



Dorchester Quarterly

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program -Deadlines

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program to assist landowners, while promoting agricultural production and environmental quality. Thus producers receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and management conservation practices that promote environmental benefits on working agricultural land. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm and ranch land. There are national, state, and local priorities. Maryland has identified the following priorities: livestock management, grazing management, erosion control, nutrient management, pest management, and wildlife habitat enhancement. Farmers may sign up for the program throughout the year, however Fiscal 2017 has two

deadlines. The first deadline for applications is January 20, 2017 and the second is February 17, 2017. Applications may be accepted after the deadlines and may be considered, if additional rounds are announced for 2017. Otherwise applications will be considered in 2018. All applications are competitive and ranked based on national, state and locally identified resource priorities and benefit to the environment. These funds are separate from the EQIP local funding pool of \$100,000 which had a deadline of December 16, 2016 and is prioritized locally. The state website has the ranking criteria posted by county. If interested in the program contact the Cambridge Service Center at 410-228-5640.

Website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/md/programs/financial/eqip/>

EQIP DEADLINES:

Cycle 1– January 20, 2017

Cycle 2 - February 17, 2017

CREP - If interested in re-enrolling land in CREP contact FSA to let them know you are interested. Also review the maintenance provisions under your Conservation Plan, as you must have **less than 10%** woody and undesirable growth (tall fescue) to qualify. To ensure eligibility we recommend re-seeding your buffer strips to avoid compliance issues.

Winter Cover Crop Reminder

This is a reminder that the cover crops planted with funding by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) must remain in place until after March 1, 2017. They can be destroyed by herbicide, disking or green chopping (for on farm use only). There is a provision to terminate the crop as early as February 15, 2017, but this must be for early vegetable crops that will be planted within 2 weeks of kill-down. Application of manure may not occur before March

1. You are permitted to apply potash and lime to the cover crop during the fall and/or winter. To obtain your spring payment, all winter crops must be killed-down or declared to be harvested before the district can request payment. All cover crops must be suppressed or killed-down no later than June 2. Remember, you must fill-out your Annual Implementation Report (AIR) by March 1st to be in compliance with MDA to receive your payment and to apply for next year's program. *by John Willey*

Cheers! MD Grape Growers and MD Wineries Association



*A toast from marylandwine.com:
"May your troubles be less
And your blessings be more."*

Governor Larry Hogan announced that Comptroller Peter Franchot and Treasurer Nancy Kopp approved \$85,000 in grants to support the Maryland Wine Industry.

The funds will be used for marketing, research, advertising, festival promotion and activities to promote grape growing throughout the state.

Maryland's growing wine industry is important to the Maryland economy. Since 2015 the tax revenue collected on wine with Maryland grown grapes distributed to the Maryland Wine and Grape Promotion Fund has grown. The state Department of Agriculture estimates the fund to receive nearly \$160,000 per year.

For more information on

Maryland wine, go to marylandwine.com website. There you will find a list of 72 wineries located in the State of Maryland. In addition, you will find information on events, wine festivals, awards and news. Also of interest is the cheers section which provides a glossary of terms, toasts, and wine quotes.

Conservation Stewardship Program Sign-up

Terron Hillsman, Ph.D., State Conservationist in a recent USDA News Release said, "Customized CSP tools for Maryland will improve the customer experience during application evaluations."

The Conservation Stewardship Program enables producers and forest landowners to earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, ecologically-based pest management, buffer strips, and pollinator and beneficial insect habitat,

while maintaining active agriculture production. The program also encourages adoption of cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques. Like precision agriculture, on-site carbon storage, and planting for high carbon sequestration and new soil amendments to improve water

quality. The Natural Resource Conservation Service is now accepting applications for enrollment. Sign-up will run through February 3, 2017. Information can be found at the CSP portal, at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp>.

Avian Influenza Emergency Orders Extended



Biosecurity Procedures Extended be vigilant.

The Maryland Secretary of Agriculture has extended emergency orders to prevent High Path Avian Influenza from infecting poultry flocks in Maryland. Please follow all preventive biosecurity procedures while tending your flocks large or

small, whether in the backyard or on a commercial farm. Keep in mind that bacteria and viruses can be picked up on shoes and clothing. Therefore, you should clean and disinfect your shoes and launder your clothes before you check on

or work with birds, as well as before leaving your property to travel to another farm or business establishment. A self assessment of biosecurity practices can be found at www.uspoultry.org/animal_husbandry/assessment.cfm.

“Women and Land” Conservation Learning Circle

The American Farmland Trust is hosting a Women and Land Conservation Learning Circle. Conservation staff is currently assisting the trust to identify women that own and or help manage a farm or forest land in Dorchester, Talbot, or Caroline County. The goal is to engage discussion and fellowship, as well as inform participants of conservation practices and resource management agencies that may be able to

assist them. Thus enabling women to become more knowledgeable and confident when making decisions regarding their land and to seek out technical and financial assistance to protect or improve their land and natural resources. If you are a woman landowner who recently experienced a major transition in land ownership and/or decision making, perhaps widowed or divorced, purchased a farm or recently inherited land, this

may be the perfect opportunity for you. There will be three sessions with the first on February 16th from 9:30 am to 3 pm at the Dorchester Soil Conservation District, as well as March 9th, and March 30th. Total cost for all three days with lunch provided is \$15.00. If you think you may be interested please contact Lori Lilly at (503)-791-8405 or aftwomenandland@gmail.com.



“The circle is important for dialogue. Women talk differently than men. We speak different languages. We may say the same sentences, but it can have a different meaning.” Maryland Learning Circle participant 2015.

In the News....

MD Energy Grant for Animal Waste to Energy Program—MEA has made available up to \$2 million for animal waste to energy program, with no cap for participation. Applicants must provide 50 percent cost share. The program is open to businesses, government agencies and non-profits in MD. Applications due Feb. 28th.

Chesapeake Bay Foundation received a Regional Conservation Partnership Award from NRCS to fund \$1.1 million worth of conservation practices to livestock farmers who wish to convert their operations to grazing systems. Sign up for funds will be fall of 2017. Contact Rob Schnabel at 443-482-2175.

Delmarva Whole System Conservation Program—Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and the Delmarva Conservation Partnership, NRCS will focus \$5 million over 3 years to farmers in the Choptank, Nanticoke and Pocomoke watersheds in Maryland and Delaware to implement 4R Nutrient management enhancements. The 2017 funding will include advanced nutrient management, wetland restoration and other natural filters, Denitrification (Wood Chip) Bioreactors, Gypsum Soil Amendments, and Cover Crops.

Article on AMERICAN FARM. COM by Jonathan Cribbs, Associate Editor, titled “McNew: International corn to test market”. International grain markets are becoming increasingly competitive as countries boost production of corn, soybeans and wheat. Kevin McNew, President of GeoGrain a grain market analysis company spoke at the University of Maryland’s 2016 Agricultural Outlook and Policy Conference on December 14th. He said Brazil’s corn crop is projected to expand by 30 percent as they recover from a drought, Argentina may expand 10%, and China is reversing 15 years of government corn policy.

Kevin McNew said the United States must limit wheat production. And further stated, “He would love if Maryland farmers got that message because they all double crop it.”



Dorchester Soil Conservation District

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Function of the Conservation District

The function of the Conservation District is to take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water, and related resources.

The Dorchester Soil Conservation District was organized on March 27, 1942 as a political subdivision of the State of Maryland.

We are an equal opportunity employer.

**If interested in serving as Supervisor or
Associate Supervisor contact Karen Houtman
by email at karen.houtman@maryland.gov.**