

Beginning Farmer Resource Guide

For Frederick, Howard, & Montgomery Counties
Compiled by: Kelly Nichols, Ag Agent, UME Montgomery County

General Resources

[University of Maryland Extension Agriculture and Food Systems Website](#) - Learn more about Extension's programs and find resources for crop and livestock enterprises.

Beginning Farmer Resources

- ~ [University of Maryland Extension Beginning Farmer Success Website](#) - This website includes information on various farm enterprises, the Beginning Farmer Guide Book, business planning resources, marketing, and permits and licenses.
- ~ Interactive Beginning Farmer Guidebook - This online, self-paced course walks through the Beginning Farmer Guidebook. To access the course, visit campus.extension.org. Search for "Maryland Farmer". Select the Maryland Beginning Farmer Guidebook course. You will need to create a free account to access the course.
- ~ [University of Maryland Extension Entrepreneurial Coaching](#) - An opportunity to meet with a trained, impartial coach that can be a sounding board for your ideas, provide resources and contacts, and help sharpen your focus on reaching your business goals.
- ~ [New Farmer FAQ Website](#) - Includes information on registering a business, financial resources, certifications, and product sale regulations.
- ~ [U.S. Department of Agriculture New Farmers Website](#)
- ~ [Future Harvest - Beginning Farmer Training Program](#)

Business Planning

- ~ [University of Maryland Extension Beginning Farmer Success Program](#) - This website provides resources for beginning farmers. The [Business Planning Workbook](#) is a workbook to develop a business plan.
- ~ [University of Maryland Extension Ag Marketing](#) - This website provides information about marketing ag products.

Custom Operators

- ~ The Frederick County Extension website as a list of customer operators and equipment dealers in the area on our [county Agriculture and Food Systems webpage](#); scroll down to the Ag Frequently Asked Questions heading.
- ~ The Howard County Soil Conservation District has a list of custom operators in the area on their [website](#). Click on “Contractors List” under the Links heading.

Financial Resources

- ~ Local banks may provide lending and financial services for farmers.
- ~ [Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation \(MARBIDCO\)](#) - MARBICO is a quasi-public economic development organization that helps Maryland’s farm, forestry, and seafood businesses achieve sustainability and profitability. They offer loan and grant programs for farmers and rural business owners, land preservation programs, partnerships with commercial lenders, and business resources and planning tools for rural entrepreneurs.
- ~ [Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit](#) - Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit is an agricultural lending cooperative. They offer farm, home, and land loans, as well as crop insurance. Farm Credit also has a Beginning Farmer Program and an AgBiz Masters Program for young and beginning farmers.
- ~ [Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\)](#) - Has several grant opportunities for established farms.
- ~ [U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) - The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). FSA handles the government cost-share and price support programs, as well as low-interest loans. Disaster programs for drought, freeze, and hail are also handled by FSA.
- ~ [U.S. Department of Agriculture Grants and Loans website](#) - includes information for beginning farmers
- ~ Visit the following county websites for county-specific information.
 - o For Frederick County farmers, the [Frederick County Office of Economic Development](#) may be a resource for funding. (See bottom of the page under Agriculture Incentives.)
 - o For Howard County farmers, the [Howard County Office of Economic Development](#) has some financial programs available.
 - o For Montgomery County farmers, the [Montgomery County Office of Agriculture](#) has some financial programs available.

Forest Stewardship Plans are written by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). These plans allow the landowner to maximize the wildlife, timber, recreation, aesthetic value, and other benefits of the woodland while preserving the woodland for future generations. Below is the contact information for local county offices.

- o Frederick County DNR Office
8602 Gambrill Park Road, Frederick
301-473-8417
Mike Kay, Forester, mike.kay@maryland.gov
- o Howard & Montgomery Counties DNR Office
17400 Annapolis Rock Road, Woodbine
410-442-2080 or 301-854-6060

Legal Educational Resources - The [Maryland Agriculture Law Education Initiative \(ALEI\)](#) provides information and resources regarding laws that impact Maryland Agriculture.

Looking for Land/Land Access

- ~ [Maryland FarmLink](#) - an online place for farmers to list land for sale or lease.
- ~ [Land Link Montgomery](#) is an online forum for Montgomery County farmers and landowners.

Marketing

Each county has a farm directory which consumers can use to find local products. The links to each of these farm directories are below; to be added to the list, please contact the appropriate office.

- o Frederick County
 - [Homegrown Frederick](#), maintained by the Office of Economic Development
- o Howard County
 - [Farm Search](#), maintained by the Economic Development Authority
 - [HoCo Farms Connect](#), a list of farms that are offering delivery or pick up services
- o Montgomery County
 - [Farm to Table website](#), maintained by the Office of Agriculture

Nutrient Management Plans are required in Maryland if your gross sales are more than \$2,500 per year or if you have more than 8,000 pounds of livestock on the farm. A nutrient management plan balances the nutrient levels in the soil with what the crop needs, and provides recommendations so that nutrients are not being over- or under-applied. For more information about nutrient management plans, visit the Maryland Department of Agriculture's [website](#). There are three ways to have a plan written for your farm:

- ~ [Become certified to write your own plan](#)
- ~ [Hire a private consultant](#) (See the Directory of Nutrient Management Consultants for Hire document under the Farmers heading in the menu on the right side of the page.)
- ~ County Extension Offices have a Nutrient Management Advisor who is also able to write nutrient management plans; this service is provided by funding through the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Contact information for local Advisors is below.
 - o Frederick County: Kaitlyn Fuss, kfuss1@umd.edu, 301-600-3571
 - o Howard County: Krista Mitchell, kristaw@umd.edu, 410-313-2709
 - o Montgomery County: Natalia Salazar, nsalaza1@umd.edu, 301-590-2840

Permits

- ~ Value-Added Products - The [Processing/Selling Value Added Products in MD fact sheet](#) (listed in the menu on the right under the Related Information heading) provides information on what permits/licenses are needed for various value-added products. The permits mentioned are typically obtained from the county health department.
 - o [Frederick County Health Department - Food Control Office](#)
 - o [Howard County Health Department - Food Protection Program](#)
 - o [Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services - Food and Facilities Licensing](#)
- ~ For questions regarding building greenhouses, buildings, etc. on your property, contact the county zoning/permitting office. Each county also has an office of agriculture or economic development which can also assist with answering zoning/permitting questions.
 - o Frederick County:
 - [Frederick County Office of Economic Development](#); contact Katie Stevens, Agriculture Business Development Specialist at KStevens1@frederickcountymd.gov.
 - [Frederick County Zoning Office](#)
 - o Howard County
 - [Howard County Economic Development Authority - Farm & Agriculture](#)
 - [Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning](#)
 - o Montgomery County
 - [Montgomery County Office of Agriculture](#); for zoning/permitting questions, visit the [FAQs page](#) and [Find My Zoning tool](#).
 - [Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services](#)
- ~ [A Farmer's Guide to Environmental Permits](#) - This document provides explanations for common permits that farmers need, as well as a checklist on pages 20-21.

A Pesticide License is required when applying restricted use pesticides on your farm (includes owned and rented property). For more information on obtaining a pesticide license, visit the Maryland Department of Agriculture's [website](#).

Registering a Farm Business - [Maryland Business Portal](#)

Another resource that may be helpful is the Department of Assessments and Taxation, which has forms on their [website](#), under the Create or Start a Business in Maryland heading. These forms can be mailed or emailed to the Department.

Soil & Water Conservation Technical and Financial Assistance The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and County Soil Conservation District (SCD) Offices provide technical assistance with implementing soil and water conservation practices on the farm. Example practices include cover crops, no-till, manure storages, grass waterways, roof runoff structures, and stream buffers. NRCS may also have financial cost-share programs available for some of these practices. Below is the contact information for local offices.

- o [Maryland NRCS Website](#)
- o Frederick County NRCS and SCD Offices
92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 230, Frederick
301-695-2803 ext. 3
Brent Cammauf, NRCS District Conservationist, brent.cammauf@md.usda.gov
[Frederick & Catoclin SCD Website](#)
- o Howard County NRCS & SCD Offices
14735 Frederick Road, Cooksville
410-313-0680
Mitch LeMueix, NRCS Acting District Conservationist, mitchell.lemueix@usda.gov
[Howard County SCD Website](#)
- o Montgomery County NRCS & SCD Offices
18410 Muncaster Road, Derwood
301-590-2855
Mitch LeMueix, NRCS Acting District Conservationist, mitchell.lemueix@usda.gov
[Montgomery County SCD Website](#)

Soil Sampling

- ~ [Directions for taking soil samples.](#)
- ~ [A list of soil testing labs in the region.](#)
- ~ Soil Probe Use - The county Extension Office may have soil probes that are available on loan. To inquire about borrowing a soil probe, contact your Extension Nutrient Management Advisor:
 - o Frederick County: Kaitlyn Fuss, kfuss1@umd.edu, 301-600-3571
 - o Howard County: Krista Mitchell, kristaw@umd.edu, 410-313-2709
 - o Montgomery County: Natalia Salazar, nsalaza1@umd.edu, 301-590-2840

Soils Information

- ~ [Web Soil Survey](#) – This online, interactive tool enables you to see the soil series and characteristics at a specific location.

Value Added Products/On-Farm Processing

- ~ Value-Added Products - The [Processing/Selling Value Added Products in MD fact sheet](#) (listed in the menu on the right under the Related Information heading) provides information on what permits/licenses are needed for various value-added products. The permits mentioned are typically obtained from the county health department.
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 - o [Howard County Health Department - Food Protection Program](#)
 - o [Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services - Food and Facilities Licensing](#)
- ~ The Maryland Department of Health provides information on the following:
 - o [On-Farm Processing](#)
 - o [Maryland Cottage Food Businesses](#)

Crop/Livestock-Specific Resources

Christmas Trees

- ~ [UME Christmas Tree Enterprise Fact Sheet and Budget](#) (Scroll down to the Christmas Tree heading.)
- ~ [Nutrient Management Recommendations](#) (University of Maryland)
- ~ [Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Conservation and Management Program](#)

Cover Crops

- ~ The following companies sell cover crop seeds:
 - o [King's AgriSeeds](#) (Use the Find Your Dealer link at the top to find a local salesman.)
 - o [Local Seed Company](#)
 - o [Seedway](#) (Use the About Us tab, then click on Find a Farm Dealer or Locations to find a local salesman.)
 - o [Southern States](#) (sells grass and clover seed)
 - o [Green Cover](#) (A company based in the Midwest that sells a wide variety of cover crops and mixes.)
- ~ The book [Growing Cover Crops Profitably](#) is a great resource for information on cover crops. You can view the online version for free or purchase a hard copy.

Cut Flowers

- ~ [University of Maryland Extension Commercial Horticulture website](#) - This website has information for the nursery, greenhouse, landscape, and cut flower industries. The tabs across the top can be used to navigate through the site. Upcoming events can be found in the Conferences tab.
- ~ [North Carolina State University Extension](#) has put together a list of resources from various universities and Extension services. (If the link in the article does not work, copy and paste the title of the document and its source into a search bar to find it.)
- ~ [Maryland Cut Flower Growers Association](#) - Membership is free. They typically have a few educational meetings throughout the year.
- ~ [Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers](#) - This is a national organization which provides resources and research results (including flower variety trials) for cut flower growers.
- ~ [Nutrient Management Recommendations](#) (University of Maryland)

Goats

~ [Maryland Small Ruminant Page](#)

Grapes

- ~ [University of Maryland Extension's Grapes and Fruit website](#) – Includes information for Starting a Vineyard and recordings from the New Grape Grower Workshop
- ~ Wine Grape Production Guide for Eastern North America
 - [PDF](#)
 - Hard copies can be ordered through [Cornell University](#) or [Ag Science, Inc.](#)

Herbs

- ~ [Selection and Care of Herbs](#) (University of Maryland Extension)
- ~ [Culinary and Aromatic Herbs](#) (North Carolina State Extension)
- ~ [The Herb Society of America](#). Local chapter: [Potomac Unit](#)
- ~ Lavender resources:
 - [Growing Lavender](#) (Cornell University)
 - [Lavender Owner's Manual](#) (Sequim Lavender Company)

Horses

- ~ [University of Maryland Extension Horses website](#) - includes videos, publications, and recorded webinars on various subjects including pasture management, soil testing, and manure management. (For manure management and composting information, click on the Publications heading, and scroll down to find the Manure Management heading.)
- ~ [Horse Owner's Guide to Best Management Practices](#) (Maryland Department of Agriculture) - includes information on manure, composting, and pasture management
- ~ Poisonous Plants in Horse Pastures:
 - o [Penn State fact sheet](#)
 - o [Rutgers fact sheet](#)

Livestock (General)

[University of Maryland Extension Animal Science website](#) - Information and resources for cattle, horses, poultry, sheep and goats.

Mushrooms

- ~ [Cornell University](#)
- ~ [Penn State University](#)
- ~ [University of Maryland Resources](#) (Scroll down to the Shiitake Mushrooms heading.)

Ponds

~ [Link to Pond Management Info document.](#)

Poultry

~ [Egg Inspection](#) - The Egg Inspection program is responsible for enforcement of the Maryland Egg Law enacted to provide Maryland consumers with wholesome, high quality eggs. Applications and guidelines are found in the menu on the right side of the page.

~ [Maryland Egg Quality Assurance Program](#) - The Maryland Egg Quality Assurance Program (MEQAP) is a voluntary program to minimize the risk of Salmonella enteritidis (SE) contamination of chicken (shell) eggs and provide standards for the quality of eggs marketed under the provisions of this program.

~ [Poultry Registration](#) - MDA asks poultry owners to register their flocks in order to be notified of disease outbreaks (i.e. avian influenza) when they occur.

~ [Backyard Poultry](#) (University of Maryland Extension) - This website includes resources for flock management, housing, diseases, home processing, and preventing predation.

Sheep

~ [Maryland Small Ruminant Page](#)

Small Fruits

~ [Small Fruit Portal](#) from the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission

Vegetables

~ [Sample Vegetable Budgets](#) - University of Vermont has a list of vegetable and berry budgets from various universities across the U.S.

~ [Vegetable Crop Budgets & Irrigation Cost Calculators](#) from the University of Delaware

~ [University of Maryland Extension Vegetables website](#) - Information for Maryland vegetable growers, including the Mid-Atlantic Commercial Vegetable Production Recommendation Guide

~ [When to Plant Vegetables in Maryland](#) - Our Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC) has a list of when to plant vegetables. While HGIC is geared towards home gardeners, you may find the site useful for finding information about vegetables.

~ [Food Safety Tool-Kit](#) - Future Harvest CASA has a set of resources regarding food handling and safety regulations. Additionally, they offer one-on-one, on-farm consultations about food safety planning for compliance with FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act).