



Maryland Department of Agriculture News



Celebrating Maryland Agriculture

October 2008

In This Issue

- Take it From Maryland Farmers: Recycle
- Homegrown School Lunch Week
- October is Maryland Seafood Month
- Ag Commission Fall Tour
- MDA Mosquito Control - On Your Side
- AFO Public Hearings Scheduled
- Landscape with Maryland Nursery Plants
- Preparing for Animal Emergencies
- People Profile: Bruce Yerkes
- Featured Recipe

Secretary's Corner



With the fall weather, comes so much activity in all facets of our lives. For the farmers, it's time to harvest; time to welcome visitors to a growing number of [agricultural tourism operations](#); and time to plant [cover crops](#) to protect the Chesapeake Bay.

For homeowners, it's time for [backyard actions](#) that protect the soil and water like raking and recycling leaves, planting trees and shrubs and decorating with locally grown products like pumpkins. Don't forget, when you are buying firewood to make sure you get what you pay for. MDA's weights and measure's staff

Remember: Register to Vote by Tues., Oct. 14!

Did you know that Election Day is rooted in agricultural tradition? That's right - the first Tuesday of November was selected as Election Day as it is after the fall harvest, Sunday was a day of rest and voters were able use Monday as a travel day to arrive at the polls by Tuesday. Please join Marylanders across the State as we exercise our patriotic right to vote! Tuesday October 14 at 9 p.m. is the last day for Marylanders to register to vote in the 2008 Presidential General Election on November 4. Voter Registration Applications must be delivered in person to the State Board of Elections, a Local Board of Elections, or must be postmarked by October 14. Click [here](#) to download a Voter Registration Application. For more information and a list of frequently asked questions, visit the [State Board of Elections website](#).

Take it From Maryland Farmers: Recycle!

The Maryland agricultural awareness partners are continuing the "Take it from Maryland Farmers: Backyard Actions for a Cleaner Chesapeake Bay" [campaign](#) they started in the spring to draw attention to farmers as conservation leaders. Listen for the voices of [Deputy Secretary Buddy Hance](#) and [Governor Martin O'Malley](#) in ads running on radio stations in many areas of the state.

"Take it from Maryland farmers. There are many ways to recycle that help the Chesapeake Bay. Each fall, farmers keep the stalks and leaves of harvested crops on their fields to improve the soil for the next year. Leaves from your own backyard can be recycled as mulch around your trees, shrubs, and in your gardens. A light covering of leaves can also be mowed into the lawn to enrich the soil. For more tips from Maryland farmers, go to www.iwantmarylandsbest.com."



Homegrown School Lunch Week a Success!

The Jane Lawton Farm-to-School initiative and the Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Program, signed into law by Governor O'Malley this year, is designed to bring more Maryland-grown products to school lunches and to help educate students about the source of their food, how it is produced, and the benefits of a healthy diet.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the exciting kick-off event. Statewide, the program has been an overwhelming success and shows great promise for the future. Almost every county in Maryland is participating this year as are more than 30 different Maryland farms. It is a true example of a successful federal, state, local and private collaboration that is working.

Just think of the tremendous impact on our families and our communities if even one local item is included in school lunches for each of the 950,000 Maryland public school students. Farmers would have additional income, thereby strengthening the local economy and keeping farm land open and productive. Our children would receive the nutritional benefits of fresh, local products as well as the knowledge of why this matters. And, the financial, environmental, and nutritional costs of transporting food would decrease.

Including local food in school lunches and related information in the classroom is good for our students and good for Maryland. We encourage students and parents to continue asking for fresh, local produce in school lunches. Click [here](#) for more information about the program.



have [tips for you](#).

And for residents of all ages, it's a great time to keep warm with our favorite recipes for fall produce, [seafood](#) and meat. Fresh apple pies, pumpkin soup, and more. Thanks to the Jane Lawton Farm to School program, our young people are getting a taste of local food in the cafeteria. Remind your school system to keep the local food coming.

Thank you and I wish you all the best,
[Roger Richardson](#),
[MDA Secretary](#)

Quick Links

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October is Maryland Seafood Month

Are you ready for local sweet fat crabs, succulent oysters and tender, flaky rockfish? Autumn is the perfect time for Maryland seafood because the best of the best is in season at the same time! Governor Martin O'Malley is promoting October as "[Maryland Seafood Month](#)," to celebrate Maryland's delicious and desirable seafood.

Seafood quality and safety has been, and continues to be, a Maryland tradition. Our seafood is monitored by several state agencies, local health departments and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. These agencies conduct regular product and plant inspections and water tests ensuring that Maryland seafood is wholesome. In addition, Maryland crab meat undergoes a voluntary quality control and sanitation inspection. Maryland is the only state that has this extra level of inspection for crab meat.

Maryland seafood is more than delicious. An excellent source of high quality protein, seafood is easily digested, generally low in fat, sodium and calories and high in important vitamins and minerals. In addition, seafood contains Omega-3 fatty acids, believed to be effective in lowering cholesterol and the risk of heart disease. Click [here](#) for more information about Maryland seafood.



Md. Ag Commission Tours Kent, Queen Anne's Counties

The [Maryland Agricultural Commission](#) held its annual fall agricultural tour and visited agricultural operations in Kent and Queen Anne's Counties on October 9. The commission toured operations including a new farrowing facility and [organic](#), horse breeding, dairy, [community supported agriculture](#), and poultry operations. The tours were organized by local [University of Maryland Cooperative Extension](#) agents John Hall and Jenny Rhodes.



To conclude the day, the Commission held a public meeting in Chestertown where nearly 50 participants discussed issues impacting the agricultural community, exchanged ideas, and became better acquainted with the role the Commission plays in Maryland's leading industry.

MDA Mosquito Control - On Your Side

During the 2008 mosquito season (April - October), [MDA's Mosquito Control Section](#) provided a direct service to approximately 2,100 communities in 22 Maryland counties and Baltimore City.

The following is a summary of the surveillance data to date for the 2008 season: one horse in Prince George's County tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) infection, five mosquito pools in Montgomery and Prince George's counties have tested positive for West Nile virus, and nine cases of WNV (2 confirmed, 7 probable) have been identified in Maryland. Click [here](#) for more information about West Nile virus. The primary goal of the program is to prevent mosquito-borne disease in humans, pets and livestock.



A 2007 survey of participants in the program showed that 97 percent of respondents said it was very important to control mosquitoes and 97 percent also believe that mosquito control efforts effectively reduce the mosquito population. The program relies on surveys and monitoring of the larval and adult mosquito populations to coordinate control activities. Control techniques include breeding source reduction, public education, biological control and insecticide applications from aircraft or ground equipment. Click [here](#) for tips to rid your community of mosquito breeding sites. Click [here](#) to learn how to avoiding mosquito bites.

Public Hearings Scheduled for New Animal Feeding Operation Proposal

The Maryland Department of Agriculture continues to work closely with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) on proposed animal feeding operation permit development and outreach. MDE recently published a [draft general permit and regulations](#) for animal feeding operations in the Maryland Register. The public comment period is now open. Formal hearings will be held at the following times and locations:

November 10, at 6 pm, Wor-Wic Community College, Salisbury; Guerrien Hall Auditorium at Route 50 and Walston Switch Road

November 12, at 6 pm, Chesapeake College at Wye Mills; First Floor Theatre in the Todd Performing Arts Center, 1000 College Circle

November 13, at 11 am, Frederick; City Hall Board Room, 101 N. Court Street

Click [here](#) for more information, including the draft permit and regulations as well as a fact sheet.

Landscape with Maryland Nursery Plants

Fall is a great time of year to purchase and plant turf grasses, perennials, and both evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs. Maryland is fortunate to have some of the best producers of high-quality ornamental plants in the country.

In the fall, the warm soil encourages roots to develop on newly planted ornamentals. Roots continue to grow through the winter until the ground freezes. Then, in spring, roots begin new growth or continue to develop at a faster rate, and top growth begins. When summer finally arrives, the fall-planted plant is often better equipped to deal with heat and drought because its roots are better established.



Maryland has many local producers of ornamental plants. In fact, the nursery and greenhouse sector produces more than \$560 million and delivers more than \$1 billion in economic impact from gross sales according to a [2003 study](#). Click [here](#) to find local supply, and [here](#) to find a Certified Professional Horticulturist near you.

Preparing for Animal Emergencies

With the hurricane season almost behind us and winter weather ahead, it is especially important to think about addressing your pet and livestock needs in an emergency. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is the responsible agency for all animal needs during emergencies. In support of this mandate, MDA staff have visited every Maryland county to assist local governments in preparing a customized animal emergency plan. Other outreach activities being conducted include volunteer recruitment, shelter site selection/set-up, and training of shelter workers. The final product will be a network of County and Regional Animal Response Teams to staff companion animal shelter sites during declared emergencies. You never know when an emergency will strike. Don't delay in learning how to prepare for the safety and well being of your pets and livestock. There is a great deal of valuable emergency preparedness information from the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) and [Maryland State Animal Response Team](#) websites.

People Profile: J. Bruce Yerkes

Mr. J. Bruce Yerkes is the current chair of the 11-member [State Soil Conservation Committee \(SCCC\)](#), which appoints and develops policy to guide soil conservation districts and makes recommendations to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) on programs and policies related to soil conservation and water quality to ensure environmental goals are met with programs that are economically and technically feasible. The committee also facilitates coordination among a network of local, state and federal agencies.



"It is a true honor and privilege to serve as chair of what I believe is one of the oldest agricultural committees, established in 1938. Being on the state committee allows us to meet with our conservation partners to provide input for policies concerning soil conservation and water quality issues for the state," said Bruce.

For the past 27 years, Bruce has been a loan officer with Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit. He was also a member of the first class of LEAD Maryland, a program devoted to developing leaders to work on agricultural and natural resources issues and in rural communities of Maryland. He serves on the Cecil County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors and was a member of the Governor's Incentives for Agriculture Task Force. In 2001, he was awarded "Outstanding Contribution by a New Supervisor" by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts.

"I feel some of the most important challenges in the future for us will be stormwater management, erosion and sediment control and growth issues in Maryland agriculture. The cover crop program has proven to be one of the most cost effective ways to reduce agricultural runoff into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries," continued Bruce. "I am proud to see the conservation practices that Maryland's farmers and landowners have put into place over the years, and proud of our role in these accomplishments."

Bruce is very active in Cecil County programs and is currently a member of Cecil County's Agriculture Advisory Committee, Friends of Agriculture, Agriculture Task Force and Farm Bureau (serving on the Audit Committee). He is also a former member of the Cecil County Economic Development Commission, serving as chair of the Agriculture Committee.

In his local community, Bruce currently serves on the Rosebank Cemetery Board of Directors. He is a Bronze Key Sponsor of Ducks Unlimited, former treasurer of the Sassafras River Chapter of Ducks Unlimited and member of Delta Waterfowl. Bruce was also a coach with Elkton Little League for 14 years and former treasurer of the Cherry Hill Junior Football Team.

Bruce is a graduate of Davis and Elkins College in West Virginia and holds a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Marketing and Management. Bruce and his wife Lauren have two sons Justin and Andrew.

Featured Recipe: Creamy Pumpkin Soup

Pumpkin is good for your health and taste good too. It has no cholesterol, low in fat and sodium and rich in vitamins, especially beta carotene and vitamin A. Taste for yourself and try this recipe - a perfect way to warm up on a late fall day. Click [here](#) for fun pumpkin facts.

Ingredients:

- 16 ounces Pumpkin (canned or fresh pureed)
- 13.75 ounces Chicken Broth
- 1 Large Onion
- 2 Carrots (Wheels or Diced)
- 2 cups half and half or evaporated milk
- 1/4 cup Sour Cream
- 1/8 teaspoon Pepper
- 1 teaspoon Cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1/3 teaspoon (or less) Salt
- 4 teaspoons Bacon Bits

Preparation Directions:

In a large pot add, chicken broth, onions, carrot, baking soda, salt and pepper. Simmer uncovered for ten to fifteen minutes until carrots are soft.

Optional: Put vegetable and broth into a food processor or blender and blend until smooth.
Return to pot.
Add pumpkin and half and half.
Simmer uncovered for 10 minutes.
Pour into soup crocks or soup bowls.

Serves: 6
Recipe Courtesy of PumpkinNook.com.

Upcoming Events

- [Agritourism Events](#)
- [Seafood Festivals](#)
- [St. Mary's County Oyster Festival \(Oct. 18-19\)](#)
- [Pick Your Own Farm Markets](#)
- [Farmers Markets](#)

We invite your feedback.

Thank you for reading our latest publication. We are always looking for ways to improve how we serve our constituents. Please send your comments, suggestions and ideas to mdanews@mda.state.md.us or call 410-841-5881.

Contact Info

Sue duPont, Communications Director, 410-841-5889, dupontsk@mda.state.md.us

Julie Oberg, Public Information Officer, 410-841-5888, obergja@mda.state.md.us



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