning farmer is one who has been farming for less than 10 years. A limited resource farmer is one whose household income is less than 50 percent of the median household income in the county. Farmers in these groups can receive a higher payment when installing conservation practices through the Farm Bill programs.

There is a continuous sign up for the EQIP program. Contact the Howard Soil Conservation District for more details if you are interested in solving a resource issue on your farm. (410-489-7987 or e-mail james.myers@md.usda.gov) Outside of Howard County, contact that county's soil conservation district office. – Montgomery is 301-590-2855 and Carroll can be reached at 410-848-6696, ext 3.

Free Ride

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

Susan caught the lawyer by his elbow in the restaurant. "I thought that was you. Can I ask you a question?"

"Sure," he replied, "what's on your mind?"

"I was talking to a friend who told me that we should put Mom's houses and money in a trust so that a nursing home won't take everything."

"Here's the scoop," the lawyer told her. "If your mother needs a nursing home to care for her, she has a large bill every month. It might be as high as ten thousand dollars a month if she lives in an expensive facility, or as low as six or seven thousand. It's a big bill, and it has to be paid. "If she stays there long enough, she'll spend a lot of her money."

"That's what worries us," Susan said. "My father didn't work all his life to have all his money go to a nursing home!"

"It doesn't have to," the lawyer replied. "Nobody's making you put your mother in a nursing home. But if you decide that's best for her and for the family, that choice has a cost.

"But let's think about it. If your mother has to go into a nursing home, because that's the only place she can safely receive care ..."

"But that's it!" Susan exclaimed. "If we can't take care of her ourselves, and we have to put her in a nursing home so she'll be safe, it's not fair that all her money should go to the nursing home!"

"I understand," the lawyer replied. "It doesn't feel fair, to not have a choice, and to have to spend that much money. "The only other option is Medicaid. That's what we're really talking about – qualifying Mom for Medicaid by giving away her money.

"There are two ways to do that. One is to give her money to the kids right now. The problem

with that approach is that she will be disqualified from Medicaid for five years after the gift, or maybe for much longer. The kids could give the money back and eliminate the disqualification, but that doesn't work if they've spent the money.

“The second way is to put the money in a trust that Mom would set up. The problem with that approach is, first, that it would create the same disqualification as the gift to the kids. The second problem is that if Mom needed the money, for example due to the disqualification from Medicaid, it could be difficult to get it back to her. You could find yourself in a situation where you couldn't get Medicaid or Mom's money.

“And that's the problem with the other approach. If one of the kids spends Mom's money, the others could end up supporting her. And that's not fair.

“Medicaid is set up for people who have no money. And it's set up so that people can't give away all their money to get the taxpayers to support their nursing home stay. Nobody wants to pay higher taxes so that somebody else can make their kids rich.

“When I give seminars on this, I usually tell people that my parents want to give their house to the kids, and qualify for Medicaid. Then I hold out my hat and ask who wants to contribute to the cost of my parents' care so that we kids can keep the house. “It's funny, but nobody has ever give me money!”

“Well then, what do we do to protect her money?” asked Susan.

“Let's meet at my office next week and go over her situation,” suggested the lawyer.

“Sometimes people panic when there's no real emergency.

“Can you get together what you know about your mother's finances – bank account balances, values of the houses, any investments and retirement plans – and bring a list to the office. Then we can make a strategy to protect your inheritance.”

Susan bristled, then looked defensive. “This isn't just about my inheritance! It's about protecting what our parents worked for. It's about ...”

“I understand,” commiserated the lawyer, “and didn't mean to be offensive. But we need to be sure we're doing the best thing for your mother in all of this. Let's meet next week and go over everything so we can create a plan that's best for her.” (To be continued.)

AGNR Open House **2014**

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, October 11, for the 2014 College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) Open House. The Central Maryland Research and Education Center (CMREC), Clarksville Facility, located at 4240 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD, will again provide a beautiful backdrop for the event.

We had nearly 4,000 visitors at the 2013 Open House and hope you will take advantage of this great opportunity to show off the important work you are doing and how it is improving the lives of others.

Check out the AGNR Open House event page at: <http://agnr.umd.edu/openhouse>

If you would like more information or are interested in providing an exhibit, please contact Carol Hill at carolann@umd.edu or 301-596-9330.

Dad Purchases a New John Deere Corn Binder

by Allan Bandel

These days of the early 21st century, we rarely ever see anymore what was once a common sight across rural Howard County, those neat precisely arranged rows of corn shocks that used to stretch across the county's gently rolling hills. Reminding us of those bygone, pastoral scenes, the Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club sometimes cuts and shocks a few acres of corn in the fall by that now all-but-forgotten traditional way of harvesting corn. Club members at the Living Farm Heritage Museum enjoy this educational activity because, among other things, it enables them also to demonstrate their vintage McCormick-Deering corn binder.

This once popular corn harvesting method often reminds me of the new John Deere corn binder that Dad purchased in the mid-1940s. His purpose in buying this exciting new machine was simply that it promised to make the chore of corn harvesting much less labor intensive than before. This was a valid benefit regardless of whether the crop was harvested green for silage or mature for shocking and drying in the field.

At the time when Dad purchased his new harvesting machine, corn binders were not a new idea. They had been around for many years. It was known that they eliminated much of the hard labor associated with corn harvest. Horse-drawn corn binders had been available

from various manufacturers since before the late 1800s. But, there weren't many, if any, of these labor-saving machines being used on the farms in our part of central Howard County, at least not until after Dad bought his new corn binder.

The modern corn binder functioned much like the famous McCormick reaper. The difference was, the more rugged corn binder cut and bundled heavy coarse-textured corn stalks. Whereas, the reaper cut and bundled the lighter, finer-textured small grain straw of wheat, barley, oats, or rye.

Corn binders were typically of a one-row design. Since the early models were ground-driven, they were pulled either by a team of horses or by a small tractor. Some of the later, more advanced, models were powered by means of the tractor's gear-driven power-take-off shaft (pto).

The corn binder cut off stalks near the ground using a short reciprocating sicklebar blade, typically fitted with one or two sharp triangular shaped mower sections. Specialized "gathering" chains then moved the cut stalks, still upright, through the machine until they came to a complex, cleverly designed mechanical knotter. Using ordinary binder twine, a dozen or so stalks were automatically tied into small, conveniently sized, bundles which were then either deposited on the ground behind the binder, or guided by a series of stiff curved iron rods so that they fell onto a sturdy wooden power carrier.

The power carrier, attached to the rear of the binder, was oriented perpendicular to the corn row. Once tied, the bundles fell onto the carrier which had a capacity of several bundles. On the carrier's wood floor was an endless drag chain

used for quickly unloading the bundles. When loaded, the carrier chain was engaged by depressing a foot pedal near the binder's hard metal pan seat. The bundles were unloaded from the carrier onto the ground, but off to the side and some distance away from the standing corn. The bundles were unloaded far enough from the most recently cut row so that they were out of the way of the tractor (or horses) when the binder came by again to harvest the next row.

According to old sales literature from that era, some corn binders were available with an optional elevating power carrier that lifted the bundles onto a wagon towed beside the binder. Our corn binder was not equipped with this optional elevating feature. But, it did have the standard horizontal carrier.

For some of those older machines that were not equipped with any carrier at all, the bundles were dropped on the ground directly behind the machine. These bundles had to be moved out of the way by hand so that they were not run over by the tractor or trampled by the horses as the next rows were cut.

As a youngster, it was often my job to ride on the binder's seat, holding on tightly with both hands, firmly gripping the curved edges of the seat. My job was tripping the foot pedal to engage the carrier's drag chain. If timed right, the bundles were deposited in orderly rows across the field. This made it easier for loading wagons to haul the corn in to the silo, or for gathering the dry bundles into groups to build the shocks. The binder's hard metal pan seat was a carry-over feature from a time when the machine had to be drawn by horses.

The corn binder eliminated the labor-intensive need for a large crew at harvest time to cut

and gather the stalks by hand. Now the primary job for the harvest crew was gathering the bundles and setting them upright in shocks so that the ears could finish drying prior to husking. Or, in the case of silo filling, the crew loaded the heavy green bundles onto a truck or wagon for hauling to the silo for chopping into fine pieces and blowing it into the upright silo.

Dad purchased his new corn binder in the mid-1940s and since we had already purchased a new tractor, our binder was equipped with the more modern, tractor hitch. To our benefit, and not realizing just how big a job it was going to be, Dad negotiated a more favorable purchase price from the Ramsburg Supply Co. in Ellicott City when he agreed to assemble the binder himself.

Subsequently, in the early spring of 1944 or 1945, several heavy crates containing an assortment of miscellaneous parts, was delivered to our farm. Dad, my brother Donny and I, and occasionally a hired man, spent many days (and evenings) carefully studying the detailed assembly instructions. For hours, we searched through the jumbled piles of brightly painted wood and metal parts. This was an exciting time for us kids, trying to correctly identify each part by its number and determine where each part belonged in that small, yet somewhat complex machine.

It was a slow, but educational, job sorting through that big pile of assorted nuts and bolts, gears, sprockets, chains, shafts, rods, wheels, and oddly shaped pieces of wood. The final easy step (theoretically) was that of methodically assembling our machine, one brightly painted piece at a time. Once assembled, we anxiously awaited the day when our corn binder could actually begin cutting and tying bundles of corn stalks.

Several weeks later, the great day finally arrived and we hooked that bright green, yellow and red corn binder behind our tractor. The wooden binder parts were protected by either a coat of clear varnish or were painted a dark red. Combined with the traditional John Deere green and yellow, the newly assembled binder made a rather awesome sight.

Dad put the tractor in gear, engaged the clutch, and started moving forward, pulling the new binder across the farmyard. But, to our disappointment, the binder's large yellow, aggressively steel-cleated drive wheel was stuck tight and would not turn, nor did the new machine's mechanical "innards" start functioning. Everything was firmly locked up tight. The binder's big yellow, and immobile, drive wheel would only slide across the ground. Its sharp, aggressive cleats plowed a deep furrow in the hard unforgiving fieldstone surface of our farm lane.

Because it was a newly assembled machine, many of the bearings, gears, shafts and other parts that normally should have turned freely, were so tightly fitted, that none moved. We knew then that there was still much more work to be done. More greasing and oiling, loosening and adjusting were in order before the machine's complex arrangement of gears and chains could finally "break loose" and function properly. It was obvious that there was no shortage of paint on many of the parts that were meant to operate at very close tolerances. Much of that excess paint had to be carefully removed. Eventually, the sticking parts were all loosened and our new corn binder began functioning as it was designed.

Always looking for a better way to get a job done, Dad decided to improve the binder's outside wheel which had no function other

than to support the other side of the binder. It was this non-driving, non-cleated, steel wheel on which he installed an old 10-ply truck tire. The truck tire prevented the narrow wheel from sinking into the soft earth. Fortunately, there was very little weight on that wheel and Dad discovered that he did not even have to inflate the tire. The tire was so stiff, and the machine was so light on that side, that there was no need even to install an inner tube.

For the next few years, Dad did quite well financially by hiring the binder out doing custom corn cutting for many of our neighbors. Because of the one sharp steel-cleated ground-drive wheel, the binder often had to be hauled by truck to those farms that were located any distance from our place.

Although we could tow the binder to nearby fields, without a rubber tire on the drive wheel, it could not safely be towed any distance on the public roads without risking it being "jarred apart", or perhaps damaging the few roads that were hard surfaced in our area.

To load the binder onto the truck, Dad often did something that would be unlikely today. Selecting a high bank along Triadelphia Road, one that was high enough to serve as a "loading dock", he backed the truck up against the bank, placing it at right angles to the county road. This often completely, but temporarily, closed the road to any other traffic.

But, in the 1940s, briefly blocking the road was not the problem that it would be today. There was only light traffic on the county roads in those days. And if a vehicle did approach, it was usually moving fairly slowly. There was very little danger that the approaching vehicle could not stop safely in time to avoid a collision. The driver was often a neighbor who

was only too happy for any excuse to stop briefly and chat, give some advice, or perhaps even help with the loading process. In many ways, those slower, more laid back days, were part of the legendary “good old days”. A larger part of the population was directly involved in agriculture. But, times have significantly changed since then. Road rage as we know it today was practically unheard of in those days.

For several seasons, we used our corn binder to harvest fields on farms all around the neighborhood. One such farm was that of Mr. Robert Mercer out on MD 144 (then U.S. 40) at the east end of Triadelphia Road. For several days, or until all of his corn was harvested, Donny and I took turns riding that corn binder over the Mercer fields. We didn't know it back then, but many of those fields later became part of interstate highway I-70 which was built through a portion of the Mercer dairy farm.

After just a few short years, Dad decided to sell his now well broken-in, but still far-from-worn-out corn binder, to a neighbor eager to purchase it. Sadly, nevertheless, its useful days were numbered. With the advent of the modern field chopper (forage harvester), and then the improved mechanical corn picker, the need for machines like the husker/shredder and the silo filler chopper/blower, the corn binder soon became obsolete. It worked itself right out of a job and soon disappeared from the scene.

But Dad remarked years later that during its heyday, his corn binder had been an exceptionally good investment. It had been a real labor saver and because of the custom work that he was called upon to do with it, the

binder had been a good profit generator and soon paid for itself.

It is difficult to imagine now, just how in such a short period of time, so many innovative labor-saving devices, advancements and improvements in technology could be so successfully introduced to accomplish so many different tasks related to agriculture and everyday living. Those couple of decades following World War II comprised a very interesting, fruitful and exciting era in our local agricultural history.

Reflecting now on those memorable years, we can now see how time seemed to move very rapidly as those various forms of advanced “cutting edge” technologies came on the scene, then rapidly faded into obscurity on the dusty pages of history books as new practices and new machines were introduced and replaced them.

Will we ever again witness so many rapid changes, so much accelerated progress in agriculture's developing technology, and over such a short period of time? It hardly seems possible. But then again, how many would have predicted back in the early 20th century the important roles that computers were going to play in all phases of our lives today. TV and cell phones are other great examples.

How many foresaw the remarkable successes that no-till farming and other modern practices would eventually achieve? Space-age precision agriculture is a practice that most of us could not even dare dream of 50 years ago. So, who among us now would be willing to predict what great and wonderful scientific advances the 21st century will surprise us with? Reality may very well be way beyond our current wildest dreams.

Calendar of Events

2014

Apr 3 - May 15

Beginning a Successful Small Farm, Part 1 Short Course (7 classes). 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. Call 301-600-3577 or email tepoole@umd.edu.

May 3 **2014 Howard County Cup Races.** Pleasant Prospect Farm, 4389 Jennings Chapel Road, Brookville, MD. Picnic & Tailgating. Gates open 12 noon; Opening Ceremonies 2:00 pm; Post Time 2:30 pm. Concludes with Kentucky Derby Party.

May 4 **23rd Annual Maryland Two-Cylinder Club Antique Tractor Show.** Gladhill Tractor, 5509 Mt. Zion Road, Frederick, MD. Contact: Howard Salan at 443-677-8928.

May 3-4 **41st Annual Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival.** Free admission and parking. Howard County Fairgrounds, 2210 Fairground Road, West Friendship, MD.

May 4 **Junior Sheep & Wool Skillathon.** 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.

May 8 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 to 9:00 am. Dining Hall, Howard county Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.

May 13 **Farm Bureau Women's Planning Meeting.** Time: 7:00 pm at the Howard Soil Conservation District Office, 708 Lisbon Center Drive, Woodbine, MD.

May 21 **Strawberry Twilight Meeting.** Wye Research & Education Center. 6-8 pm. 211 Farm Lane, Queenstown, MD. Info: call Michael Newell at 410-827-7388.

Jun 21 **Howard County Farm Bureau Picnic.** 11:00 am, TLV Tree Farm, 15155 Triadelphia Mill Road, Glenelg, MD 21737. To RSVP, complete and mail the form included at the end of this Newsletter.

Jun 29 **MGGA Field Day.** Afternoon through early evening. Tidal Creek Growers, Davidsonville, MD.

Aug 2-9 **69th Annual Howard County Fair.** Howard County Fairgrounds, 2210 Fairground Road, West Friendship, MD.

Aug 7 **Field Crops Research Twilight, Bar-B-Q & Ice Cream Social.** CMREC Upper Marlboro Farm. BBQ at 4:30, Ice cream at 5:15 & Crops Twilight Tour at 6:00 pm. Free, but reserved meal ticket required. Call: AA County Ext. Office at 410-222-3906.

Aug 22-

Sep 01 **Maryland State Fair.** State Fairgrounds, Timonium, MD.

Sept 4-

Oct 16 **Beginning a Successful Small Farm Part II Short Course (7 classes).** 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. Call 301-600-3577.

Sep 5-7 **52nd Annual Mason-Dixon Historical Society Steam and Gas Round-Up.** Carroll County Farm Museum, 500 S.

Center St, Westminster, MD. Feature: Orphan Tractors. Contact: Robert Griesmyer at (443) 398-4242.

Sep 11 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast/Dinner.** 7:00 to 8:00+ pm. (Replaces the former bi-monthly Agri-Business Breakfast). Dining Hall, Howard county Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.

Sep 11-14 **Maryland Steam Historical Society 59th Annual Steam and Gas Engine Show.** Fire Company Grounds, Arcadia, MD. Feature: Case Tractors, Bulldog Gas Engines. Contact: Ken Warehime at (410) 374-1252.

Sep 20-

Oct 5 **Howard County Farm-City Celebration.** For information on sponsorship and a schedule of events, please contact Kathy Zimmerman at (410) 313-6500. Also, visit the Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club website at www.farmheritage.org.

Sep 27-28

19th Annual Howard County Farm Heritage Days. Living Farm Heritage Museum Grounds, West Friendship MD. Contact: Virginia Frank at (410) 489-2345.

Oct 11 **AGNR Open House.** 10 am to 3 pm, University of MD Central Maryland Research and Education Center, Clarksville Facility. 4240 Folly

Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD. For information: visit www.agnropenhouse.umd.edu

Oct 21-

Nov 12 **Nutrient Management Farmer Training Certification (7 classes) (may add 1 class).** 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. Call 301-600-3577, or email tepoole@umd.edu.

Nov 5 **Private Applicator Training.** 10:00 am to noon. Exam November 13 (10:00 am). Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. Call 301-600-3577.

Nov 5 **Private Applicator Recertification.** 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. Call 301-600-3577.

Nov 13 **Nutrient Applicators Voucher Training/Recertification.** 10:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Frederick County Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. Call 301-600-3577.

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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.