

Dear Partner,

As precautionary health measures are put in effect nationwide to reduce the spread of coronavirus, USDA is taking steps to ensure the safety of its employees and customers. USDA Service Centers in Maryland are currently open with most staff teleworking. NRCS field office employees continue to provide a full suite of financial and technical resources to help our customers conserve soil, protect water and provide wildlife habitat.

We're in uncertain times but this spring, producers need to make the same production decisions they always do. While avoiding face-to-face interaction with our customers, NRCS will continue to provide one-on-one customer-specific advice to producers via phone, email and through the Conservation Client Gateway Portal to help them meet their unique conservation and business goals. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Customers should contact their local service center to make arrangements to complete program application and contract paperwork by alternative means, such as over the phone, electronically, or by mail.

We continue to look to the flexibilities we have to keep our offices open for business and deliver programs on behalf of Maryland's producers. I invite your feedback on how this current approach is working for your farmers and any issues that may arise due to our open but teleworking posture. You can contact me any time on my cellphone at (410) 382-4150. Attached is a list of Maryland NRCS Service Center contacts should you or your farmers need to get in touch with local staff.

Maryland farmers are resilient, and NRCS will continue to deliver the conservation programs that keep them sustainable today and long into the future.

Sincerely,

Terron L. Hillsman, Ph.D.
State Conservationist
USDA-NRCS, Maryland