

# Ag Notes

## Harford County Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND  
EXTENSION

March 2025

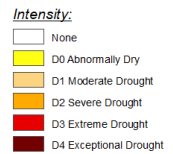
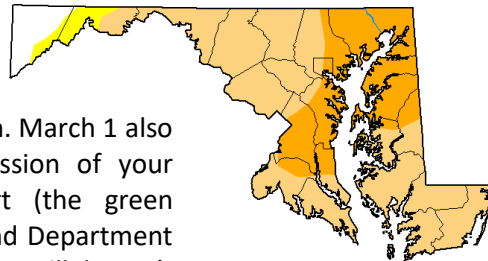


### Hello, Harford County!

Happy March! March 1 kicks off Maryland's spring fertilizer/manure spreading season and marks the unofficial start to the 2025 growing season. March 1 also marks the deadline for submission of your Annual Implementation Report (the green form from MDA) to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)—so if you still haven't completed and submitted it, here is your reminder. You will need this completed in order to qualify for cover crop or any other cost-share through the state of Maryland.

As we look ahead to 2025, we are still feeling the effects of the dry 2024 season and according to the US Drought Monitor, all of Harford County is still under a severe drought (map above). Since December 1, 2024, we have accumulated 6.16 inches of precipitation, which is 7.16 inches below normal.

Current topsoil moisture conditions are sufficient, but subsoil moisture remains low and if we do not get more rain as things warm up and plants begin growing, we will quickly lose topsoil moisture necessary for spring planting. If dry conditions persist, you may consider terminating cover crops earlier than usual



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

**Author:**  
Brian Fuchs  
National Drought Mitigation Center



to help conserve soil moisture heading into planting. As you all know, conditions can change quickly here in Maryland, so you never know what type of weather the future holds in store for us.

Finally, if you still need credits to renew your pesticide license or nutrient management voucher, I have listed some upcoming programs in the table below that you may attend. Also as a reminder, you need separate paraquat training every 3 years in order to purchase, handle, and apply any paraquat/Gramoxone products, so be sure your certification is up-to-date. Training can be completed online at the website provided in the table below.

Until next time,  
-Andy

#### Upcoming Programs for Pesticide & Nutrient Management Credits

Date & Time	Program	Location
March 13, 2025 9:00-11:00 am	Private Applicator Exam (for new applicators)	Harford County Extension Office
March 13, 2025 1:00-3:00 pm	Private Applicator Recertification Training	Harford County Extension Office
April 1, 2025 6:00-8:00 pm	Private Applicator Recertification Training	Online Register <a href="#">here</a>
April 8, 2025 6:00-8:00 pm	Nutrient Management Voucher Training	Online Register <a href="#">here</a>
Asynchronous	Paraquat Training	Online. Register at <a href="https://npsec.us/paraquat">https://npsec.us/paraquat</a>

University of  
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Agricultural Center  
Suite 600

3525 Conowingo Rd.  
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(410) 638-3255

M—F 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

[Extension.umd.edu/harford-county](http://Extension.umd.edu/harford-county)  
[facebook.com/HarfordAg](https://facebook.com/HarfordAg)

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#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1099-G Support	2
USDA Grants	2
Grain Marketing & Budgeting Resources	3
Commercial Vegetable Production Guide	4
Sheep Production Workshop	5
Fencing Workshop	5
Triticale Research Webinar	5
Manure Transport & Injection Grants	6
Small Acreage Cover Crop Program	6
Farm Labor Course	7
Prescribed Burn Workshop	7

Jesse Ketterman, Senior Family & Consumer Sciences Agent  
University of Maryland Extension, Washington County

University of Maryland Extension (UME) is offering resources to assist farmers and landowners who received incorrect 1099-G forms that contain social security numbers and addresses of other people. Protecting the financial privacy and security of Maryland residents is one of UME's top priorities, with educators committed to providing the necessary resources to navigate this issue.

[Here is the official link](https://marylandtaxes.gov/notice.php) to the notice from the Comptroller of Maryland (<https://marylandtaxes.gov/notice.php>). To help those affected, UME has compiled a range of resources designed to educate and inform about credit protection and identity verification. Those affected may access the guide on understanding credit and credit reports here: [Understanding Credit and Credit Reports](#).

When the Comptroller of Maryland provides the promised information about credit monitoring, UME recommends taking advantage of this option.

Individuals may also consider placing a security freeze on their credit reports as an added precaution. More information on how to do this can be found here: [What Does It Mean to Put a Security Freeze on My Credit Report?](#)

For those who are unsure of how to proceed with missing or incorrect tax forms, the IRS offers guidance that can be accessed here: [What to Do When a W-2 or Form 1099 is Missing or Incorrect](#).

UME encourages farmers and landowners in the community to take these steps to protect their information.

Need additional guidance? Please contact Jesse M. Ketterman, Jr., UME financial literacy educator at (301) 724-3320 or [jketterm@umd.edu](mailto:jketterm@umd.edu)

Affected taxpayers can email [gad@marylandtaxes.gov](mailto:gad@marylandtaxes.gov) with the subject line "1099G Issue" with questions or concerns as well.

## USDA Business Builder Sub-Award Grants

The Northeast USDA Regional Food Business Center (RFBC) is excited to accept applications for [Business Builder sub-awards](#)! This grant program will provide producers and food businesses in the Northeast region with between \$15,000 - \$100,000 in no-match required funding to support projects ranging from:

- Production Expansion and New Product Development: Value-added production or product development to increase the amount and variety of regionally grown products.
- Market Development: Market research, access and general marketing support.
- Financial Resource Development: Navigation of third-party funding opportunities.
- Business Strategy and Development: Financial literacy, legal and regulatory awareness and record keeping.

Please reach out to program staff at [northeastrfbc@nasda.org](mailto:northeastrfbc@nasda.org) with any questions about the application process.

**Application Dates:** February 24 – April 7

**Eligible Entities:** Farm and food businesses, including aquaculture and wild-caught fisheries, and non-profits with \$1M or less in annual revenue or \$350,000 or less in revenue are eligible to apply (funding track dependent).

**Allowable Uses:** Post-harvest activities (farm gate/landing to table), including processing, storage and transportation.

**Unique Entity ID:** Applicants must either present a valid Unique Entity ID (UEI) or provide proof that they are in progress of obtaining a UEI at the point of application submission. Explore the [Application Checklist](#) for resources on obtaining a UEI.



# Grain Marketing Website Updated for 2025

*Shannon Dill, Principal Agriculture Agent and Elizabeth Thilmany, Ag Law Faculty Specialist  
University of Maryland*

The University of Maryland Extension has updated [www.go.umd.edu/grainmarketing](http://www.go.umd.edu/grainmarketing) site with custom rates, field crop budgets, and a new online tool for grain marketing analysis.

## Custom Rates

A mail and online survey conducted in the Fall of 2024 gathered custom work charge data from 61 operators and farmers across Maryland and Delaware. Custom rates refer to the fees charged for various agricultural field operations performed and often include services such as planting, tillage, harvesting, spraying, and manure application. These rates provide a valuable resource for determining fair pricing when other benchmarks are unavailable.

The report summarizes the range, average, and median rates for custom services, offering insights into cost trends. Comparisons with past surveys from 2023, 2021, 2019, and 2017 highlight rate changes over time.

Variations in charges stem from factors such as location, field conditions, equipment type, and service timeliness. Some rates have been excluded due to insufficient responses.

Overall farm production costs are expected to rise 5% in 2025 compared to 2023. The most significant rise is in field preparation, which is expected to jump 16%.

## Key Cost Increases:

- Field Preparation: Projected to rise 16%, from \$20 to \$24.
- Planting Costs: Estimated to grow 14%, reaching \$25
- Grass and Hay Production: Expected to increase by 15%, from \$15 to \$18
- Labor Costs: Rising 11%, from \$42 to \$47
- Field Applications: Experiencing a modest 8% increase, from \$14 to \$15
- Harvesting: Expected to increase from \$73 in 2023 to \$86 in 2025 (15%)
- Equipment Costs Decline: The only area expected to see a cost reduction is equipment expenses, which are reported to drop by 19%, from \$85 to \$71.

## Crop Budgets

Cost of production is very important when making decisions related to your farm enterprise and grain marketing. Surveys from 2024 UME Winter Crop Production meetings report 66% of farmers believe input costs are the greatest challenges facing their farm operation. Enterprise budgets provide valuable information regarding individual enterprises on the farm. This tool enables farm managers to make decisions regarding enterprises and plan for the coming production year. An enterprise budget uses farm revenue, variable cost, fixed cost, and net income to provide a clear picture of the financial health of each farm enterprise.

The 2025 Maryland enterprise budgets were developed using average yields and estimated input costs based on producer and farm supplier data. Fertilizer prices, pesticide availability, and fuel expenses have fluctuated greatly. The figures presented are averages and vary greatly from one farm and region to the other. It is, therefore, crucial to input actual farm data when completing enterprise budgets for your farm.

The latest cost per acre comparison from 2024 and 2025 reveals shifts in input costs and market conditions affecting farmers. Overall, there is a slight decrease in costs from 2024. The cost of production per acre for Corn – No Till is projected to decrease from \$690 in 2024 to \$655 in 2025, marking a 5% decline. Similarly, Corn – Conventional is expected to see a 2% decrease, dropping from \$749 to \$731 per acre. Conversely, Soybeans are expected to experience a 5% cost increase, rising from \$410 per acre in 2024 to \$431 in 2025. The most significant decrease is seen in Wheat, where costs are projected to decline by 6%, from \$514 per acre in 2024 to \$481 in 2025.

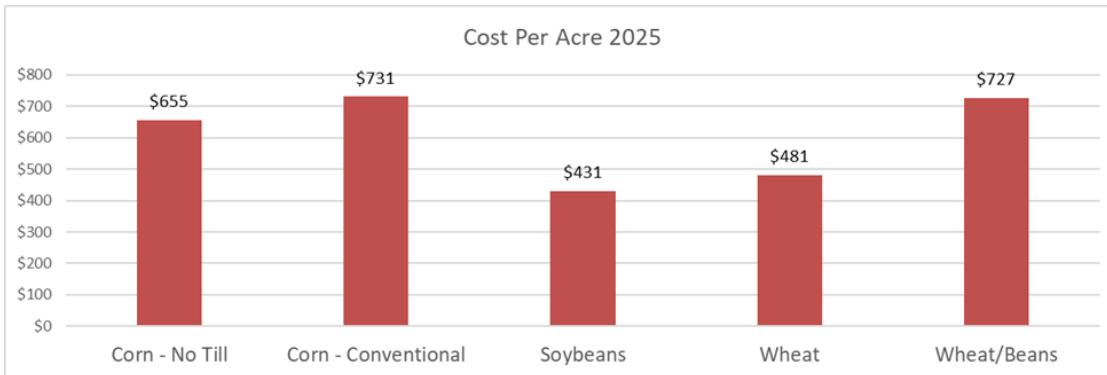
## How to Use University Enterprise Budgets

The enterprise budgets can be used as a baseline for your operation, and you can modify these budgets to include your production techniques, inputs, and overall management. The budgets are available



electronically in PDF, Excel, and now as an interactive website at [go.umd.edu/EFMD](http://go.umd.edu/EFMD). Use this document as a start or reference to create your crop budgets. Contact information is on the website if you have problems downloading any information.

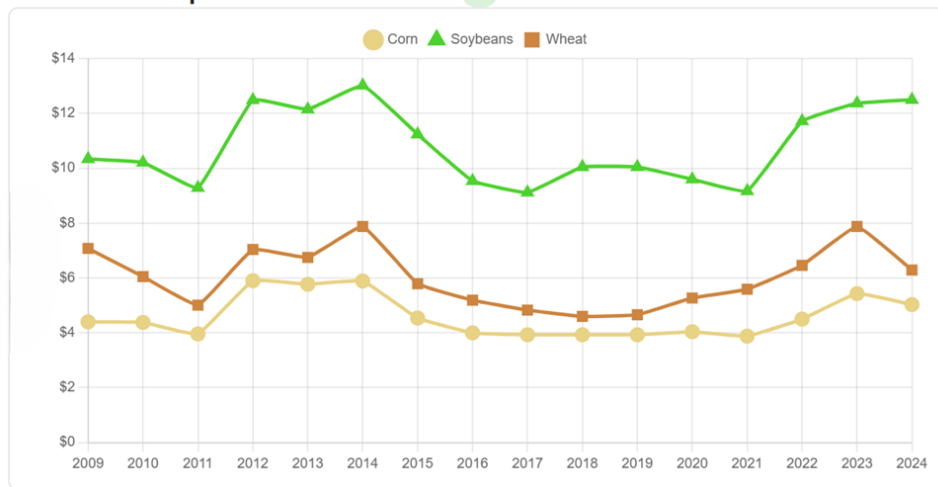
**Cost per acre for selected crops**



**New Grain Marketing Tool**

To assist farmers in making crop enterprise decisions, UMD has introduced the Maryland Grain Budget Planner, a new online tool that integrates crop budget data with grain marketing analysis. This free resource, funded by the Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center, helps farmers track market trends, project expenses, and benchmark financial performance. By using this tool, producers can make more informed decisions about the cost of production, marketing strategies, and overall farm profitability. The tool includes a Market Analysis tab, which provides historical pricing data and cost trends. Below is an example of estimated crop income per bushel from the Market Analysis tab:

**Estimated Crop Income Per Bushel**



This tool can be accessed at [go.umd.edu/EFMD](http://go.umd.edu/EFMD).



**2025 Commercial Vegetable Production Guide**

The *2025 Mid-Atlantic Commercial Vegetable Production Recommendations* is now available. This comprehensive guide provides recommendations on variety selection, site preparation, weed management, and pest management for all major vegetable crops grown in the mid-Atlantic. Recommendations are generated through research from mid-Atlantic land-grant Extension services. The guide is available for free online <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/mid-atlantic-commercial-vegetable-production-recommendations-eb-236/> or contact the Extension office for a hard copy.

## Fundamentals of Sheep Production

March 29

10 AM—3:15 PM  
Frederick, MD

Sheep producers of all ages and experience levels are encouraged to attend this free event on March 29th at the Frederick County Fairgrounds (797 E. Patrick Street., Frederick, MD 21701).

You will learn the basics of raising sheep including health, nutrition, facilities, and fencing. Lunch will be provided.

The event is free, but registration is required. Visit [go.umd.edu/sheepbasics](https://go.umd.edu/sheepbasics) to register or call Brittany Fletcher, (301) 226-7576.

## Webinar Highlighting UMD Triticale Research

March 25

12 PM—1 PM  
Online via Zoom

The Hughes Center is kicking off its 2025 webinar series with a presentation featuring UMD College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Associate Professor, Dr. Vijay Tiwari, and his research on gene editing in triticale cultivars.

Changing climatic conditions, increased pressure from biotic stresses and reduction in agricultural land pose significant global challenges for crop production. As a result, there is an urgent need to focus on developing resilient cereal crops that require low input and can fulfill the needs of grain, forage, feed and cover crops. Dr. Tiwari will present on why triticale is a great fit for these requirements. His project aims to deliver efficient, modern, locally adapted triticale cultivars that can be used as the cool season cover crop for Maryland and the broader Mid-Atlantic region. This project is funded by the Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology.

Dr. Tiwari's research is focused on genetics and genomics of small grain crops with emphasis on wheat, rye and barley, specifically, integrating genomic tools and germplasm development to achieve the goals of sustainable agriculture. Another important aspect of Tiwari's research is a focus on molecular understanding of yield and yield contributing factors in bread wheat.

Register for the webinar [online](#).



## Fencing Workshop

March 11, 2025  
9 AM - NOON

Plow and Stars Farm  
Poolesville, MD  
<https://go.umd.edu/fencing>

## Manure Transport & Injection Cost-Share

Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#)



The Maryland Department of Agriculture is reminding farmers they can apply for cost-share funding to help cover the cost of transporting all types of manure to crop fields with acceptable soil phosphorus levels.

Additionally, grants are available to offset the cost of injecting liquid manure into the soil to prevent nutrient runoff and reduce odors.

When transporting poultry manure, please visit the MDA [website](#) to check for important Control Orders from the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture regarding safe handling, storage, and transport practices to mitigate the risk of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

Program highlights include:

Receiving up to \$28/ton to transport poultry manure to qualifying fields with acceptable soil phosphorus levels or alternative use projects that can safely utilize the product; Cost-share grants are available to transport dairy and livestock manure to qualifying fields, covering up to 87.5% of eligible costs; FastTrack

and standard transport options are available for both poultry and dairy/livestock manure; Farmers can receive up to \$45/acre for costs associated with injecting liquid manure into the soil. Please note that poultry manure is not eligible for this option due to its low moisture content.

To apply for FastTrack (haul now, apply later) applications for poultry and dairy/livestock manure, please download the application from the [website](#). If you don't qualify for FastTrack, contact your local [soil conservation district](#) to apply for the standard grants. These grants require pre-approval before manure is transported or injected.

If you plan to transport manure this spring and summer, please note that all projects must be completed by **September 9, 2025**. Claims for payment should be submitted to the department's Conservation Grants Office by **October 9, 2025**.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture's Conservation Grants Program administers manure transport and injection grants. To apply for these grants, you must be in good standing with the program and in compliance with Maryland's nutrient management regulations. Visit the Delmarva Chicken Association's website at [www.littr.io](http://www.littr.io) to find manure or contact a poultry manure broker [here](#). For more information, please contact the Manure Management Program at (410) 841-5864.

## Small Acreage Cover Crop Program

Maryland Department of Agriculture [press release](#) (abridged)

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has announced the sign-up period for its Small Acreage Cover Crop Program will open on March 3, and will run through April 25, 2025. This popular program provides grants to help small farms and urban growers plant cover crops on their production areas to build healthy soils, improve crop yields, protect local water quality, improve climate resilience, and deliver other environmental benefits.

Small farms that plant less than ten (10) acres of qualifying cover crops—including cereal grains or cover crop seed mixes—can apply for the grant. Financial

assistance for this program is available at up to \$1,500 per grower, per year.

Urban and small-scale producers may download grant applications on the department's [website](#). Applications must be postmarked by April 25, 2025 for consideration in this year's program.

Growers who want to apply for these small acreage cover crop grants should contact Bill Tharpe, Program Administrator for the Small Farm & Urban Agriculture Program at [bill.tharpe@maryland.gov](mailto:bill.tharpe@maryland.gov) or (410) 841-5869. For additional information, please visit the [website](#).



# How to Conduct a Prescribed Burn

Luke Macaulay, Wildlife Management Specialist  
University of Maryland Extension

**March 27**

9 AM—3 PM  
Bozman, MD

Held at the scenic 1,000-acre Point Pleasant Farm, instructors will discuss the reasons to burn to manage wildlife habitat, fire behavior,

equipment, and planning followed by a live demonstration where interested attendees can gain hands-on experience. A BBQ lunch will be provided with vegetarian options.

If cost is a barrier, please reach out to lukemac@umd.edu—everyone is welcome, regardless of ability to pay.

**Date:** Thursday, March 27th, 2025,

Adverse weather backup date: Thursday, April 3, 2025

**Address:** 23000 Wells Point Lane, Bozman, MD 21612

Register at [online](#) or call Luke Macaulay at (703) 798-8459.

## Farm Labor Course: Retaining Employees

The University of Maryland and the University of Delaware have released an online course for agricultural operations in Delaware and Maryland. The *Hiring and Retaining Farm Employees – What you Need to Know and Do* course is now available through the University of Maryland.

The course will cover developing an employee handbook for your operation, basic legal requirements, incorporating benefits, such as retirement and health insurance, into the operation, and other common problems that agricultural employers face.

The online course will cover:

- Finding and Keeping Farm Employees - An Employer's Guide and Workbook;
- Choosing Health Insurance Options for an Agricultural Operation;
- Choosing Retirement Plan Options for an Agricultural Operation; and
- Guidelines for Delaware and Maryland Ag Operations - On Writing an Employee Manual.

The course features Nate Bruce, Farm Business Management Specialist, UD Cooperative Extension; Jesse Ketterman, PhD, AFC, Senior Agent, University of Maryland Extension; Maria Pippidis, Extension Educator,

Financial Wellness, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension; and Paul Goeringer, Principal Faculty Specialist and Extension Specialist, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland.

“This online course is a great opportunity for farmers and other agricultural business owners to think about how to set up employment strategies early on that benefit the farm. Having an employee manual helps lay out the expectations of the farm. At the same time, we know the workbook and benefits options will assist farms in adding in features that might help retain qualified employees or attract new ones,” said Goeringer.

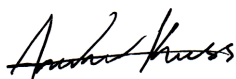
The online course is free and at a participant's pace.

Participants will receive copies of Extension fact sheets and other valuable documents as a part of the online course.

For more information or to register, go to <https://go.umd.edu/hiringcourse>. For more information, please contact Paul Goeringer at lgoering@umd.edu.

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2023-70027-40447.

*Great resources are just a click away!*



Andrew Kness  
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Agriculture and  
Food Systems



facebook.com/HarfordAg

Back-issues can be found at: <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/harford-county/agriculture-and-nutrient-management>



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EXTENSION

# Ag Notes

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## *Dates to remember*

- 11 Mar.** Fencing Workshop. 9-12 noon. Plows and Stars Farm, Poolesville, MD. Register at [go.umd.edu/fencing](https://go.umd.edu/fencing).
- 13 Mar.** Private Applicator Pesticide Exam. 9-11 AM. Harford County Extension Office. Free. Register by calling (410) 638-3255 or email [akness@umd.edu](mailto:akness@umd.edu).
- 13 Mar.** Private Applicator Pesticide Recertification. 1-3 PM. Harford County Extension Office. Free. Register by calling (410) 638-3255 or email [akness@umd.edu](mailto:akness@umd.edu).
- 25 Mar.** Triticale Webinar. 12-1 PM. Online via Zoom. Register [online](#).
- 29 Mar.** Fundamentals of Sheep Production. 10 AM-3:15 PM. Frederick County Fairgrounds, Frederick, MD. Register [online](#) or call (301) 226-7576.
- 16 Apr.** Pasture walk. Details to come in next newsletter.

# March 2025