

NEWSLETTER

HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

The March Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast is scheduled for **8:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 11, 2010** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please mark this date on your calendar and join us.

Our guest speaker will be **Mr. Bill Powell**, a retired Carroll County, Maryland dairy farmer who grew up in Howard County on well known Doughoregan Manor. Mr. Powell spent about the first 40 years of his life on this large historic estate, an original land grant from the King of England. Its one-time owner, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, was the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Powell will discuss some of his interesting experiences as a youth growing up on this historic estate. For many years, his father, Mr. William B. Powell, served as farm manager for the Carroll family. Under the elder Mr. Powell's leadership, Doughoregan Manor served for many years as an outstanding model for implementing the best in recommended soil conservation practices. Doughoregan was also the home of a nationally known prize-winning herd of purebred Guernsey dairy cattle, their milk qualifying for the then coveted "Golden Guernsey" designation.

If interested in gaining some firsthand insight into this National Historic Landmark, be sure to take advantage of this unique opportunity to hear what Mr. Powell has to tell us. Bring your spouse, and/or a friend. Enjoy the food, the fellowship and a lively and friendly exchange of

information. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. and the program will begin at 8:30 a.m.

Please RSVP by noon, Tuesday, March 9, by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or Martha Clark at (410) 531-3455. The cost of the breakfast is \$10.00 per person, payable at the door.

The formal part of the program will conclude by about 9:00 a.m. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, **March 11**, at the Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

President's Message by **Howie Feaga, President** **Howard County Farm Bureau**

WOW!! It just kept on coming. Just when we thought that it had finally stopped raining, then it just wouldn't stop snowing. We have blown the seasonal record for snowfall right off the books.

I hope that all of you made it through the storms safe and sound. I did hear that tragedy struck at Gene and Charlotte Mullinix's Woodbine farm with the collapse of one of their big feedlot barns. I haven't heard yet how many animals were lost or injured. Regardless, we wish them well on their cleanup and recovery efforts.

Hopefully, no one else has suffered this kind of misfortune. All that we can do is learn from our experiences. And it seems that there have been more than enough opportunities for learning from our weather-related experiences of this past fall

and winter. Please be safe in your future endeavors. Take your time and look ahead.

I had the wonderful opportunity of traveling to Seattle, Washington in January for the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention. Believe it or not, it was warmer in Seattle than in Tampa Bay, Florida. We met many other farmers from across the country and enjoyed visiting with them.

We heard a very moving message from AFBF President Stallman, telling us that we must no longer tolerate the efforts of our opponents to change American Agriculture. Our adversaries are skillful at taking advantage of the politeness of members of the farm community. We must not allow that to continue lest it result in our demise. We need to be more proactive and actively defend ourselves and our way of life.

On the lighter side though, we were totally entertained by our keynote speaker, Terry Bradshaw, a former Pittsburgh Steelers Quarterback and member of the Pro-Football Hall of Fame.

Spring is just around the corner and hopefully memories of this past fall and winter will fade, and we can begin to look forward to a more normal spring and summer.

So, like always, "keep your plow in the ground." "We're all pulling for you".

Tragic Loss of Cattle from Feedlot Barn Roof Collapse

Because of the recent record heavy snowfall, on Friday, February, 12, 2010, the enormous weight of snow that had collected on the roof of a large feedlot barn on the Woodbine farm of Gene and Charlotte Mullinix caused it to collapse unexpectedly with disastrous results for many of the cattle inside.

According to L. Martin Hamilton, Jr., Executive

Sec'y of the Maryland, Agricultural Fair Board, it was estimated that at the time of the collapse, between 40 and 60 head of cattle were either killed by the cave-in or were so badly injured that they ultimately had to be put down. A later report published in the February 16, 2010 issue of *The Delmarva Farmer* stated that of the 150 head of cattle in the building, 39 were lost. Miraculously, five head were recovered unharmed two days after the collapse.

The final losses, which included a tractor and some hay, were not immediately known at the time of this writing. The day after the collapse, many friends and neighbors with their equipment were still attempting to remove the debris and dig it all out.

Aside from the terrible physical and emotional loss for the Mullinix family, the bigger problem, according to Martin Hamilton, was one of how to dispose of the unusually large number of carcasses. He reported that "multiple government agencies had 'waded into the fray'."

Rachel King & Mitchel Feaga Promote Agriculture by Teresa King

I wanted to let everyone know about something exciting that the 2009 Future Howard County Farmer, Mitchel Feaga, and the 2009 Little Miss Howard County Farm Bureau, Rachel King, did recently.

On December 17 Mitchel and Rachel spoke about agriculture in Howard County to about 80 members of the kindergarten class at Bushy Park Elementary School. Mitchel's father, Tim Feaga, put together a slide show for them that included pictures of Rachel and Mitchel showing their animals at the fair and also of different types of farming in Howard County.

The kids got together beforehand to practice their presentation. They gave clues to the kids who

then were asked to guess what type of animal (dairy or beef for instance) or what kind of farming they were describing.



Some of the topics that they spoke about included local farms that produce Christmas trees, pumpkins, flowers, turf, and grains. The kindergarten kids really seemed to enjoy the

presentation and actually did quite well in coming up with correct answers to the clues.

Rachel and Mitchell also talked about the fun that they have in 4-H. After the presentation was over they gave out 4-H pencils and agriculture coloring books.

Mitchel is in 4th grade at Bushy Park Elementary School. Rachel has graduated from Bushy Park and is now in the 6th grade at Glenwood Middle School.

I thought that it would be important, and interesting, to let Howard County Farm Bureau members know, through the Farm Bureau Newsletter, some of the activities that the kids have been involved in since receiving the honor of the titles that they won this past summer.

These two young people both have a lot of pride in local agriculture and they obviously had a lot of fun in making their presentation.

Local Kids Conduct Bake Sale for Haiti Earthquake Victims by Kim Feaga

When Ellie Feaga heard about the earthquake in Haiti, she asked her parents what she could do to help. Ten days later, on January 30, Ellie held a bake sale to benefit the American Red Cross and its Haiti relief efforts.

With help from her mom, Ellie contacted family and friends to request donations of baked goods to sell at her event. Before long, over 20 families had committed to helping her and beautiful cakes, muffins, fudge and homemade jams came rolling in.



L-R: Megan Caffey, Ellie Feaga, Hannah Hills, Emily Miller, Grace Hills. All five girls are in the 2nd grade at Bushy Park Elementary School and came out to support Ellie.

The day of the bake sale became quite a family affair. Ellie greeted her customers and ran a cashiering station in the kitchen. Big brother, Mitchell, sold warm cups of chili to those brave enough to come out in the 6 inches of unexpected snow. Ellie's dad kept the long driveway plowed and salted all day long.

With just a few items left at the end of the day, Ellie packed them up and finished selling them the next morning at her church, Lisbon United Methodist.

Ellie received overwhelming support for her bake

sale efforts and raised a total of \$1500 for Haiti. What pleases her parents is that her good will appears to be contagious. Ellie and Mitchell's friends are having birthday parties asking for charitable donations in lieu of gifts, and some are hosting their own fund raisers for Haiti. It's an amazing chain of events with kids inspiring kids.

Ellie is 7 years old and in 2nd grade at Bushy Park Elementary School. She is an active member in both the Howard County Dairy and Cabin Branch Bunch 4-H Clubs. Her parents, Tim and Kim, and brother, Mitchell, are very proud of her.

Balance Sheep Rations Online

**Re-printed from Farm Notes
UME Carroll County Newsletter
February, 2010**

Montana State University's Sheep Ration Program (www.msusheerpration.montana.edu) is designed to assist producers in matching available feedstuffs with the animal's nutritional needs. With the program, you can:

- View sheep nutritional requirements.
- View the standard nutrient content of more than 300 feeds.
- Enter custom feed values based on laboratory results.
- Balance a ration for sheep at various life cycle stages.
- Find answers to frequently asked nutritional questions.

MSU Feed Ration is a free on-line program that does not require any specific type of software. To use the program, all you need is a computer capable of accessing the Internet.

The program is based in part on nutritional recommendations adapted from "Nutrient

Requirements of Sheep", Sixth Revised Edition, 1985, by the National Research Council.

Goat rations can be balanced on-line using Langston University's nutrient requirement calculator at http://www.luresext.edu/goats/research/nutr_calc.htm.

Environmental Trading Programs

by **Kristal McCormick
and Gerry Talbert**

Howard Soil Conservation District

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) has received funding for a project to coordinate with conservation districts in six states that drain to the Chesapeake Bay.

The Chesapeake Bay Eco-Trading Project was proposed to provide leadership for conservation districts to educate and assist farmers in participation in nutrient and carbon trading and market-driven programs. A selection of conservation districts in Maryland, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia will work with farmers to evaluate their potential participation in nutrient, carbon and other market-driven trading programs that are available in each state.

The three year project will train 34 conservation districts to provide outreach and technical assistance to up to 600 farmers within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed with farm-specific assessments of their potential for environmental market trading.

The first phase of the project is being held in Maryland and Delaware. Howard County is one of the seven districts involved in Maryland. The districts were trained to evaluate a farmer's potential for participation in Maryland's new Nutrient Trading Program and in carbon trading.

New online software will be used to determine eligibility and potential practices that could be

installed to generate credits for sale. Program rules will be explained so that farmers are well prepared to participate or to be ready when new programs are available. Each farmer interview will be concluded with a short anonymous survey so that farmer's opinions can be gathered regarding their interest in voluntary trading programs.

If you are interested in having an evaluation done, contact the Howard Soil Conservation District at (410) 489-7987. It is free and you have no obligation to take any action.

Thunder Storms:
Treat Them with Respect!
by Allan Bandel

Although they can be quite fascinating, and sometimes even rather frightening, powerful electrical storms accompanied by intense dark clouds, brilliant bolts of lightning and loud claps of thunder can be very dangerous to humans and to farm animals alike. Around the world, approximately 100 lightning flashes occur every second. Most of the thunder bolts that we see here are between clouds and rarely contact the ground. But many of the flashes do actually reach the ground and when they do, they can cause grievous damage.

The probability of Americans being struck by lightning is minuscule (unless you are the one getting hit of course), only about 1 in 576,000. And the probability of anyone in the U.S. actually being killed by lightning is even smaller, only about 1 in every 2,320,000. Nevertheless, every year some people do manage to get struck and even killed or injured by lightning. The Empire State Building in New York City may receive 100 lightning strikes in a year. Lightning is a very potent force, a source of energy that must be respected and reckoned with.

We sometimes hear reports of horrifying experiences involving people being stranded in a violent electrical storm without proper shelter.

It might have been a golfer playing the back nine, far away from the clubhouse, when a fast-moving storm caught him/her by surprise on the 15th green. Standing near the pole, which could attract a bolt of lightning, the golfer was struck by lightning, sometimes with fatal results.

Or, we might remember the case where a neighboring farmer tragically lost several head of valuable livestock when the lone tree under which the animals had sought shelter was struck by lightning. When the electrical charge dissipated into the soil under the tree, the unfortunate animals became victims.

There have also been many barn fires reported over the years that were caused by lightning strikes, often destroying the building and its valuable contents.

Electrical storms can, without a doubt, be very dangerous to humans and to animals, both wild and domestic. Obviously, lightning must be treated with a very high degree of respect. We cannot expect to be as lucky as old Ben Franklin was back in 1752 when he performed his legendary experiment involving the storm cloud, the kite and the key. He was one of the first to prove that there was static electricity in those dark storm clouds. But don't be fooled. A single lightning bolt can deliver a billion volts and 100,000 amperes. People have been killed when they received a lot less electricity than that. Some have been injured by lightning that struck 30 yards or more away from where they were located.

There have been one or two very unforgettable incidents involving lightning that I have experienced while working on the family farm here in Howard County. Those were times that I experienced too close a call with an electrical storm, a little closer than I really would have preferred. But, I was lucky each time and fortunately survived those dicey experiences. As a result, I learned some valuable lessons and became considerably wiser and more cautious during electrical storms.

One of those close encounters took place while

baling alfalfa hay one hot sultry afternoon in the mid-1960s. I was anxious to finish the job before a threatening storm broke. The hay was in perfect shape for baling and the New Holland baler behind our John Deere 620 tractor was working flawlessly, “humming” along with never a miss-tied bale. I didn’t want to stop just because a few dark clouds were starting to gather in the west.

Being pulled behind the baler was a high-sided New Holland bale wagon. Since the baler was equipped with a mechanical bale “thrower”, there was no need for anyone to be riding on the wagon to stack the bales. Thus, I was totally alone out there in the hay field that hot day.

The field was located about ½ mile from the farm buildings. I knew that a storm was on its way that afternoon, and I really wanted to get the rest of the hay baled before the rain arrived. But, the storm came up far more quickly than I had anticipated and soon caught me out in the open field before I could finish baling the hay, and well before I could get back to the barn.

Storms can sometimes blow up surprisingly fast when you are not expecting them. But this storm’s sudden arrival caught me almost totally by surprise, mainly because of the unique location of the field. The field was adjacent to and directly east of a heavily wooded hillside. Summer electrical storms usually approach from the west and due to the poor visibility from this field in the westerly direction, the storm came upon me almost without warning.

With a drenching rain suddenly threatening if I did not get to shelter quickly, my only option, I believed, was to shut down the baler and then drive the tractor, baler and the partially loaded wagon back to the barn as directly and quickly as I could safely travel.

Remember, this was at a time when very few farm tractors were equipped with cabs. Almost all 1960s era farm tractors were built with an “open station” configuration. Unlike many tractors built years later in the 21st century, tractor cabs back then were almost totally

unheard of. Our John Deere 620 was like most contemporary tractors of the time and did not have a cab. I was soon convinced that it would be impossible to reach shelter before the approaching downpour got to me. I was just going to have to “tough it out” and get wet!

The sky darkened quickly, and it wasn’t long before heavy rain was falling with a vengeance. Then, as if the rain alone wasn’t enough, combined with the frequent lightning flashes, the situation deteriorated even more. I was soon being pelted with hailstones about the size of marbles. Those nasty little chunks of ice created a loud “rattling” noise as they bounced off the hood of the tractor. It felt like I was being attacked by an angry swarm of stinging bees as the small balls of ice bounced off of my face and bare arms.

The stinging sensation of the hailstones convinced me that I now really needed to find shelter quickly. The storm was upon me and I was still nowhere near the barn. Without thinking much about any bad consequences, I hastily locked the tractor’s brakes, disengaged the pto, and with the engine still running, I hopped to the ground, ran back past the baler and crawled under the bale wagon where I thought I would find safe haven from the rain, the hail and the fearsome lightning.

But once again, I soon discovered that I had committed a serious mistake. As I sat on the now damp ground beneath the wagon bed, and reclined my back against one of the wagon’s two long metal coupling rails, I was “jolted”, gently fortunately, when I sensed a “tingling” minor electrical shock. Although mild, I felt it pass through my body as yet another lightning bolt struck nearby.

With a sudden “shocking” awakening of my senses, I began to understand the very serious reality of my new circumstance. I realized then that I was probably now in a much more dangerous situation than when I was up on the tractor seat. By seeking haven from the storm on the ground under the wagon, and by being in contact with the wagon’s metal frame, my body

was completing a very good route to ground for lightning to follow. It could very easily travel from the highest point on the tractor (the tall exposed muffler that extended at least two feet above the tractor's hood), through the baler, then along the bale wagon's metal frame, and then finally through me to ground. If I remained under that wagon, I could very likely be "fried" by the next bolt of lightning.

Without thinking about it any longer, and in spite of the severity of the storm's pouring rain and pelting hail, I promptly decided to take my chances being exposed high up on the tractor's open platform. Now soaking wet, I climbed back on the tractor, put it in gear and headed for the barn. Despite the unpleasantness of the hail and the rain, I was convinced that, although uncomfortable, it was far safer to be exposed up on the open tractor and getting even wetter, than it would have been had I remained huddled under the wagon where it had at least been relatively dry.

At least one good thing happened to me that afternoon. I learned first hand a valuable lesson about electrical storms. Although sometimes fascinating, I was permanently impressed with just how dangerous they might be. **I learned to treat them with much more respect.** I consider myself extremely lucky that stormy afternoon to not have been seriously injured, or worse. Besides, there was no point in "being a hero" by remaining exposed out in an open field with a dangerous storm approaching. The hay left on the ground might have gotten wet and lost some of its quality. But I, at least, still had a chance to bale what's left of it on another day.

Changing Seasons
by **Timothy S. Barkley, Sr.**
JD, CFP, CSA
Attorney at Law

How long has it been since you looked over your financial and estate plan? Does the plan you wrote or envisioned still apply? Can you

remember what the documents say?

If you cannot find your documents, you cannot claim to have a plan. This author often handles estates in which vital documents are missing, causing great problems for loved ones. In one estate, thousands of dollars of excess income taxes were paid because of a missing IRA beneficiary designation form.

Your powers of attorney become "stale" after three to five years, and are often dishonored. In one case, a brokerage firm refused to honor a power of attorney that was more than six months old. The firm presented with the form was concerned that the principal, the person granting power to the agent, might have revoked the document in the interim.

Because situations change, wills need to be reviewed and, possibly, rewritten. The brother that was to serve as guardian of your child now has retired and moved on in life, or the child that was to be his ward has children of his own. The children who needed a trust to shield them from their youthful impecunity are successful professionals and responsible citizens – or, heaven forbid, are long since over the age of majority, but can't seem to keep a dollar in hand longer than it takes to get to the nearest department store.

Your house that was worth thirty thousand dollars when you bought it is now worth ten times that much, but just a couple of years ago it was worth twenty times that much. The children that filled it alternatively with laughter and contention are long gone. Do you need a house this big? How will you pay for elder care if you need it? Can you keep the house intact and still pay for care?

The farm you inherited from your father is worth enough to attract the attention of the tax man when you die. The children who were to perpetuate the family farming tradition are scattered from coast to coast, and you know deep inside that the land you've loved and labored over will be developed as soon as you are safely out of the way. Should you cash in (or out) now?

You can remember when your 401(k) or IRA was worth a million dollars, but not too much later was valued at almost enough to buy you a cup of coffee on a good market day. But it's coming back, and you think it must be about time to re-balance your portfolio. Your first financial plan – save enough to put the kids through college – has succeeded, and now you're wondering when, if ever, you'll be able to retire, or whether you'll be able to retire early and travel, as you and your spouse have always dreamed.

The father who was your mother's mainstay and provider has passed on, and she is trying to understand all those statements that show up in the mail. You aren't sure that his very eclectic investment philosophy is appropriate for her, and you're worried that someone will take advantage of her.

As life's seasons change, we change the set of our sails to meet the shifting winds of fortune. Make sure your plans are current. Consult with your planning professional.

Got e-mail?

Then, Why Not Try Receiving Your Newsletter electronically?

If you have a computer with access to the internet, then why not help the Howard County Farm Bureau save a significant amount of money on the cost of postage and paper by choosing to receive *The Newsletter* by e-mail?

As you know, postage rates just keep on increasing. There just seems to be no end in sight. With each issue, there are approximately 1,300 copies of the Newsletter printed and sent to members through conventional mail. The cost, not counting time and labor, is nearly two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for every issue. The cost of using e-mail is but a tiny fraction of this amount. The Howard County Farm Bureau can obviously save many dollars out of its limited budget by using e-mail instead of the U.S. Postal Service.

Another great advantage to making more use of e-mail is that whenever any color photographs or other visuals are used, the e-mail version will come to you with those visuals in full color instead of in black and white. Please consider making the switch to electronic mail.

If you would prefer to receive your monthly meeting reminders by the much more economical e-mail route, then please inform Merhlyn Barnes at merhlynbarnes@aol.com.

Simply indicate in a short e-mail message that you prefer to receive future issues of *The Newsletter* by e-mail rather than through the US Postal Service. It's easy, efficient, and "green". And you will be making a significant contribution toward helping with your local County Farm Bureau's limited finances.

Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

The annual Howard County mid-winter ag meeting will be held on March 2nd at the Glenwood Community Center. Tentative time is 6:30 to 8:30 pm, possibly earlier. This event will also help satisfy Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training requirements.

For more information, call Kristal McCormick at the Howard Soil Conservation District office, (410) 489-7875.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2010

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| Mar 2 | Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting. 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Glenwood Community Center, Glenwood, MD. Contact: Kristal McCormick, HSCD at (410) 489-7875. |
| Mar 2 | Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis. (Re-scheduled from Tuesday, February 9). Start at 8:30 |

am at the Calvert House on State Street in Annapolis. Contact: Valerie Connelly at (410) 922-3426.

- Mar 2 **Regional Farm Development Workshop: Taking the Roadblocks out of Growing Your Farm Enterprise.** 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. Registration and \$35 fee required. Contact: Kathy Zimmerman or Jill Joubert at (410) 313-6500.
- Mar 4 **Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training.** 10:00 am to noon. Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, MD. To register, contact: (410) 386-2760.
- Mar 5-6 **Maryland Cattle Industry Convention/Hay & Pasture Conference.** Sykesville, MD. Contact: Dr. Scott Barao, (410) 795-5309 or (443) 745-1618 (cell).
- Mar 8 **Ag Preservation Board Public Hearing.** 7:30 pm, Board Room, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. Contact: Joy Levy at (410) 313-5407.
- Mar 11 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 to 9:00 am. Dining Hall, Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD.
- Mar 22 **Field Crops and Pasture IPM Workshop.** Davidsonville Family Recreation Center, Davidsonville, MD. Contact: Anne Arundel County Extension Office at (410) 222-6759.

Mar 24-25 **Mid-Atlantic Nutrition Conference.** Crowne Plaza, Timonium, MD. Contact: (301) 405-1392.

Mar 26-27 **2010 MD-DE Sheep Shearing School for Beginners.** 9:30-3:30 pm, Thompson Sheep Farm, 1942 Uniontown Road, Westminster, MD.

Mar 27 **National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Certification Program - Skills Test.** See article in this newsletter for details.

Apr 3 **2010 MD-DE Sheep Shearing School for Advanced.** 9:30-3:30 pm, Thompson Sheep Farm, 1942 Uniontown Road, Westminster, MD.

Apr 22 **Horse Pasture Walk.** 6:00 to 8:00 pm, Equine Rotational Grazing Site, CMREC, 4241 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Contact: Dr. Amy Burk at (301) 405-8337.

Jun 24-26 **Pioneers of Ag... Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference.** Renaissance Harborplace Hotel, Baltimore, MD. Contact: www.maefonline.com or www.agintheclassroom.org

[NOTE]: Some programs require pre-registration and/or a fee. For programs sponsored by Maryland Cooperative Extension, if you need special assistance to participate, please contact the person indicated at least two weeks in advance of the event.