

Montgomery Soil
Conservation
District
18410 Muncaster Rd
Derwood, MD 20855
301-590-2855

Calendar

Cover Crop Dates:

October 10th

Deadline Aerial Seeding

October 15th

Final planting date for Barley,
Broadcast Stalk Chop and Broadcast
Cultipacker method

November 5th

Final Planting Date for Winter Cover
Crop

November 12th

Final date to report acres to the
District.

Agricultural and Environmental Law
Conference (AELC) virtually Wednesday,
Nov. 17, 1 p.m. — 4 p.m., and
Thursday, Nov. 18, 9 a.m. — noon.
Those with questions about the AELC
may contact ALEI at 301-405-1271 or
umaglaw@umd.edu.

MSCD Office will be closed on the following
dates:

Veterans Day November—11th
Thanksgiving Day—November 26th
Christmas Day—December 25th
New Years Day January 1, 2022

Montgomery Conservation Connection



October 2021

Local Farmer Recognized for Lifetime Contribution to Agriculture



Ben Allnutt – Homestead Farm

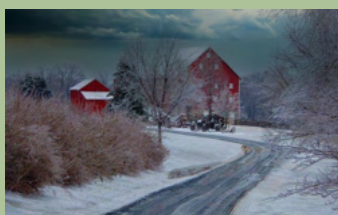
On September 15, 2021, the Montgomery Soil Conservation District honored Ben Allnutt, Owner and Operator of Homestead Farm with the District's Contribution to Agriculture Award. This recognition is awarded to an individual that has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to agriculture in Montgomery County.

Ben has been an active member of the Ag Community his whole life. Ben started working with his dad at an early age. After a short stint of working in the private sector Ben returned to the farm where he has been growing food for over 45 years. His family has been farming in Montgomery County for generations. Ben attributes his passion for farming from what he learned about farming from his father and grandfather. "I learned a great deal from my father and grandfather," said Ben. "Our operation that was started by my grandfather was a combination of livestock and grain. During World War II, my father and grandfather stayed on the farm producing food as their contribution to the war effort. Over time the operation began to transition as farming became more mechanized."

Today Ben's operation is one of the most productive and diverse fruit and vegetable operations in the County where he farms about 300 acres. Ben's focus is table top food production, where he grows peaches and apples, blackberries, sweet corn, tomatoes, blueberries, strawberries, tart cherries, pumpkins and squash, cantaloupes and watermelons and a multitude of vegetables.

Ben has also demonstrated his commitment to conservation through the numerous best management practices on the lands he owns and operates. He has established dozens of critical area plantings, conducted annual conservation crop rotations, established conservation cover, installed grassed buffers and grassed waterways, follows his nutrient management plan and employs integrated pest management, practices conservation tillage including no till and strip cropping, manages water on his property through installation of lined waterways and had one of the first agrichemical handling facilities in the County. He is also an active participant for over 15 years in the Cover Crop program where he established fall cover crops on over 100 acres.

In addition to his conservation ethic, Ben also believes it's important to educate the public, especially children on where their food comes from. In any given year, Ben will host numerous field trips to his farm from County schools or host foreign dignitaries to help them learn about agriculture in our state.



Continued on next page

Local Farmer Recognized for Lifetime Contribution to Agriculture....continued

If you ask Ben why he became a farmer, you will hear a very insightful answer. "Farming is one of the most important jobs," said Ben. "No matter where you are in this world, farming is how we feed people. Without farmers, there is no food and since we all need to eat, someone has to do it so why not me?" Ben is passionate about local food production. "Most people in this country have forgotten where their food comes from and how it is produced" said Ben. "People see certain products in the big supermarkets and think that we can produce everything that can be bought there. One thing is for certain, there is nothing like a tree ripened fruit, or a vine ripened tomato. Locally grown, fresh picked are the healthy alternative we offer, and it is what sets us apart from the big chain supermarkets."

Ben has also served on County Boards and Committees to help represent agriculture's interest at the table of government, making sure agriculture's voice is heard. Ben's long association and history of conservation work on his farm makes him very worthy of this Contribution to Agriculture Award recognition. "Montgomery County is so very fortunate to have such excellent leaders in our agricultural community and we congratulate Ben on this well-deserved lifetime achievement" said John Zawitoski, Montgomery SCD District Manager.

Delaney Gladhill Honored as the District's Cooperator of the Year

While many aspects of our life have changed over the past 18 months, one tradition of the District has remained unchanged. Each year we take time to recognize the cooperators in our District that have made conservation and conservation education a priority as a part of their day-to-day operations. It is with this intended purpose in mind, that the Montgomery Soil Conservation District is pleased to honor Delaney Gladhill as the District's 2021 Cooperator of the Year.

Delaney exemplifies what it means to be a conservation steward and is one of the many conservation leaders within the agricultural community of Montgomery County. Some examples of his stewardship ethic include maintaining cover crops outside of the regular growing season to protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Since the 2006-2007 program year, he has participated in the MDA cover crop program. He has participated in the District's commodity cover crop program since its inception in 2017. Delaney is always one of the first cooperators to enroll in these programs, planting about 150 acres in cover crops annually. Since the 2006-2007 program year, he has participated in the MDA cover crop program. He has participated in the District's commodity cover crop program since its inception in 2017. His participation in USDA's Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) spans 4 farm bills and 4 contracts over a 20-year period! Talk about a sustained commitment to conservation!



Delaney Gladhill Pictured with John Zawitoski, District Manager presenting 2021 Cooperator of the Year Sign



Continued on the next page

Delaney Gladhill Honored ...continued



Charlotte Brewster, NRCS District Conservationist presents Delaney with USDA-NRCS's Certificate of Appreciation for his Sustained Commitment to Conservation

As an active cooperator, he understands the importance of promoting these programs among his peers. It is with this in mind that Delaney regularly invites MSCD staff to his farmer's club meetings where he provides us the opportunity to discuss programs, current conservation topics, and to exchange information about projects the District is involved with.

Conservation stewardship is a priority for Delaney. He understands the responsibility and diligence it takes to protect his lands from resource concerns. While farming about 330 acres, he has been an early adopter of conservation practices, possesses a unique ethic for the conservation of farmland and is an innovator with the use of various cover crop mixes to improve soil health.

As a result, he frequently works with the District and our staff to evaluate resource concerns on his farms and to get guidance on conservation related issues. This included the installation of numerous watering troughs and stream side fencing to exclude livestock and provide an alternative water source. He has utilized District technical assistance and repaired waterways at his own expense.



Middle Schooler's Experience Montgomery County AG!

On August 3rd and 5th, The Montgomery Soil Conservation District, in partnership with the Montgomery Office of Agriculture and University of Maryland Extension coordinated an Agricultural Experience Summer Camp Program for Montgomery County Middle School Students. Through this two day summer camp experience, students explored various aspect of Agriculture in Montgomery County, ranging from protection of the environment, food production and livestock management. This in person field trip emersed middle school students to Montgomery County Agriculture.

On August 3rd students visited Bella Vita Farm where they learned about growing food in a controlled environment and horticulture and local food production at Butler's Orchard. On August 5th students visited Pleasant Valley Farm where they learned about how farmers use conservation tillage methods to help protect the soil, how integrated pest management is an important tool to reduce pesticide use, the differences better sweet corn and field corn grown primarily for animal feed and raising beef steers. In the afternoon the students visited Rock Hill Orchard where they learned about dairy farming and got to see firsthand, the robotic milking parlor in action. Students also got the opportunity to interact with young dairy cows as part of their emersion experience. This summer camp experience was so well received by teachers and students, they have already begun discussions on expanding this program next summer.



Middle Schoolers Interact with Young Dairy Calf at Woodbourne Creamery at Rock Hill Orchard in Mt. Airy

District Celebrates 75th Anniversary at Cooperators Dinner



Getting Ready for a Great Meal at our Cooperator's Dinner



A Beautiful Night for Hayride Tour!

Even more importantly, the dinner provides a pathway to extend our sincerest “thank you” to everyone that helps to make the conservation of our natural resources in the County a priority.



Wade Butler Conducting Wagon Tour of Butler's Orchard

The venue for this year's dinner was Butler's Orchard in Germantown which was graciously provided by our hosts, Wade and Angela Butler, their family, and staff.

It goes without saying just how impactful the global pandemic has been. All signs in June indicated that COVID-19 was in decline, and it would be safe to hold our event. As we approached September, variants of COVID-19 made a resurgence and we wanted to make sure guests attending our event could do so safely. Holding the event at an outdoor venue, providing masks for guests to wear, having individual hand sanitizers available, and maintaining social distancing were all put in place for the safety of our guests attending.

On September 15th, we were blessed with a pleasant evening where 100 guests attended and enjoyed the peaceful surroundings, a wagon tour of Butler's Orchard, a pumpkin cannon demonstration, conservation award recognitions, and enjoyed a delicious meal.



Guests Arriving at Butler's Orchard for our Cooperators Dinner

Last year, marked our 75th anniversary and unfortunately COVID-19 robbed us of the opportunity to celebrate the passing of this important milestone. During the Dinner, there was a presentation by John Zawitoski, District Manager commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Montgomery Soil Conservation District. John reached back into the District archives and highlighted some items of interest that have occurred over the past 75 years as well as highlighted the District's accomplishments over the past year.

The evening event culminated with the presentation of several recognitions to individuals that were conservation leaders this year within Montgomery County. Paul Meyer and James Harne received their Years of Service Awards to Montgomery County. Within the last year, we had three exceptional supervisors who stepped down after serving distinguished terms on the Board. **Pam Saul**, County Executive Appointment — For 15 years of Service, **Wade Butler**, Farm Bureau Appointment — For 25 years of Service, **Robert Stabler**, U of MD Extension Appointment — For 34 years of Service.



Catherine Provost, Representing Senator Chris Van Hollen. Presents 75th Anniversary Congressional Citation to Robert Butz, District Chairman and John Zawitoski, District Manager



*Wade Butler – 25 Years of Service
Soil Conservation District Supervisor*



*Bobby Stabler – 34 Years of Service
Soil Conservation District Supervisor*

The District also recognized Ben Allnut as the recipient of the MSCD **Contribution to Agriculture Award**. This is not an award the District provides annually, but rather when we truly have a cooperator worthy of this recognition. This is a well-deserved recognition for Ben as he has demonstrated a long history of conservation work and agricultural educational outreach on his farm and throughout the County. Last but certainly not least, the District, The Maryland Department of Agriculture and Natural Resource Conservation Service joined to honor Delaney Gladhill as the District's 2021 Cooperator of the Year. Over a 20 year period, Delaney has been an active participant in Federal, State and Local conservation grant programs, he often will pursue conservation measures regardless of whether cost share assistance is available, even on rented ground. He has been and continues to be an early adopter of conservation measures as well as promotes soil and water conservation through outreach efforts among his peers. This clearly shows his sustained interest in conservation and conservation education. Please join with us as we honor Delaney Gladhill with the 2021 Cooperator of the Year Award.. We certainly hope that all that attended enjoyed the evenings events and we hope to see everyone again for next year's Cooperators Dinner.



Paul Meyer and James "J" Harne

District Recognized By State Association with Honors



On August 2nd, The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) met as part of the Association's Annual Summer Meeting and Banquet. As part of this meeting, MASCD recognizes Districts and individuals that made a difference in promoting soil and water conservation across the State as well as the outstanding work performed during the past year. We are both humbled and pleased to announce that our District was honored as the recipient for several of the Association's top awards.

The Montgomery Soil Conservation District for the 4th year in a row was honored with the Conservation Education District of the Year Award

Conservation Education is such a big part of what our District does and remains a high priority of our Board" said Robert Butz, District Board Chairman. "We have excellent staff that take every opportunity to make the conservation of our soil and water resources a learning opportunity." Whether through programs like Envirothon, the Close Encounters with Agriculture Program, Pasture Walks, Classroom Seminars, Legislative Tours, one on one farm visits or through the interactions associated with our social media outreach presence are all tools to inform and educate the public about the importance of soil and water conservation. If you haven't yet, Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest information on District Programs and other conservation educational outreach information.

Twitter@montgomery MDSCD

Facebook: The Montgomery Soil Conservation District



MASCD President Bruce Yerkes Presents Conservation Education District of the Year Award



MASCD President Bruce Yerkes Presents MidAtlantic Farm Credit 2nd Place District of the Year Award to the Montgomery Soil Conservation District. Pictured left to right Bruce Yerkes, John Zawitoski, Robert Butz, District Chairman and Tim McGrath, District Treasurer

Our District was also recognized this year by the State Association with a 2nd place finish as the **MidAtlantic Farm Credit Outstanding District of the Year**. *"We are very appreciative to MASCD for our award recognitions" said John Zawitoski, MSCD District Manager. "Being recognized by your peers as being among the top District's in the State is indeed quite the honor and one we are most proud to receive".* The **MidAtlantic Farm Credit Outstanding District of the Year Award** is presented to the District that exhibits comprehensive soil and water conservation programs, demonstrates leadership in promoting and achieving conservation throughout their county, and annual fulfillment of the District's mission. *"Our district staff and other agency partners are truly a great team and work diligently to promote soil and water conservation, whether through direct technical assistance to landowners and operators or through conservation education outreach, our team is always ready to assist" said Robert Butz, Montgomery Soil Conservation District Chairman.*

2021-2022 Cover Crop Fall Planting and Reporting Reminder



Montgomery County farmers applied for just under 19,000 acres during the winter cover crop application period which occurred this past summer. The application process was again done via mail as many state and county offices were still closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Ideally, the weather will cooperate in September and October and a majority of these acres will be planted by the November 5th deadline. Covering the soil with living plants offers many benefits including weed suppression, nutrient retention, animal habitat, increased soil organic matter and improved soil structure.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Winter Cover Crop Program is virtually the same as it was last year. The seeding rates have been reduced for incorporated seed. Higher seeding rates still are required for aerial applications, broadcast stalk chop and broadcast culti-packer seeding methods. Please refer to your Cover Crop

Attachment or contact the District if you have questions.

Acres enrolled in the MDA program are eligible if a cover crop was planted following the harvest of an annual summer crop of corn, soybeans, sorghum, or vegetable. Fields that were idle, in hay, pasture, or were not planted to a crop following the summer harvest of a small grain are not eligible for reimbursement.

Some important seeding deadlines for cover crops include October 1st for Oats and Radishes. The same date applies for mixes with vetch, clover, and winter peas. The seeding deadline for Barley is October 15th. Broadcast stalk chop and broadcast culti-packer methods must be completed by October 15th. Aerial planting methods must be completed by October 10th.

All planting methods other than aerial and broadcast stalk chop require some form of incorporation. Whether it be a pass over the field with a cultipacker (following corn only) a disc, drill, or vertical tillage implement, incorporation is important for seed to soil contact. The broadcast stalk chop method requires corn stalks to be moved down to create a mulch over the seed. With all of these methods, the date of mowing or incorporation is the seeding date you should report. Within one week of planting the cover crop but no later than the dates listed in the chart below, the Operator shall certify planting information with the local Soil Conservation District.

MACS INCENTIVE FOR 9/10 AERIAL PLANTING DEADLINE - Certification Deadline 9/17

MACS INCENTIVE FOR 10/10 INCORPORATED PLANTING DEADLINE—Certification Deadline 10/16

MACS BASE PAYMENT PLANTING DEADLINE 11/05—Certification Deadline 11/12

The Operator shall submit the following to the local SCD with the fall certification form:

- Seed tags for purchased seed and seed tests for home grown seed. The seed tags need to be signed by the Operator and any seed tests not in the Operator's name shall also be signed.
- All Custom planted acres including Aerial and Aerial Ground will require an FSA map designating which fields were planted signed and dated by the applicator.

Timely reporting helps staff with the field verification portion of the program. As in years past, 20% of the acreage for each cooperator is spot checked in the fall. You may call the District, mail maps, or email to report acres. COVID-19 restrictions may continue through the fall so in person reporting may not be allowed. District staff will do our best to assist cooperators with their reporting. Please let us know if you have questions about the program. We will do our best to make the reporting process as easy as possible.

What is BMP verification, why is it important to the Chesapeake Bay, and more importantly, why is it for you?

Agricultural Best Management Practices and the Chesapeake Bay

The implementation, tracking and reporting of Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) has been at the center of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership restoration efforts for almost three decades. When properly installed and maintained, these conservation and technological practices reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment entering local waters and the tidal Chesapeake Bay. Over the decades, BMPs have been installed on agricultural land by farmers utilizing government funded cost share programs as well as at the farmers personal expense. The best management practice (BMP) verification process was developed to assist farmers in documenting those practices, treatments and technologies that result in reductions of nitrogen, phosphorus and/or sediment pollutant loads when implemented and operating correctly. The process includes initial inspection, follow-up checks, and continuing evaluation of BMP performance over the life of the practice and beyond.

In the early 2000's, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) created a database to assist in the reporting of technical assistance provided by the state's twenty-four soil conservation districts. This database not only helps to document the technical assistance provided by the District for BMPs installed on farmland but also serves to document those practices farmers install on their own that meet the approved standards and specifications for the practice.

Local Importance

As we have reported in previous editions of our newsletter, there are numerous aspects of the Watershed Implementation Plan process (WIP) including proposed goals for nutrient and sediment reductions assigned to the Agricultural sector. Revising and writing new soil conservation and water quality plans and the implementation of agricultural best management practices are the centerpiece to receiving credits for reducing nutrients and sediment. Previously installed practices or those practices installed by farmers on their own that meet certain practice standards can continue to receive credits provided these practices are still functioning as designed and have been "verified" by an agency partner. These practices include but are not limited to: grassed waterways, waste storage structures, riparian forest and grassed buffers to name a few. These installed and functioning practices have numeric values "credit" assigned to them based on the lifespan of the practices and the associated reduction in nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment loads entering the Chesapeake Bay. While it is important to note, MDA/District does not require farmers to maintain conservation practices after the practice's designed lifespan, often farmers see the value of these practices and elect to continue to maintain these practices well after the effective life of the practice.

You may have seen many of these practices as you drive through the county. Long, beautiful grassed waterways snaking their way through dried fields of barley and corn. You may remember them being there when you were a child, or perhaps they are still there on your own farm today. Some of these practices can be 30, 40, even 50 years old, still being maintained and functioning as designed. The BMP verification process was designed to help capture these practices to ensure Maryland's agriculture community is receiving nutrient and sediment reducing credits. Through this BMP verification process not only are you helping to quantify what is being done to help restore the Bay, but you are also being an active participant in demonstrating what agriculture has and continues to accomplish in a voluntary arena.



Jillian Pyle, MDA's Agricultural Resource Conservation Specialist

BMP Verification continued on the next page

...BMP Verification continued

Have the BMPs on My Farm Been Verified Yet?

The answer is maybe. The BMP verification process has resumed in Montgomery County with some farms already being visited by MDA agency partners. Jillian Pyle, Agricultural Resource Conservation Specialist for the Maryland Department of Agriculture, has been assigned to work in Montgomery County to conduct the BMP verification process. She will also be working in Anne Arundel, Howard and Prince Georges Counties. We wanted to take this opportunity to introduce Jillian to you. This process will continue over the next several years, until all of the farms in the County with aging BMPs have been verified.

Best Management Practices or BMPs are cost-effective actions that agricultural landowners can take to conserve water and reduce the amount of nutrients and other pollutants from entering water resources.

Jillian is trained in conservation planning and technical design and will visit your farm and check to see if installed practices are still functional. If the practice is no longer in use, MDA will simply remove it from the Conservation Tracker database and inform the Soil Conservation District. If the practice is still in good working order, Jillian will make a note and the environmental benefit of the BMP will be adjusted to account for its age.

In late August, Jillian began her work here in Montgomery County and is currently reviewing District files for the BMPs that will need to be verified. When Jillian is ready to begin her field visits, the District will make personal phone contact with each farmer to schedule the visit with Jillian. You are free to accompany Jillian during her visit, but it is not mandatory that you be present. If you would like to be present, then the District will arrange a date and time that is convenient for you. District staff will assist Jillian with these field visits. It is also important to understand that there may be additional benefits to the Montgomery County agricultural sector when the BMP verification process is completed. If while visiting a property, Jillian finds practices installed by the farmer that provide an environmental benefit but were never previously

accounted for, she will make a record of the practice so that conservation credits are provided for the work done.

The Montgomery Soil Conservation District is very proud of the 75 years of conservation assistance and service to Montgomery County's Agricultural community. With this great legacy of technical assistance in mind, the BMP verification process provides farmers an avenue to have their installed practices re-visited to achieve a true representation of the efforts multiple generations of farming families have given to protecting the environment in the face of a changing landscape. The Montgomery Soil Conservation District sincerely appreciates all the cooperation our farmers have given us in making Maryland a model for farm stewardship. If you have any further questions or comments about verification, do not hesitate to contact the Soil Conservation District at 301-590-2855

Important Nutrient Management Dates

Fall Applications (September 10 - December 15)

Application of organic nutrients to existing crop or crop to be planted. Fallow cropland must be planted to cover crop by November 15th if manure is applied. Inject or incorporate within 48 hours, except those operations managed to obtain the benefits of no-till farming. Application prohibited when soil is saturated, ground is covered with snow >1", or ground hard frozen > 2".

MDA reserves the right to require incorporation of organic nutrients on a case by case basis

Emergency Winter Spreading Needs Approval.

Spreading manure in winter is not allowed in Maryland.

If winter spreading becomes unavoidable, call 410-841-5959 before any spreading takes place. The department will work with you to prevent overflows from storage structures and minimize impacts to water quality. Stackable solids may not be applied to fields in winter, but temporary stockpiling is allowed for solid manures.

Spring / Summer Applications (March 1-September 9)

Inject or incorporate organic nutrients within 48 hours, except those operations managed to obtain the benefits of no-till farming. Application prohibited when soil is saturated, ground is covered with snow >1", or ground hard frozen > 2". MDA reserves the right to require incorporation of organic nutrients on a case by case basis

Clarksburg Welcomes Intensive Rotational Grazing System

The intensity of the summer heat can wreak havoc on horse pastures. Cool season grasses like fescue and orchard grass become dormant while clover, tenacious as it is, surrenders its dried leaves and flowers to the sun and retreats into the soil. As the heat of the summer began to subside, Misty Gleann in Clarksburg, MD welcomed a new sort of intensity.



Rotational Grazing System at Misty Gleann Farm

From its inception, the horse training operation, has sought to properly balance the needs of its four-legged students with our natural resources. The juxtaposition of the farm with the Little Bennett Regional Park, which surrounds it on three sides, speaks well to the approach that owners Barbara Strawson and Brian Scrivens have taken over the last nine years.

Before a single section of fence was even built, the owners reached out to the Montgomery Soil Conservation District for assistance with constructing an indoor arena. The arena was built, the perimeter fencing was installed, and for a decade the owners have been experimenting with different grazing rotation layouts to see what maintains the best grass coverage.

Through the years a clear pattern was observed: The more paddocks that were used in the rotation, the better the grass cover. However, after nearly a decade the old polytape fence was showing its age, and more spirited horses were finding ways to overcome it. The owners decided it was time for a permanent fix and again reached out to the District.

With input from Regional Conservation Partnerships and District Staff, the owners worked through several different layouts in the planning stage before settling into on **intensive rotational grazing system** which

would divide 4.3 acres into sixteen roughly quarter-acre sized paddocks using electrified braid. Horses will be rotated through those fields in pairs or singles every 2-4 days, giving each paddock roughly a week of rest between grazing periods.

To assist with this undertaking, the owners took advantage of the Soil Conservation District's Water Quality Protection Cost Share Program, which can provide reimbursement for divisional fencing in prescribed grazing systems. The amount reimbursed to the owners represented a substantial portion of the overall cost of the new fencing.

"Previously, with fewer paddocks and temporary tape used for rotation," comments Brian, "The horses were to spread out and the areas closest to the barn were over-used since the horses were happier there. Areas further from the barn were barely getting grazed at all. Now we can turn out the horses closer together in the smaller paddocks, so they feel like they are in a herd while grazing more remote areas of the pasture."

"The management of the paddocks is much easier than our previous set up," explains Barbara, "It was labor intensive to be moving tape and awkward getting in and out. We've noticed the horses are much happier and relaxed under the new turnout schedule."

Brian adds, "In the new system we can turn out 5 to 8 horses at once and have capacity to go to 12 horses without overstressing the pasture."

Could an intensive grazing system work for your equine operation? If you want to find out, a good first step would be to reach out to the Montgomery Soil Conservation District to schedule a field visit from its equine resource conservationist. To reach the office, call 301-590-2832 or email the Equine Conservationist, Travis Gorleski: travis.gorleski@montgomerycountymd.gov.



Montgomery County STEM Teachers Tour Montgomery County Farms

On August 12th, the Montgomery Soil Conservation District, the Montgomery Office of Agriculture (OAG) and University of Maryland Extension-Montgomery County participated in a Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) sponsored mini course for Montgomery County STEM teachers. The Mini Course was entitled *“Connecting Montgomery County to the Chesapeake Bay through Environmental Chemistry”*. This day long agricultural tour was part of a five day continuing education event sponsored by the CBF.



The Agricultural component of the mini course was entitled *“Ag Today is not the Ag of Your Grandfather”*. Teachers toured four Montgomery County farms and interacted with farmers and State and County agricultural resource professionals where they discussed the role farmers play in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort.

Teachers were treated to the rich diversity of Montgomery County Agriculture as they toured Ruppert Nurseries and learned about Horticulture Production, Sunnyridge Farm where they learned about no till agriculture, nutrient management, cover crops and agricultural handling facilities. They also toured Waredaca Brewery to better understand how on farm breweries that utilize locally sourced agricultural products are emerging and growing in popularity. Finally they visited Laytonsville Landscaping to discuss how turf farming has evolved over time and how they do their part in conserving our soil resources.

The day long tour provided an opportunity for Teachers to learn about how farmers are helping to clean up the Chesapeake Bay through the implementation of Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans, Nutrient Management Planning and other Agricultural Best Management Practices that reduce nutrients and sediments entering our waterways. Teachers also learned that Agriculture and Wastewater Treatment facilities have been responsible for most of the nutrient reductions to the Bay. Since 1985, agriculture has reduced nutrient loads to the bay by an average of 10.5 million lbs. of nitrogen per year. By 2025, an additional 8.4 million lbs. of nitrogen must be reduced by all sectors. Teachers learned what this means for farmers. They are responsible for 43% of the nutrient loads and are being asked to achieve 51% of the reduction, or 4.3 million lbs. of nitrogen per year. The key takeaway is that farmers are doing their fair share and more to help clean up the Chesapeake Bay! Through these discussions, teachers learned that while agricultural best management practices help to address soil and water resource concerns, most do not result in an increase to the farmer's bottom-line. This means, farmers are voluntarily installing practices at their own expense, and it is one reason there are publicly funded cost share programs designed to reduce the farmers cost of practice implementation.



STEM Teachers were able to see a new Ag Chemical Handling Facility Under Construction at Laytonsville Landscaping



**MONTGOMERY SOIL
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

18410 Muncaster Road
Derwood, MD
20855

**[http://
www.montgomeryscd.org](http://www.montgomeryscd.org)**

MSCD Board of Supervisors

Robert Butz, Chairman
Robert Butts, Vice Chairman

Tim McGrath, Treasurer
Linda Lewis, Supervisor
Doug Tregoning, Supervisor
Joe Lehman, Associate Supervisor
Tom Linthicum, Associate Supervisor
Chris Miller, Associate Supervisor

MSCD Staff

John Zawitoski, District Manager
Charlotte Brewster, District Conservationist

Brandy Gibbons, Soil Conservationist
Travis Gorleski, Equine Conservationist
J. Harne, Resource Conservation Specialist
Udeni Leanlage, Soil Conservation Technician
Paul Meyer, Engineering Technician
Chris Zawitoski, Soil Conservation Technician
Karen Walker, Administrative Assistant

**You Can Receive
This Newsletter by EMAIL!!!**
Enjoy a full color version emailed
to you as soon as it is posted to
our website.
<https://www.montgomeryscd.org>
Register by
Phone: 301-590-2855
or
Email:
Karen.Walker@md.nacdnet.net

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