

For Immediate

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Farm O Gram

AG Happenings

Tri State Hay and Pasture Conference

The Tri-State Hay and Pasture Conference will be held at Garrett College, Garrett Information Enterprise Center located at 687 Mosser Road, McHenry, MD on Wednesday, January 17th from 9am to 4pm in room 111.

The annual event will feature regional experts and local speakers covering a variety of topics on growing and managing forages on the farm. A full agenda will be published soon.

Participants will receive Nutrient Management recertification credits for licenses and applicator vouchers in Maryland and West Virginia. The cost for the event is \$30 and will include a light breakfast and lunch.

To register for the event, please contact Continuing Education & Workforce Development at 301-387-3069. The registration deadline for the event is January 12th. Registration is required, as space is limited. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this event, please contact us at 301-334-6960 by January 3, 2024.

Backyard Farming Zoom Sessions to Begin

Backyard Farming Zoom Sessions will begin February 2024. These sessions, known as Flock Fridays will be held on Fridays at noon and will detail the following:

- February 2, 2024: Keeping Your Flock Healthy-Feed quality, health, biosecurity, etc.
- February 9, 2024: Is it right for me?
- February 16, 2024: Advantages and disadvantages of raising poultry on pasture
- February 23, 2024: Small Flock Economics.

You may register for any of the sessions at <https://go.umd.edu/chickenfeed>. Registration is required. For additional information, contact Maegan at 443-523-4389.

Winter Ban on Spreading Manure Begins December 16

The Maryland Department of Agriculture reminds farmers that the winter ban on spreading manure and other nutrient sources on cropland, including food-processing residuals (FPRs) begins December 16, 2023. Farmers may resume spreading on March 1, 2024, based on their nutrient management plan recommendations, as long as fields are not saturated, snow-covered, or hard-frozen.

Maryland's nutrient management regulations prohibit farmers from spreading manure and other nutrient sources on fields in winter due to the increased risk of runoff into local waterways. Farmers are required to store liquid

manure sources generated on farms in structures. The department is authorized to work with livestock farmers to prevent overflows from storage structures and minimize impacts on water quality. In these instances, farmers must contact the Nutrient Management Program for emergency authorization before spreading occurs.

Temporary field stockpiling of “stackable” poultry litter and other qualifying organic nutrient sources is allowed if the moisture content is 60% or less. Farmers may not apply stackable organic nutrient sources to fields in winter under any conditions.

Farmers should contact their regional nutrient management specialist if they have storage concerns, questions about the regulations, or need guidance on storage requirements. For more information, please visit the department’s Nutrient Management Program website.

Labor Workshop Planned for Agricultural Employers

The University of Maryland and the University of Delaware will host the *Hiring and Retaining Farm Employees – What you Need to Know and Do* workshop on January 23rd in Boonsboro, MD and on January 30th in Georgetown, DE. Both workshops will be from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. The Jan. 23rd program will be at the University of Maryland Extension Washington County office, 7303 Sharpsburg Pike, Boonsboro, MD 21713. The Jan. 30th program will be at the University of Delaware Carvel Research & Education Center, 16483 County Seat Hwy, Georgetown, DE 19947.

These free programs will cover developing an employee handbook for your operation, basic legal requirements, and how to incorporate benefits that agricultural employers deal with. The funding for this program, including the complimentary lunch, is thanks to the Northeast Risk Management Education Center.

The speakers include Nate Bruce, Farm Business Management Specialist, and Maria Pippidis, Finance Agent, with the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, and Paul Goeringer, an Extension Specialist in agricultural law, and Dr. Jesse Ketterman, a Senior Agent, with the University of Maryland Extension. Bruce will address tax issues associated with benefits. Goeringer will address the employee handbook and common legal issues. Pippidis and Dr. Ketterman will discuss incorporating benefits.

“This program will be a great opportunity for agricultural employers to get valuable information on their legal responsibilities and options,” said Paul Goeringer. “This information will be useful for any employer, regardless of the size of the operation,” said Goeringer.

Lunch is provided with the workshop. Check-in will start at 9 am, and the workshops will run from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Participants will receive take-home copies of Extension fact sheets and other valuable documents from the workshop series.

For more information or to register for the Boonesboro event on Jan. 23, go to <https://agrisk.umd.edu/events> - and do not hesitate to reach out Paul Goeringer at lgoering@umd.edu if you have any questions.

For more information or to register for the Georgetown event on Jan. 30, please call Karen Adams at 302-831-3328.