

# AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

410-666-1188, EXTENSION 3

EDITOR: GERALD F. TALBERT

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## THE 2008 CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

The Conservation Security Program (CSP), created in the 2002 Farm Bill, has approved contracts to ten Baltimore County farmers in 2008. The intent of CSP is to support ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural lands by providing payments to producers who maintain and enhance the condition of natural resources. It is unique in federal conservation programs because rather than enticing farmers to install best management practices, it rewards and acknowledges those who are already providing excellent conservation management of their natural resources. By establishing tiers of accomplishments, it also provides higher payments for those who agree to further enhance their operations with more environmental improvements.

The current CSP was the result of years of encouragement by the conservation community to create such a program. By embracing a philosophy of using a voluntary, incentive-driven approach with farmers, conservation districts have always placed the highest value on those farmers who are willing to be the first to try a new conservation practice while the rest of their community wait to see how it works for them. Often, conservation programs are then created to provide incentives for best management practices and ironically, those who have led the way are then ineligible to receive the incentive payment. CSP is designed to reward those leaders who have installed conservation on their land and inspired others to follow.

Each year that CSP has been offered so far, only certain watersheds are targeted in each state for participation. The 2008 program targeted the Gunpowder and

Patapsco watersheds which cover nearly 208,000 acres and made nearly all of Baltimore County eligible plus parts of Carroll, Howard, Anne Arundel and Harford Counties and York County, Pennsylvania.

The first step in the application process is for the farmer to complete a self-assessment with a description of conservation activities to help USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) personnel determine eligibility and placement on a three tier system of accomplishment. Although such a level of documentation is considered necessary in order to adequately determine eligibility and placement, some farmers didn't participate because of the amount of paperwork and that the signup period was during spring planting, even though many would be qualified to rank high in the program.

The ten Baltimore County farmers who signed contracts will receive payments collectively totaling \$150,058 for stewardship on 8,809 acres. They were all ranked in the highest tier and all agreed to add additional practices.

"CSP is providing an incentive for the good conservation work being done in the Gunpowder-Patapsco watershed," said Tim Clippinger, District Conservationist. "Baltimore County has an abundance of good, conservation-minded farmers."

The program was included in the 2008 Farm Bill, but will be revised and renamed the Conservation Stewardship Program. There are few details as to how the program will differ from the current CSP until regulations are drafted and finalized.

### **You Can Receive This Newsletter By Email!!**

Enjoy a full color version emailed to you as soon as it is posted to our website. Register for our email group by calling 410-666-1188, ext. 101 or emailing to [essy.frey@md.nacdnet.net](mailto:essy.frey@md.nacdnet.net).



The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts presented a “Special Achievement” Award jointly to District Manager Jim Ensor (left) and District Conservationist Tim Clippinger in recognition of their concept which resulted in the District’s establishment of the Small Farm Water Quality Cost-Share Program. *Photo by Essy Frey.*

### Forestry for the Bay

Forestry for the Bay is a new program designed to assist small and medium private woodland owners in the Bay region with technical and financial support for woodland management. It is free and voluntary and is designed to complement existing forest stewardship programs rather than duplicate them. For more information, go to [www.forestryforthebay.org](http://www.forestryforthebay.org).



Sara Campbell joined the District as an Urban Conservationist in September. Her previous work experience included working at the Maryland Science Center as an Outreach Specialist and as a dispatcher for the Alban Tractor Company.

*Photo by Essy Frey*

### Update on ‘08/’09 Winter Cover Crop Program

Cover crops are one of the most cost-effective and environmentally sustainable ways to control soil erosion and reduce nutrient runoff into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries during the winter.

This year, \$18 million in cover crop funding is available to Maryland farmers—more than double last year’s cover crop budget. At this funding level, farmers can plant nearly 500,000 acres in protective cover crops following the fall harvest.

If you signed up for the program during the enrollment period of June 23 – July 8, consider the following guidelines:

- An applicant must come to the District office to sign the fall certification form of the MD Agricultural Cost-Share (MACS) Cover Crop Program within one week of planting the cover crop. For those who have planted on the MACS incentive for an October 1, 2008 deadline, they must report no later than October 8<sup>th</sup>; for an October 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, they must report no later than October 22<sup>nd</sup>; and, for a November 5<sup>th</sup> deadline, reporting must be done by November 12<sup>th</sup>.
- District personnel shall conduct random spot checks to verify compliance with program guidelines and complete documentation by December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Fall application of manure generated on the farm is allowed and may be eligible for an incentive payment if: there is inadequate winter storage or other use options; manure is applied before November 5, 2008; manure is managed with a certified nutrient management plan; and, the acreage on which manure is applied was indicated on the submitted cover crop application form.
- The manure incentive payment is also available for manure applied last spring as part of the fertilization method for the previous crop.
- The cover crop can only be established by conventional drill, no-till planter or broadcasting followed by light disking, turbo till or stalk chopping.
- Grazing or “green chopping” for livestock forage use on an applicant’s operation (not for sale) is allowed after the fall crop is well established.
- Crop Rates, Dates and Payments
  - Barley must be planted between 8/15—10/15/08 at 120 lbs./acre for a base payment of \$45/acre.
  - Rye must be planted between 8/15—11/05/08 at 112 lbs./acre for a base payment of \$50/acre.
  - Triticale must be planted between 8/15-11/05 at 112 lbs./ac. for \$45/ac.
  - Wheat/Speltz must be planted between 8/15-11/05 at 120 lbs./ac. for \$45/ac.
- For additional information, call Jared Wagner, 410-666-1188, extension 113.



*“...Each soil has had its own history. Like a river, a mountain, a forest, or any natural thing, its present condition is due to the influences of many things and events of the past...”*

—Charles Kellogg,  
*The Soils That Support Us, 1956*  
 [volume 1, Issue 3]

The Baltimore County Soil Conservation District won the 2008 Outstanding Newsletter Award presented by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in McHenry, MD on July 16. From left to right above is Stanley Booth, MASCD Awards Committee, Charles Conklin, District Chairman, Vernon Foster, District Supervisor, Jim Ensor, District Manager, Diana Gutierrez, Associate Supervisor and Lee McDaniel, MASCD President. The District also won the Outstanding Newsletter Award in 2004.



### **DO YOU HAVE A SMALL FARM IN THE PRETTYBOY WATERSHED?**

- Operate with 7 or less animal units (1 animal unit = 1,000 lbs.)?
- Want free technical assistance to develop a conservation plan for your property?
- Could use cost-share funds up to 87 1/2 % of the installation cost of conservation practices (up to a maximum of \$5,000 per farm if applicable)?

**Contact the District office at 410-666-1188, ext. 112 and make an appointment .**

Ciara McMurtrie is the District’s new Soil Conservation Planner and Regional Equine Specialist for Baltimore, Harford and Carroll Counties. She started in August and will be assisting with the District’s Small Farm Cost-Share Program. Her previous experience includes work as an Assistant Trainer/Exercise Rider with thoroughbred race horses. *Photo by Essy Frey.*

#### **District Outreach**

Speakers from the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District are available at no charge to give presentations on natural resource conservation programs in agricultural and urban areas. If your organization or school would like to hear about the ways that conservation practices can improve soil, water and air quality for any land use, contact the District office at 410-666-1188, extension 3 to

**B**altimore County Soil Conservation District  
 9831 Van Buren Lane  
 Cockeysville, MD 21030  
 Phone: 410-666-1188; Fax: 410-666-0179  
<http://www.mascd.net/BCSCD>



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**BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

*A political subdivision of the State of Maryland, the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District was established in 1944. Its mission is to protect the natural resources of Baltimore County and assist landowners in implementing sound conservation measures. The District is managed by a Board of Supervisors, five appointed county residents who take an oath of office to serve their community. The staff is composed of federal, state and district employees.*

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

- Charles Conklin—Chairman
- Thomas Reynolds—Vice Chairman
- Loring Sparks—Treasurer
- Vernon Foster
- Stephen Smith
- David Martin, Secretary, Cooperative Extension

**ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS**

- Daniel Dorsey      Pat Ghingher      Lucy Wright
- Diana Gutierrez

**DISTRICT STAFF**

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

- Jim Ensor, District Manager
- Essy Frey, Administrative Assistant

**AGRICULTURAL**

- Tim Clippinger, District Conservationist, NRCS
- Andy Thomas, Soil Conservation Eng. Tech., MDA
- Ciara McMurtrie, Planner/Outreach Specialist, MDA
- Jared Wagner, Soil Conservation Planner, MDA
- Serafina Rayner, Technician, MDA

**URBAN**

- Jeff West, Urban Conservationist
- Quintin Cornwell, Urban Conservationist
- David Bachman, Urban Conservationist
- Sara Campbell, Urban Conservationist, Balto. Co.

*All District services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.*

**LET US KNOW IF WE CAN HELP YOU!**

The Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS) will pay up to 87.5% of the installation cost of these practices for qualifying landowners:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waste Storage             | <input type="checkbox"/> Grassed Waterway       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Riparian Buffer           | <input type="checkbox"/> Winter Cover Crop      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Border           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Use Area Protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Filter Strip           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roof Runoff Mngt. System  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sediment Basin            | <input type="checkbox"/> Stream Fencing         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient Mgt. Plan        | <input type="checkbox"/> Strip Cropping         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Development        | <input type="checkbox"/> Stream Crossing        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trough or Tank            | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical Area Planting |

If you would like to see if you qualify or you'd like more information on these or other conservation practices, a conservation plan for your property or updating an old plan, mail or fax this form to us and we will contact you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Fax to: 410-666-0179 or mail to:

Baltimore County Soil Conservation District  
 9831 Van Buren Lane  
 Cockeysville, MD 21030