

Mountain Top Ag News

Growing Hemp in Maryland

In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly first passed legislation allowing for the development of an Industrial Hemp Pilot Program in the state. That program was updated in 2018 by House Bill (HB) 698 to allow farmers contracting with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) or Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) in Maryland to grow industrial hemp for research purposes. Production of hemp under the program must further either agricultural or academic research. HB 698 became effective July 1, 2018. MDA issued final regulations to implement this pilot program effective January 28, 2019.

The legislation defines "industrial hemp" as the plant *Cannabis sativa* L. and any part of such plant, whether growing or not, with a THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) concentration not exceeding 0.3% on a dry weight basis.

Industrial hemp is a versatile plant that has been used for thousands of years as a source of fiber and food. While grown commercially in the United States until after World War II, industrial hemp became regulated along with cannabis (a.k.a., marijuana) and its cultivation was prohibited. Under the pilot program, farmers are allowed to harvest and sell the hemp they grow for the research project.

Fabrics, concrete, body care products, plastics, rope,

paper and the recently popular cannabinoid (CBD) oil can all be made from hemp.

The 2018 Farm Bill made significant changes to the classification of hemp and allows states to begin to develop regulations for the legal production of hemp outside of research projects.

The 2018 Farm Bill removes hemp from the definition of marijuana under the Controlled Substances Act and allows for states to begin developing hemp production plans. Hemp produced under these plans will potentially be eligible for the federal crop insurance program. The Maryland General Assembly during the 2019 session passed legislation (HB 1123) allowing the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to develop a hemp production plan for the state. MDA will be able to create this hemp production plan once USDA releases the guidelines for the state programs. The hemp production plan is the way producers will be monitored and will regulate the production of hemp.

MDA will need to submit to USDA for approval of a hemp production plan. A producer will need to comply first with the state's hemp production plan before legally growing hemp. To date, USDA has not released the final regulations for hemp production plans.

This summer, three projects were conducted in Garrett County with University of

Maryland Extension, Frostburg State University and Garrett College. Additional projects working with different universities were also conducted in the county. The plants have been growing well, and hemp seems to be a viable crop for Garrett County. It seems the critical part of the hemp industry is to be involved in the processing and marketing. We are hoping to coordinate some meetings this fall with potential producers who are interested.

An informal field day will be held on Saturday, September 14th from 3-5pm. Anyone interested in attending should call the University of Maryland Extension Office at 301-334-6960 to register or to learn more.

Got Hay or Straw for Sale?

Get Listed on the Garrett Farms website

The Extension Office often fields questions about hay and straw for sale. www.GarrettFarms.org is where the office finds that info and/or refers people to.

Please contact the office and let us know what you have for sale:

- Type of Hay or Straw
- Type/Size of Bales
- Amount Available
- How it is Stored
- Pricing
- Contact Info

We'll be happy to put a listing on the website for free. Please let us know if you sell out: 301-334-6960.

Save the Date: Tri-State Hay and Pasture Conference

The Tri-State Hay and Pasture Conference will be held on January 16, 2020. The agenda will include Matt Poore, Ruminant Nutrition Specialist at North Carolina State University. The location and time will be announced later in the year.

Appalachian Beekeepers Association: Helping Bee Owners Learn About Care & Keeping of Bees Join Today!

The Appalachian Beekeepers Association works with all beekeepers and potential beekeepers with any number of hives.

With regular meetings with experienced beekeepers to discuss issues, the association is the best way to learn and connect with other beekeepers.

Membership fees are just \$10 per year, due in January. Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of the month, 7:00 pm at the Garrett County University of Maryland Extension office at 1916 Maryland Hwy, Suite A, Mt. Lake Park, MD 21550.

To be added to the mailing list, call 301-334-6960.

FFA Notes:

Oakland

Northern and Southern FFA will be partnering with the Oakland Elks Lodge on Sept 22 to host a car show.

Entry to the show is a donation and baked goods will be for sale on site. All proceeds will be split between the two FFA chapters.

Contact Info for the above:

Terry.Hauser@garrettcounty schools.org



Northern

Northern and Southern FFA will be partnering with the Oakland Elks Lodge on Sept 22 to host a car show.

Entry to the show is a donation and baked goods will be for sale on site. All proceeds will be split between the two FFA chapters.

Contact Info for the above:

Becky.Yost@garrettcounty schools.org

Western Maryland Food Council Efforts Continue

The Western Maryland Food Council (WMFC) had a very active spring and summer. On April 20th, we held the first *Cultivating Western Maryland Food Future Conference* at Allegany College of Maryland. The conference was a great success with over 160 in attendance and a great line up of speakers and sponsors. The conference has already inspired collaborations and grant funding opportunities.

At the conference, Western Maryland Health Systems (WMHS) in Cumberland was presented with the first annual *Food System Champion Award*. WMHS does many great programs with healthy foods.

The conference also generated funds that will be given to each county workgroup to help fund or start local food system projects. Each county will receive \$1,500. We are starting the planning for the 2020 conference. We plan to move the conference between the three counties. The 2020 conference will happen in either Garrett or Washington County.

WMFC Coordinator, Dan

Fiscus will be working with WMHS this coming year to complete a Food Access evaluation in Allegany County. The work is being funded by a grant that WMHS received from Sunlife Financial.

The local Garrett County workgroup for Food Access and Food Education decided to use funds from the 2018 Rural Maryland Council Grant to double the SNAP and WIC benefits at the Farmers Market.

Monthly meetings of the Food Access and Food Education workgroup are held. We are also planning to activate the Food Economy Workgroup in Garrett County. We are planning to do a 12 month study of Garrett County agriculture looking at what opportunities will help farmers and landowners in the next 20 or so years.

If you would be interested in being involved with these workgroups please contact Willie Lantz at 301-334-6960 or wlantz@umd.edu.

You can learn more about the WMFC at www.wmdfoodcouncil.com or find us on Facebook.

Small Ruminant Pasture, Grazing, & Browsing Conference: Saturday, October 19 Western Maryland Research & Education Center in Keedysville, Maryland

9:00 Where Does It Start? Healthy Soil as the Foundation for Good Pasture Management; Maegan Perdue, Extension Associate, Worcester County

9:45 What Do I Need? Setting Up a Pasture and Grazing System; Matt Morris, Extension Educator, Frederick County

10:45 What Should I Plant? An Overview of Common Pasture Forages; Amanda Grev, Pasture Management Specialist, Maryland Extension

11:30 Will It Work? Matching Forage Quality with Animal Requirements; Erika Crowl, Extension Associate, Baltimore County

12:15 Lunch

1:00 Is Financial Assistance Available? An Overview of

NRCS Cost-Share Programs; Hans Kefauver, NRCS Washington County

1:15 Are They the Same? Separating the Sheep from the Goats; Jeff Semler, Extension Educator, Washington County

2:15 How Do I Keep Them Healthy? Worms and Other Potential Problems on Pasture; Susan Schoenian, Sheep and Goat Specialist, Maryland Extension

3:00 How Do We Make It Work? A Producer Panel on What Works for Us; Steffanie Simpson, White Post Farm; Mary Bowen, Browsing Green Goats; Michael Heller, Chesapeake Bay Foundation; Andrew Keller, Vista View Farm

The registration link is <http://2019grazingconference.eventbrite.com/>

Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification and Training

If your private applicator pesticide license expires in December of 2019, you will need to renew the license online. You should receive a postcard in the mail from Maryland Department of Agriculture in October. That postcard will have the web address and the codes necessary for you to renew your license online. *If you are not comfortable with renewing online*, you can call the Department of Ag or the Extension Office and request a paper renewal, which will require you to send a check through the mail for the renewal. If you do not have the required continuing education credits to renew your license you will receive a letter from MDA explaining that you need to get credits. University of Maryland Extension will be offering two opportunities (you only need to attend one) to get the required continuing

education in December. The first will be **Monday, December 9th** from 6-8pm at the Grantsville Library and the second will be on **Monday, December 16th** from 6-8pm at the Extension Office in Mt. Lake Park. Both sessions are free of charge, however we ask you to call the Extension Office at 301-334-6960 to RSVP.

We will also be offering a **pesticide test review** for anyone interested in getting a private applicator license. The session will be held on Monday, January 20th from 6-9pm at the Garrett County Extension Office. The office also has study materials for the test that can be picked up at any time. The Extension Office will arrange with MDA to give the test in Garrett County sometime in late winter. If you have any questions or would like to register call the Extension Office at 301-334-6960.

USDA Opens Signup for Market Facilitation Program

Signup is open for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program to assist farmers who continue to suffer from damages because of unjustified trade retaliation from foreign nations. Through MFP, USDA will provide up to \$14.5 billion in direct payments to impacted producers, part of a broader trade relief package announced in late July. The sign-up period runs through Dec. 6.

MFP payments will be made to producers of certain non-specialty and specialty crops as well as dairy and hog producers.

Non-Specialty Crops: MFP payments will be made to producers of alfalfa hay, barley, canola, corn, crambe, dried beans, dry peas, extra-long staple cotton, flaxseed, lentils, long grain and medium grain rice, millet, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, rye, safflower, sesame seed, small and large chickpeas, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, temperate japonica rice, triticale, upland cotton, and wheat.

MFP assistance for 2019 crops is based on a single county payment rate multiplied by a farm's total plantings to the MFP-eligible crops in aggregate in 2019. Those per acre payments are not dependent on which of those crops are planted in 2019. A producer's total payment-eligible plantings cannot exceed total 2018 plantings. View payment rates by county.

Dairy and Hogs: Dairy producers who were in business as of June 1, 2019, will receive a per hundredweight payment on production history, and hog producers will receive a payment based on the

number of live hogs owned on a day selected by the producer between April 1 and May 15, 2019.

Specialty Crops: MFP payments will also be made to producers of almonds, cranberries, cultivated ginseng, fresh grapes, fresh sweet cherries, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts. Each specialty crop will receive a payment based on 2019 acres of fruit or nut bearing plants, or in the case of ginseng, based on harvested acres in 2019.

More Info: Payments will be made in up to three tranches, with the second and third tranches evaluated as market conditions and

trade opportunities dictate. If conditions warrant, the second and third tranches will be made in November and early January.

MFP payments are limited to a combined \$250,000 for non-specialty crops per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined \$250,000 for dairy and hog producers and a combined \$250,000 for specialty crop producers. However, no applicant can receive more than \$500,000. Eligible applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) for tax years 2015, 2016, and 2017 of less than \$900,000, or 75 percent of the person's or legal entity's average AGI



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Risk Management Agency

for those tax years must have been derived from farming and ranching. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

More information can be found on farmers.gov/mfp, including payment information and a program application.

USDA Now Making Payments for New Dairy Margin Coverage Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) opened enrollment for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program on June 17 and has started issuing payments to producers who purchased coverage. Producers can enroll through Sept. 20, 2019.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC replaces the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). The program offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. To date, nearly 10,000 operations have signed up for the new program, and FSA has begun paying approximately \$100 million to producers for January through May.

May Margin Payment

DMC provides coverage

retroactive to January 1, 2019, with applicable payments following soon after enrollment.

The May 2019 income over feed cost margin was \$9.00 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the fifth payment for eligible dairy producers who purchase the \$9.50 level of coverage under DMC. Payments for January, February, March and April also were triggered.

With the 50 percent hay blend, FSA's revised April 2019 income over feed cost margin is \$8.82 per cwt. The revised margins for January, February and March are, respectively, \$7.71, \$7.91 and \$8.66.

Coverage Levels and MPP Reimbursements

Dairy producers can choose coverage levels from \$4 up to \$9.50 at the time of signup. More than 98 percent of the producers currently

enrolled have elected \$9.50 coverage on up to 95 percent of their production history.

More Information

On December 20, 2018, President Trump signed into law the 2018 Farm Bill, which provides support, certainty and stability to our nation's farmers, ranchers and land stewards by enhancing farm support programs, improving crop insurance, maintaining disaster programs and promoting and supporting voluntary conservation. FSA is committed to implementing these changes as quickly and effectively as possible, and today's updates are part of meeting that goal.

For more information, visit farmers.gov DMC webpage or contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Local Agriculture Marketing Grants

Garrett County Economic Development offers Agriculture Marketing Grants to ag-based businesses in Garrett County.

Up to four grants of up to \$250 each may be awarded annually to fund up to 90% of the costs of each project. Grant funds can be used to aid in the promotion of agriculture-based businesses in Garrett County. Examples include signage, brochures, logo development, business cards, displays, etc.

Applications are simple and taken anytime. Funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis to qualified projects as funding allows. Once approved, the grant funds will be reimbursed to awardees with valid receipt(s) dated after grant approval.

Visit www.gcedonline.com (under agribusiness) or call Cheryl DeBerry at 301-334-6968 for more information.

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The University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources programs are open to all and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, or national origin, marital status, genetic information, or political affiliation, or gender identity and expression. If you have a financial/disability need that requires special assistance for participation in any of the programs, please contact the Extension Office at 301-334-6960.

Selling Farm Products to the Public? Get a free listing on Local Food & Farms Website!!

If you are selling farm products or services to the public, or have an Agritourism enterprise, or just want to get the word out about your agribusiness, you need to get listed or update your listing on www.GarrettFarms.org

Just go to the website and check the "Farms A-Z" page to see if you're already listed. If not, or if you are listed and the info needs updated, send the information to Cheryl DeBerry at: 301-334-6968, or cdeberry@garrettcountry.org

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