

spotlight

AUGUST 2009 • ISSUE 0005

A PUBLICATION FOR VOTING MEMBERS OF MARYLAND FARM BUREAU

Maryland Farm Bureau Sets Membership Record

At press time, Maryland Farm Bureau had processed 32,671 members for 2009, an all-time high. In June the organization secured quota status and the Navigator Award, two growth goals established by the American Farm Bureau Federation. Final membership results will not be known until the end of August, but regardless of the number, a new record high membership will be achieved.

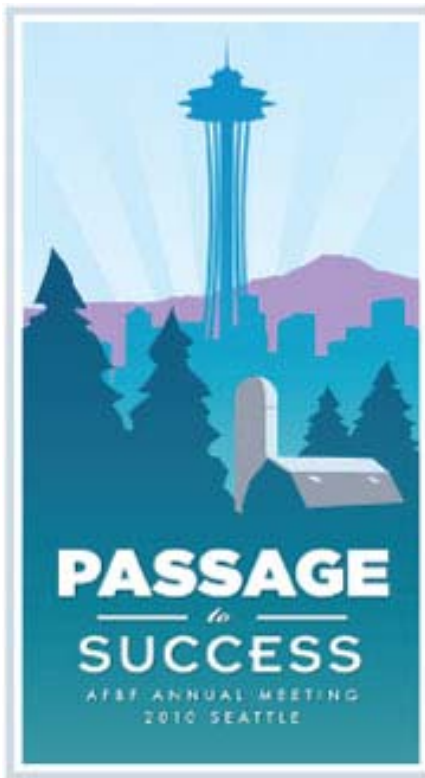
On the local level, Dorchester County was first in the state to reach their county membership goal of increasing their regular membership by 1 percent over last year. Congratulations to county president Brinsfield Lowe and the entire Dorchester County Farm Bureau team for setting the pace. Following Dorchester's lead, seven additional counties have reached their county membership goal. They are Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Frederick, Harford, Howard and St. Mary's.

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Congressman Kratovil Schedules Round of Meetings with Farmers

Every August Congress takes a break to allow elected officials to go home to visit with their constituents. Congressman Frank Kratovil (MD-1) is devoting the first full week of the August District Work Period to the farm community. Coordinating with the state and county Farm Bureaus, the Congressman has scheduled town hall-style meetings across the shore to talk with local farmers. The meetings are the perfect opportunity for farmers to convey their concerns about economic conditions on farms, about the potential impact of higher energy costs and to discuss what they want – and don't want – in a health care reform package.

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Join the fun and fellowship in Seattle

More than 6,000 Farm Bureau members are expected to attend the 91th annual American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in Seattle, Wash., scheduled for January 10-13, 2010. Keynote speakers, special interest sessions, fun and fellowship await attendees from every state in the nation.

The Maryland Farm Bureau delegation will be staying at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel. The Sheraton is the convention headquarters hotel and is located across the street from the convention center.

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MFB Women send care packages

For at least four years, the Maryland Farm Bureau Women have been sending care packages to service men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. At their recent meeting, the women packed 66 boxes with non-perishable foods, phone cards, stamps, disposable cameras and personal items. At the soldiers' request, they also include pencils, erasers and wristbands to give away to children. All packages also include a personal letter sharing thoughts and well wishes.

"It's not much but it's a little something we can do to help," said MFB Women's Chair Evelyn Wilcom.



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Be Sure to Report Wildlife Nuisance Complaints



If you are experiencing crop loss, damage to equipment or predation of livestock as a result of wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources and USDA Wildlife Services want to hear about it. By calling their jointly-operated toll free hotline at **1-877-463-6497**, you are able to log your wildlife nuisance complaint, receive technical assistance and begin the process to receive any necessary permits to resolve the nuisance issue. Producers can call at anytime when they are experiencing "threats or damage" from wildlife.

When you call, a biologist will work with you to collect the relevant information he/she needs to assist you properly, but all locations and names are protected as Personal Identifiable Information and not put into their system or reported to the public. During the phone conversation you will be asked questions in order to establish:

- Location (county)
- Damage or threat
- Type of livestock
- Description of the incident
- Value of loss or cost of the damage (damage can be to structures or fences as well)
- Animal responsible if known: damage can be from any species, coyote, dog, fox, raccoon, deer, bear, vulture, bobcat, etc.

In utilizing this service, not only will you receive assistance in addressing your nuisance problem, but the aggregate data compiled at the county and state level helps provide accurate information necessary for sound management of nuisance wildlife populations.

Safety Workshop Announced

Farm families are at risk due to the rural environment where they live, work and visit. A workshop will focus on ways to protect children and adults on the farm and participants will learn about agricultural risks, injury prevention and presenting safety programs to children, families and youth.

This workshop will take place on Tuesday, August 25, at the Queen Anne's County 4-H Park, Dulin Clark Road, Centreville, with registration beginning at 8:45 a.m. and the program concluding at 3p.m.

Participants will gain knowledge in animal and hand washing needs, chemical awareness, tractor and agricultural equipment safety, all terrain vehicle safety, gun safety, electric hazard awareness and more. The resources of this training are provided by a mini grant sponsored by the USDA Risk Management Agency with hands-on experiences being offered by the Iowa-based Farm Safety 4 Just Kids program and University of Maryland Extension. In addition to lunch and free educational resources, gift certificates will be provided.

Call the University of Maryland Extension, Caroline County office at 410-479-4030 to pre-register by August 21. If you need assistance to participate in the program, contact Sharon Pahlman at 410-479-4030.

How to Win an Election

A two-day strategy seminar to unlock the secrets of a successful political campaign with insider knowledge

October 7-8, 2009
Double Tree Hotel
Annapolis, MD

Enrollment limited to 25 persons

Registration Deadline is September 2, 2009

For more information and registration, go to
www.mdfarmbureau.com

10 SCHOLARSHIP winners ANNOUNCED



Joel Workman

Parents: Doug & Susie Workman of Allegany County
Attends: Potomac State College
Major: Agriculture
Graduate: 2009 Mountain Ridge High School



Brittany Lethbridge

Parents: Stephen & Donna Lethbridge of Carroll County
Attends: Hood College
Major: Undeclared
Graduate: 2009 Francis Scott Key High School

Brittany Coleman

Parents: William & Lisa Coleman of Dorchester County
Attends: Salisbury University
Major: Biology
Graduate: 2009 North Dorchester High School



Matthew David Insley

Parents: William & Traci Insley of Dorchester County
Attends: University of Northwestern Ohio
Major: Diesel Technician
Graduate: 2009 Cambridge South Dorchester High School



Emmilee Lynn Guy

Parents: Roy & Sherri Guy of St. Mary's County
Attends: College of Southern Maryland
Major: Elementary Education
Graduate: 2009 Leonardtown High School

Charlotte Thompson

Parents: Frank & Pam Thompson of Frederick County
Attends: University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Major: Agriculture Business
Graduate: 2007 Walkersville High School



Kayla Griffith

Parents: Jeff & Chris Griffith of Anne Arundel County
Attends: Michigan Technological University
Major: Biology
Graduate: 2006 Southern Senior High School



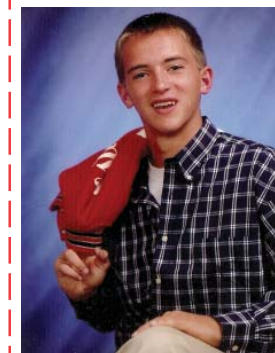
Allyson Lethbridge

Parents: Stephen & Donna Lethbridge of Carroll County
Attends: Hood College
Major: Secondary Education
Graduate: 2007 Francis Scott Key High School



Theodore Patterson

Parents: Ross & Miriam Patterson of Cecil County
Attends: University of Delaware
Major: Urban and Regional Planning
Graduate: 2004 Perryville High School



Michael Amoss

Parents: William & Mary Amoss of Harford County
Attends: Harford Community College
Major: Agriculture Business
Graduate: 2007 Fallston High School



ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR THE 2009 POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The following issue summaries are provided for your consideration as you begin your policy development process. We believe that these issues may be the subjects of debate in Annapolis, in Washington or before your local government during 2010. Please call Valerie Connelly or Kurt Fuchs if you have any questions or need additional information. We thank you for your commitment to an inclusive and thorough policy development process in 2009!

State and Local Policy Issues:

Accuracy of farm data in Bay analysis

The Chesapeake Bay Model and other analytical tools used to measure agriculture's impact on the environment lack up-to-date, accurate farm input and yield data. The Bay model folks are using five-year census information, with some yield data dating back more than a decade. How do we show we are better stewards? How can we get the best data included in the analysis? What annual summaries are already being completed by farmers that could be used to update the Bay Model? Should AIRs from nutrient management plans be filed electronically to allow aggregate data (on a county or watershed basis) to be used in the model annually? Should NRCS share data about the BMPs that have been installed on farms? How can we capture data on BMPs that were not paid for by government?

Septic Tank Management

In 2009, the General Assembly passed legislation to mandate nitrogen removal septic technology for new homes and homes with failing septic systems in the critical area. The critical area is the first 1000 feet from the shoreline. In 2010, there is the possibility of legislation to institute a state-wide mandate for nitrogen removal septic systems. There is also likely to be legislation to require pump-out of all existing septic systems in the state every three years. Can we support the pump out option as a middle ground and a common sense approach to preventing systems from failing? If so, what is the best way to enact this process? How would a homeowner prove the system was pumped? Should the county collect the data? What are the pros and cons of such a requirement?

Sewage Sludge Utilization

Sewage sludge application has traditionally been regulated solely by the Maryland Department of the Environment, through a permit process. During the last several years, local governments have requested a role in the approval process for the application of sewage sludge on land within their jurisdictions. Some counties would like to prohibit out-of-county sludge from being applied. Others want to set up buffer requirements for application near residential areas. Several bills were introduced in 2009 to give local governments more authority in this area. Should local

governments have the authority to set parameters for sewage sludge use on land in their jurisdiction? How would this impact farm use of sewage sludge as a fertilizer?

Farmer's Markets

There has been a dramatic increase in both the number of farmer's markets as well as the number of agricultural producers selling their harvest at several markets, sometimes in multiple jurisdictions. Is there a need for more uniformity amongst health code requirements for participation in markets across the state? Although much of the County Health Code requirements are based on state provisions, localities tend to interpret and carry out these provisions in differing manners, at times causing frustration and undue paperwork for direct-marketing operations. Would the agricultural community be better served if vendors could become certified under one statewide farmer's market health certificate, without going through the certification process in each and every jurisdiction they intend to market their fresh meats and produce?

Defining "Locally-Produced"

One of the most important trends in consumer food spending is purchasing "locally-produced" food. Whether it is fresh meats and dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables, or even value-added processed items like jams and pickled foods, the "Buy Local" trend has taken root across the country. Our state's agricultural community is particularly poised to take advantage of this consumer preference shift because we're located within easy reach of significant population centers like DC, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Wilmington. The only question is what does local mean? A lack of definition allows for slick marketing to imply sweet corn brought up from North Carolina and sold in a supermarket in Maryland is local sweet corn. Even with the best of intentions producers, consumers and retailers alike may all have a different idea of local products. Unless they have a framework for what constitutes a local product, they're free to interpret it as they see fit. Would it benefit both the industry and consumers to have a set definition for "locally-produced" agricultural products? Might this definition include both a maximum mile radius with an "and/or produced in Maryland" clause?

National Policy Issues:

Policy Development—Confronting the Issues

The AFBF Board of Directors has approved seven issues for policy development for 2009-2010. These issues, on the national and international level, raise numerous questions needing further discussion by farmers and ranchers.

Abandonment of Orchards:

Abandoned orchards and fruit groves can harbor dangerous pests and diseases for fruit trees. The current economic climate could increase orchard abandonment and place producers within close proximity at higher risk. Availability of federal and local funds that have historically supported these programs has been reduced in many counties. Farm Bureau policy is limited on this issue. What are possible solutions to this problem? What kind of a financial-based incentive would work for fruit producers? What other incentives and/or disincentives could be implemented? Can this issue be addressed without infringing on private property rights?

Biotech versus Conventional Seed:

Concern is increasing about the availability of good, high quality germ plasm in conventional seed. Several aspects of this issue are currently being discussed and debated within the farm community. Farm Bureau policy contains numerous statements in support of biotech seed, but contains minimal language regarding conventional seed. Is conventional seed availability an issue for farmers?

Forest Carbon Markets:

With the development of voluntary carbon markets, and possible consideration of federal climate change legislation in 2009, the issue of carbon credits for forest landowners is becoming increasingly important. A large segment of Farm Bureau members could earn carbon sequestration revenue. Certain croplands and grasslands might also be eligible. Should Farm Bureau policy address converting existing pastureland and croplands to forests to obtain carbon credits? Should Farm Bureau policy treat cropland sequestration projects and forestry sequestration projects equally?

Milk Pricing:

The Federal Milk Marketing Order system was created in 1937 to assist dairy producers/processors with milk marketing and many in the dairy industry believe the system is not reflective of the sector in 2009. Recognizing milk production and delivery systems have changed in the last 70 years, producers, processors, and policymakers are now wondering whether there is a better option than this system. Cornell University Extension Economist, Mark Stephenson, lays out four alternative pricing options. To ensure current policy meets the needs of dairy producers now and into the future, discussion by Farm Bureau members is critical.

Modify Current Product Price Formulas

Right now, milk prices are determined by back-calculating an implied value for milk from the products made from that milk over a set time frame. Product prices, make allowances (the price of processing milk that is included in milk pricing formula), and yield factors are components of price formulas and can be contentious. One option is to change the components within the formulas to better reflect the current conditions.

Survey of Unregulated Milk

In order to de-regulate the milk markets, the government could survey unregulated manufacturing milk sales in a particular market, such as the Upper Midwest, and base national prices on these surveys. While this would lessen the focus of fluid milk utilization, it could cause a price time lag in the rest of the country. This is similar to the previous pricing scheme based on the Minnesota-Wisconsin Grade B manufacturing price series but was ended due to lack of product in that market.

Only Pool Differentials

Under this scenario, all milk in all areas would be unregulated. Both manufacturing and fluid plants would have to negotiate prices with local suppliers and cooperatives, report those prices to a central authority, and then pay the difference in prices from a national average into a pool. Workability, existing USDA authorities, assuring equitable minimum prices, and integration with futures markets are concerns of this system.

Futures or Spot Markets

Many producers are beginning to market their milk in Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) futures markets. These prices could be used to set national pay prices or expanded to be the sole marketing entity. While price discovery would be improved, problems like delivering bulky products and perishability would still exist. Spot markets prices, like the current CME spot contracts, could be used to set prices; however, a national and neutral delivery point for milk would be problematic. Technology-assisted trading via the internet has been discussed.

What would be the impact of elimination of the Federal Milk Marketing Orders? Would this be good or bad for dairy producers? Are ten orders sufficient or should the dairy industry consolidate to a single national order? Would a comprehensive national milk pricing formula maximize return to dairy producers and decrease volatility in the marketplace? What would an alternative dairy pricing structure look like? What would be the impact of potential alternative pricing mechanisms? Are there other market-based approaches that would enable dairy producers to maximize trade opportunities?

Public and Animal Health

Attempts to restrict antibiotic use in food animal production are increasing. Coupled with a host of other issues related to the links between food production and animal health ensures amplified scrutiny for producers. Swine flu is just the latest example that certain diseases affect both human beings and animals. Does Farm Bureau policy deal thoroughly with the interactions between animal health and public health? With medical community opinion divided and scientific research inconclusive as to the transmission of many human/animal diseases, where should grassroots producers concentrate their efforts to promote consumer confidence in the food they eat?

Sustainable Certification

The word “sustainable” is the new buzz word for environmentally and socially-conscious consumers. Utilization of certification methods in the market place to designate products developed or grown under sustainable conditions is increasing. Recognition and support of this practice is noted in Federal legislation and by consumers. The current proliferation of certification schemes is causing havoc in the marketplace. Currently, there are two sustainable forest management/product certification systems in the United States. Should Farm Bureau have policy addressing certification systems? What policy could Farm Bureau articulate to assure broad acceptance of wood as a sustainable, renewable resource in building and construction?

Traceability and Labeling

Improved traceability and labeling systems are viewed as important for maintaining foreign market access. Combined with the somewhat different but related concepts of identity preservation and product segregation, these systems could impact nearly all agricultural commodities. Further discussion by Farm Bureau members is needed regarding the following questions: What impacts could these programs potentially have on the agricultural sector? Should Farm Bureau support a traceability system? If so, what should a system look like? Would it encompass on-farm practice audits? Would traceability ensure timely identification of an outbreak’s point of origin and minimize market disruption?

AFBF searching for Farmer Idea Exchange and County Activity winners

Information on the 2010 Farmer Idea Exchange program and the County Activities of Excellence program are now available. Farmers or ranchers wishing to enter the exchange contest can access the program information and application from <http://www.fb.org/programs/farmerx/>. County Farm Bureaus wishing to enter can access program information and applications from www.fb.org/programs/countyx. New this year is the ability for members to submit their applications with the click of a button under the Online Entry Form.

Congressman Kratovil Schedules Round of Meetings with Farmers

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Mark your calendar and plan to attend one of these Farm Town Hall meetings:

Monday, August 3rd

- 10 a.m. **Caroline County** - Gen. James F. Fretterd Community Center
107 South Fourth St., Room #104, Denton, MD
- 1 p.m. **Talbot County** - University of Maryland Extension Office
28577 Mary’s Court, Easton, MD

Tuesday, August 4th

- 10 a.m. **Worcester & Somerset Counties** - Snow Hill Elementary School
515 Coulbourn Lane, Snow Hill, MD
- 1 p.m. **Wicomico County** - University of Maryland Extension Office
28647 Old Quantico Road - Salisbury, MD

Wednesday, August 5th

- 9 a.m. **Dorchester County** - County Council Chambers
501 Court Lane, Cambridge, MD
- 6 p.m. **Queen Anne’s County** - Prior to the QA County FB Board meeting
Queen Anne’s 4-H Park- Centreville, MD

Thursday, August 6th

- 10 a.m. **Harford County** - University of Maryland Extension Office
2335 Rock Spring Road, Forest Hill, MD
- 2 p.m. **Cecil County** - Calvert Grange Hall
2657 Telegraph Road, Rising Sun, MD

Friday, August 7th

- 1 p.m. **Kent County** - University of Maryland Extension Office
709 Morgnec Road, Chestertown, MD

Calling all scoopers!

The Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmers Want You! It’s time to buff up those arm muscles and head to Timonium – the Young Farmers are still looking for help in the Dairy Bar each day and evening of the Maryland State Fair. The fair runs from Friday, Aug. 28, to Monday, Sept. 7.

Proceeds from the fund-raising project go to Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmer activities and scholarships.

For more information or to sign up, call Laura Ruhlman at (410) 922-3426.



Because farming and ranching are as much a lifestyle as an occupation, the entire family – including children and seniors – are often exposed to the many hazards associated with an agricultural workplace. As a result, the responsibility to learn about and reduce agricultural hazards ultimately rests with adults in the family and those who manage the farm.

Daily awareness and a proactive attitude toward safety are the first steps toward creating a safer environment for everyone on the farm.

The *Farm Safety Quiz* can help farmers and ranchers assess the overall safety of their operations and learn easy-to-make changes to increase safety. The *Farm Safety Quiz* is available at www.FarmSafetyQuiz.com, launched in June by Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Company.

The quiz takes about 10 minutes to complete. Participants are asked a series of questions about their farms or ranches from the age of buildings and their primary heating sources to livestock handling practices, maintenance routines and more. Points are awarded or subtracted for each answer and the final score from 0-100 indicates if the quiz-taker may be an “endangered species,” “sleeping soundly,” or at another level in between.

No data is collected from the quiz, as it is intended to be an opportunity for farmers and ranchers to gauge the relative safety of their operations for their own information. Although the *Farm Safety Quiz* is easy to complete, its goal is to increase safety awareness and practices. Participants have an opportunity to request additional information at the end of the quiz.

As the leading farm insurer in the nation, Nationwide Agribusiness has learned that helping farmers and ranchers operate more safely can save lives and may benefit the bottom line of the farm business.

Contributed by Nationwide and Nationwide Agribusiness, which is sponsored and endorsed by Maryland Farm Bureau.

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Lechliden receives state honor

Montgomery County Farm Bureau President George Lechliden, center, of Gaithersburg received the Maryland Association of County Agricultural Agents Service to Agriculture Award during the group’s summer meeting in Ocean City. MACAA President Benjamin Beale, right, presents the award as George’s wife, Carolyn, looks on.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

August

- 3 – Miss Maryland Agriculture Orientation, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium
- 11 – Caroline County Farm Bureau Resolutions Meeting, Denton Library, 8 p.m.
- 21 – Dorchester County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Chicken Dinner Fundraiser, Unity-Washington United Methodist Church, Hurlock
- 28 – Miss Maryland Agriculture Contest, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium
- 28-Sept. 7 – Maryland State Fair

September

- 10 – Caroline County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Williams Building, 4-H Park, Denton, 6:30 p.m.

October

- 7-8 – Maryland Farm Bureau Campaign Management Seminar, Annapolis
- 8 – Frederick County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, New Midway Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

November

- 5 – Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation Dinner
- 10 – MFB Board of Directors Meeting

December

- 6-9 – Maryland Farm Bureau Convention, Ocean City

January 2010

- 10-13 – American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting and Convention, Seattle, Washington
- 22-24 – Maryland Farm Bureau Young Farmer Retreat, Hyatt Chesapeake, Cambridge

(To get your county's activities listed on the calendar, please send the date, event, place and time to Susan Summers at ssummers@comcast.net.)

Maryland Farm Bureau Sets Membership Record

(continued from page 1)

Thank You Nationwide Agents

Nationwide Agents continue to sign new Maryland Farm Bureau members as they offer member-only discounts on many insurance products. Statewide, agents wrote over 8,000 members during the 2009 membership year. We thank every agent who helped us achieve membership success.

The top three agents who combined to write a total of 588 new members and who will be recognized during the Maryland Farm Bureau Convention in December are:

Craig Knippenberg , Cumberland	203 New Members
Philip Simmerer , Laurel	198 New Members
Robert Stastny , Baltimore	187 New Members

Other agents who wrote over 100 new Farm Bureau members this year are:

Pamela Beidle , Glen Burnie	David Kushner , Gaithersburg
Rhett Butler , Rockville	Michael Payne , Gaithersburg
Kathleen Bye , Severna Park	Alan Rubin , Gaithersburg
Jack Hutchison , Severna Park	Gregory Whitten , Cambridge
Ray Hykes , Gaithersburg	Gary Young , Gaithersburg

Congratulations and thank you all!

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Join the fun and fellowship in Seattle

(continued from page 1)

Preliminary plans include three optional tours and a Maryland delegation dinner. The tours we are considering have been arranged by the Washington Farm Bureau and will showcase some of Washington state's unique agricultural enterprises.

A skeleton schedule currently looks like this:

- Friday, January 8 - Travel to Seattle, Washington
- Saturday, January 9 - Optional Tours and the Maryland Delegation Dinner
- Sunday, January 10 - Convention Sessions
- Monday, January 11 - Convention Sessions
- Tuesday, January 12 - Return to Maryland

Final details and pricing will be available soon so check the next issue of the *Spotlight* or visit www.mdfarmbureau.com for more information. If you would like to receive a trip brochure as soon as they are printed, call (800) 248-9012 or email melh.mdfb@verizon.net to request one. Include your name, address, phone number and email address.

Farm Bureau loses a leader

Daniel Shortall, 72, of Ruthsburg died June 11 at his home. The agricultural leader had served as president of the Queen Anne's County Farm Bureau and was vice president of Maryland Farm Bureau. He also served on county and state land preservation boards and chaired the Queen Anne's County Fair. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth Ann Moore Shortall and their five children. Memorial contributions may be made to the Queen Anne's Museum of Eastern Shore Life, Steam Engine Project, P.O. Box 525 Centreville, MD 21617 or the Hospice of Queen Anne's, Inc., 255 Comet Drive, Centreville, MD 21617.