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Spring 2010

The BARN



► BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ► AG MARKETING ► RURAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ► NETWORK

PROVIDING THE TOOLS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

New Tool! Assessing Your Farm Business Plan

Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center (www.mredc.umd.edu)

No where does the old adage “failing to plan, is planning to fail” more applicable than when preparing to launch a new business enterprise or service company. Regardless of the greatness of your product, unless you carefully plan in advance how to operate a profitable, sustainable business, your business success will be limited. The goal of the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center is to help you succeed in that planning process and this is why we are pleased to announce the completion of a new tool, **Assessing Your Farm Business Plan**.

Assessing Your Farm Business Plan is an interactive assessment to assist farmers and agri-entrepreneurs in evaluating the potential of their farm business planning success. There are 54 statements in the assessment to which you rate your degree of agreement. The statements are categorized into nine sections covering topics such as Mission and Goals, Marketing, Implementation Strategy, Human Resources, Inventory, and more. Along with each statement, you will be provided with valuable feedback to give you plenty of food for thought as you



Continued on page 3...

New On-Farm Processing Guide for Maryland Farmers: “Processing for Profits”

Got questions about value-added processing, the regulations, and its profit potential for your farm? Get answers in the new publication, “Processing for Profits.” This publication is an assessment tool and guide for small-scale, on-farm food processors.

While written with Maryland farmers in mind, any producer interested in the potential and pitfalls of on-farm and value-added food processing, will find this new resource helpful in their planning and implementation process.

Written by Ginger S. Myers, Ag Marketing Specialist and Director of the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center, University of Maryland Extension, the publication addresses:

- Product development and manufacturing.
- Understanding the food safety system, labeling, and acidified food.

Continued on page 2 ...

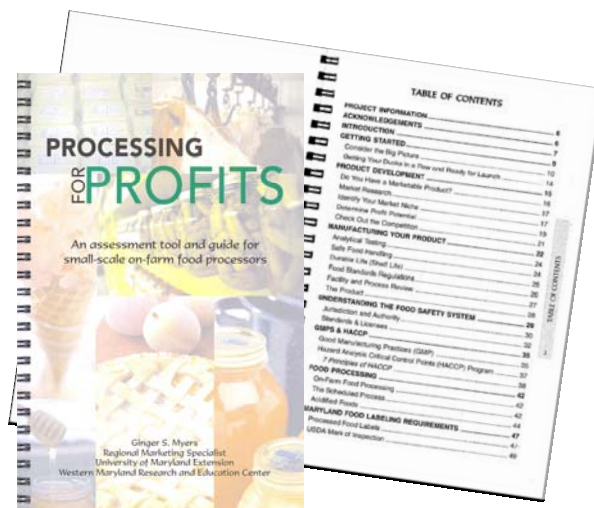
New On-Farm Processing Guide For Maryland Farmers:

"Processing for Profits" Continued from page 1 ...

- ▶ FAQ's about Maryland's food regulations and specific Maryland processed farm products.
- ▶ Business planning and marketing for specialty food producers and processors.

This publication can be downloaded at www.mredc.umd.edu. Printed copies are available free of charge upon request. Please direct your request to Ginger S. Myers (gsmyers@umd.edu) or Susan Barnes (sbarnes6@umd.edu) at 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756, 301-432-2767.

This publication was made possible through grant funding from the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc., with support from the United States Department of Agriculture – Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (USDA-CSREES.)



Small Farm Bus Tour Slated for Late June

Summer days promise an opportunity for small farmers on the Delmarva Peninsula to join the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) as they embark upon an educational two-day Farmer Bus Tour to "Explore New Farm Income Opportunities" on Monday, June 28, and Tuesday, June 29.

The goal of the tour is to provide farmers a chance to learn from successful and innovative farming ventures in the Southeast/Tidewater region of Virginia. Although farmers face many obstacles, there are many alternatives and opportunities for farmers to increase their profits. Hands-on demonstrations and first-hand explanations from other farmers and agriculture experts can help people see the results (or potential) for themselves. The stops chosen for the tour offer diverse and practical examples of what farmers can do to help their bottom line while implementing sustainable practices. Major focuses of the tour include direct marketing, value-added products, sustainable farming practices, alternative "niche" crops, agri-tourism, and more. The tour bus is scheduled to leave UMES at 7:30 a.m. on Monday, June 28, and to return on the following day around 6:30 p.m. The registration fee to attend is \$25, which covers bus transportation, hotel accommodations for one night, educational materials, and snacks/refreshments throughout the tour.

This educational tour is sponsored by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore's Small Farm Outreach Initiative, a grant-funded project to help small-scale and underserved farmers prosper and become successful agriculture entrepreneurs through education, training, and outreach. Currently, the project provides on-going outreach and program activities that address a variety of issues/needs identified among target audiences to include: alternative enterprise selection, direct marketing strategies, improved agriculture production systems, farm business management, better management of natural resources, and participation in USDA farm programs.

In the project's second year, under the leadership of Small Farm Program Coordinator Berran Rogers, over 400 clients have participated in informational meetings, workshops, field tours, conferences, and other program activities hosted by the Small Farm Outreach Initiative.

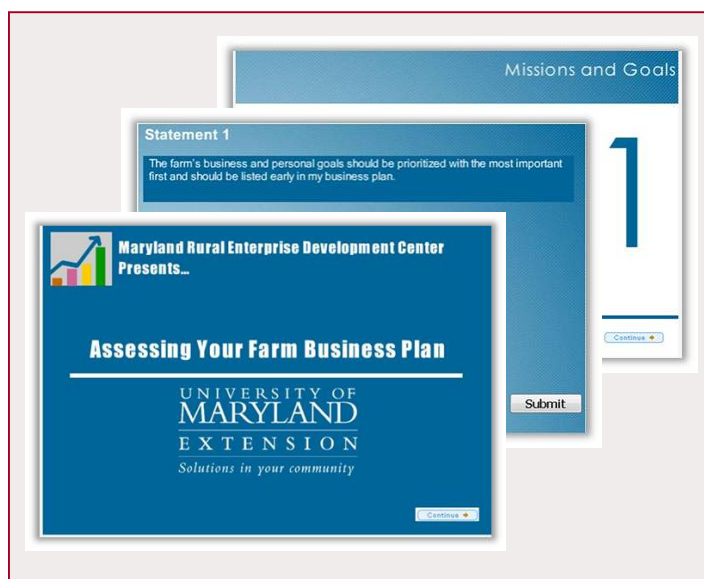
For more information about the "Exploring New Farm Income Opportunities" bus tour or the Small Farm Outreach Initiative, contact Rogers at 410-651-6206 or 6693

Suzanne Waters Street, agriculture communication specialist, UMES – University of Maryland Extension, 410-651-6084, ssstreet@umes.edu.

New Tool! Assessing Your Farm Continued from page 1 ...

plan your enterprise. At the end of the assessment, you are provided with a total score with general recommendations for your business plan. This tool provides you with the opportunity to assess the components of your plan and make revisions before investing your valuable time and resources in the new business.

Be one of the first to access this valuable tool at <http://www.mredc.umd.edu/> (link on home page). You may take the assessment using an online interactive version, or access a printable version. If you decide to take the online version, please set aside at least 30 minutes to complete the assessment. It is not possible to “save” the online version for completion at a later time. As always, your feedback is important to us. If you have any questions or comments about the Assessing Your Farm Business Plan tool, please contact us at mredcsupport@umd.edu.



Assessing Your Farm Business Plan is based on the information found in the University of Maryland's Instructional Workbook, Farm Business Planning (Beale, Dill, and Johnson) and an Agricultural Marketing Program article, "Do You Have a Marketable Product?" (Myers). The tool is available to you for free by taking a very short survey of six questions. The survey data will help the University of Maryland Extension continue adding and improving valuable programming for the public.

MREDC Receives NESARE Community Development Grant

"Stimulating Maryland Agricultural Entrepreneurship through Curbside Roundtables and Individualized Planning"

The Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center has received a NESARE Community Development grant to conduct a new entrepreneurial support program, "Stimulating Maryland Agricultural Entrepreneurship through Curbside Roundtables and Individualized Planning." The project has three components:

- (1) The identification and training of entrepreneurial coaches from across the state.
- (2) Conducting three statewide open roundtable discussion sessions to provide a platform for agricultural entrepreneurs to have an entrepreneurial coach listen, critique, and advise them on their business idea and provide follow-up resources.

- (3) Encouraging entrepreneurs to follow-up with business development professionals and use the resources on Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center website to develop a business plan and launch their new business.

This summer, a team of farmers, support agency personnel, and Extension Educators will be trained as coaches to support Maryland's new agricultural entrepreneurs. The three entrepreneurial roundtables, held across the state—one each on the eastern shore, in southern Maryland and, on the western shore, will begin at 1:00 PM and end at 6:00 PM to give anyone working off the farm time to come in after work.

Training to become an entrepreneurial coach will be conducted in August. If

you are interested in joining the coaching team, please contact Ginger Myers at gsmyers@umd.edu. If you are a budding agricultural entrepreneur who could benefit from additional support and resources, please watch for the announcement of the Entrepreneurial Roundtables near you this fall.

Inside Quote

"Entrepreneurs are simply those who understand there is little difference between obstacle and opportunity and are able to turn both to their advantage."

Niccolo Machiavelli

ESSAY: Land Grant College Program Has Been a Boost to U.S.

On March 31, our own Jeff Semler in Washington County was recognized by APLU (Association for Public and Land Grant Universities) based upon an article that he had published in a local paper. APLU sent an announcement out to the national Land Grant system to alert Land Grant University Presidents, Deans and Directors to Jeff's article. This is quite an accomplishment and recognition for Jeff and University of Maryland Extension!

By Jeff Semler - published in Herald-Mail (http://www.herald-mail.com/?cmd=displaystory&story_id=242423&format=html)

March 30, 2010 -- Spring has sprung and April's showers have arrived a little early, but I am not complaining.

Over the past several weeks, I have had the distinct pleasure to advise and teach many different audiences on a variety of topics. Those topics ranged from ground water to soil fertility and from poultry management to nutrient management.

While some are calling the recent health care reform action in Washington such things as historic or landmark legislation, only time will tell. But I can tell you for sure that there was once legislation that started a movement that is still moving nearly 150 years later. That legislation was called the Morrill Act of 1862 or the Land Grant College Act.

This legislation was a major boost to higher education in America. The grant was originally set up to establish institutions in each state that would educate people in agriculture, home economics, mechanical arts, and other professions that were practical at the time. The land-grant act was introduced by a congressman from Vermont named Justin Smith Morrill. He envisioned the financing of agricultural and mechanical education. He wanted to assure that education would be available to those in all social classes.

While there were several of these grants, the first passed in 1862. This bill was signed by Abraham Lincoln on July 2. This gave each state 30,000 acres of public land for each senator and representative. These numbers were based on the census

of 1860. The land was then to be sold and the money from the sale of the land was to be put in an endowment fund, which would provide support for the colleges in each of the states. The land grant has improved the lives of millions of Americans.

Most of you know of or maybe have even attended a land grant institution but my guess is unless you were in the college of agriculture you didn't even know it. In the spirit of March Madness, 20 of the 64 teams that started the NCAA men's tournament were land grant universities. I do not know who will survive in the

Through the work of colleges of agriculture, agriculture experiment stations and extension offices, today the American farmer feeds about 155 people worldwide, up from 25.8 in 1960.

tournament, but by the time you read this half of the sweet 16 were land grants.

They were Cornell, Kansas State, Kentucky, Michigan State, Ohio State, Purdue, Tennessee, and my alma mater, West Virginia. Quite impressive. In addition to teaching the world to feed itself, they play a pretty mean game of basketball. Oh and my employer, the University of Maryland, is a land grant.

The land grant model is the envy of the entire world, but as our society has evolved, the land grants' importance is being overlooked. In a sense, we are the victim of our own success. Through the work of colleges of agri-

culture, agriculture experiment stations, and extension offices, today the American farmer feeds about 155 people worldwide, up from 25.8 in 1960.

So why should anyone care? Only because the land grant universities are still serving you today. In addition to the commercial farmers that would have been in my nutrient management class, my horticulture colleague is training our fifth class of Master Gardeners. I have instructed more than 100 Tri-State area residents in small flock poultry management over the last three years. So learning never goes out of style and there is a resurgence in interest in agriculture and horticulture as many urban refugees move to rural areas and stake their claim.

Whether you are one of those generational agrarians or you are new to the vocation, welcome to the front door of your land grant university, the Washington County Extension Office. If you are interested in raising hogs on a small scale, you are in luck. We are having a class Thursday at the Extension Office beginning at 7 p.m. Please call to register.

Other opportunities on the horizon are our perennial pasture walks. In addition, I am soliciting interest in a fence building workshop and in our new Flock (poultry) Walk series. Please call to be added to our list for these new offerings. Until next time, remember the words of Wendell Berry, "If you eat, you're involved in agriculture."

USDA Organic Farming Survey

In its first broad survey of organic farming, USDA counted 14,540 U.S. farms and ranches in 2008 that were either certified organic or exempt from certification because their sales were less than \$5,000. These comprised 4.1 million acres, of which 1.6 million acres were cropland and 1.8 million acres pasture or rangeland.

Although most organic producers sell locally (44 percent of organic sales take place less than 100 miles from the farm), those sales were primarily into wholesale channels. Only 7 percent of sales were direct to consumers at farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs and other direct markets.

Total organic sales in 2008 were \$3.16 billion. Average sales for organic operations were considerably higher than conventional, but so were expenses. Organic operations averaged \$217,675 in sales and \$171,978 in expenses; conventional farms averaged \$134,807 in sales and \$109,359 in expenses.



Ferry Plaza Farmers Market, shoppers and organic produce Photo by Edwin Remsburg
USDA/CSREES

On The Web

Explore What Community & Economic Programming Through Extension Can Do...

<http://cred.ext.wvu.edu/>

Community Resource & Economic Development (CRED) is a unit of the Community, Economic & Workforce Development (CEWD) program center within West Virginia University Extension Service. CRED is dedicated to providing educational programs and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of citizens and organizations throughout the state of West Virginia. By utilizing the latest research-based knowledge, strategies, and technology, CRED is capable of helping people understand community change and identify opportunities to improve their social and economic well-being. Extension's efforts of finding practical and timely solutions are enhanced by working closely with local communities, organizations, and partnering agencies.

Where to Look on the Web for Statistical Information

Today, United States Federal Government agencies are making available more and more information on the web, so there is a lot of statistical information out there! It is very helpful to begin your search for statistics by visiting a site that contains links to government agency web sites where you can find statistical information.

FEDSTATS

<http://www.fedstats.gov/>

The purpose of this site is to provide easy access to the public, to statistical information produced by over 70 federal government agencies. Some of the agencies included are the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of the Census, National Center for Education Statistics, and Internal Revenue Service. You can query by keyword, browse a topical alphabetical index, and limit your search to a particular agency. There is also a page on regional statistics which divides up links according to category, such as agriculture, crime, education, health.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN DOCUMENTS CENTER - STATISTICAL RESOURCES ON THE WEB

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html>

When you visit this site you can choose the category, such as agriculture, finance, health, housing, in which you want to find statistical information. Each link is annotated so you will know what information you can find at the site, and where to look within the site once you link there.

GOVERNMENT STATISTICS

<http://www.yahoo.com/Government/Statistics/>

You can also go to the Yahoo! category on Government Statistics which lists many of the government agency web sites where you can find statistical information.

Gender and Purchasing Behavior at Farmers' Markets in the Mid-Atlantic

Reprinted with permission: Amy Chamberlain, Graduate Student, The Pennsylvania State University

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. –This newsletter serves to provide fruit and vegetable industry members with additional results from the consumer research studies conducted to better understand the food preferences and purchasing behaviors of the mid-Atlantic consumer. The information provided in this newsletter reflects only a sample of a wide array of data collected from two of four surveys that were conducted through early 2010.

A total of 1,553 (Survey 1) and 1,518 (Survey 4) participants residing in metropolitan areas of New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Richmond, and who reported that they were the primary food shopper for their household, were surveyed on what types of food products they purchased, where they purchased these products, and what factors may have affected their purchasing behaviors. Pertaining to Survey 1, one question asked participants to select, from a list of retailers (e.g. grocery stores/supermarkets, supercenters, discount stores, farmers markets/CSA's, convenience stores), the retailer(s) where they primarily purchase produce. In Survey 4, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they shopped at farmers' markets.

In both Surveys 1 and 4, data analysis revealed that a significantly greater percentage of female participants shopped at farmers' markets (Survey 1; 71.7% of females vs. 65.5% of males) and selected farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms as their primary produce retailer (Survey 2; 36.4% of females vs. 30.4% of males), compared to male participants. Results are exemplified in Figures 1 & 2 below.

Although those who participated in Survey 1 may not have participated in Survey 4, and the two questions discussed in this newsletter are not identical, the results are indicative of a trend of shopping behavior at farmers' markets between male and female consumers in the mid-Atlantic; a trend that all involved in the produce industry in the region may be interested in knowing. Additionally, our results show (across four surveys) that approximately 75% of participants who indicated that they were the primary food shopper for their household were female. With women recognized as initiating 80 to 90 percent of household purchases, and often referred to as the "gate keeper" of the household, it is imperative that all involved in the supply chain pay particular attention to their needs



Ferry Plaza Farmers Market, shoppers and organic produce, Photo by Edwin Remsburg USDA/CSREES

and wants and how to best market their products to appeal to them.

To be added to the Mid-Atlantic Specialty Crops Research Initiative list serve and receive bi-monthly updates contact specialtycrops@psu.edu or 814-863-5567. To view past bi-weekly updates and related Mid-Atlantic Specialty Crops Research Initiative information, visit www.midatlanticspecialtycrops.com. For more information about the USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative program, visit the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) website: www.nifa.usda.gov.

Figure 1.

Percent Males & Females Choosing Farmers Markets and CSA's as their Primary Produce Retailer

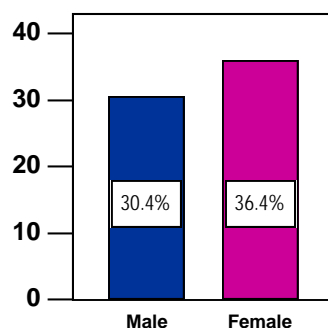
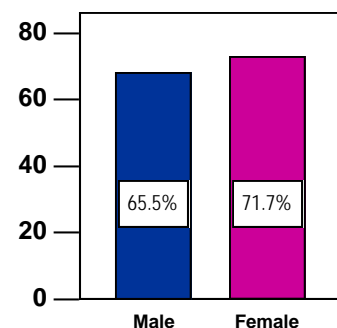


Figure 2.

Percent Males & Females Purchasing from Farmers Markets



MREDC NEWS

MREDC Has a New “Shell”

Entrepreneurship Tools ▸ Explore Enterprises ▸ Distance Learning Library ▸ Get Connected

MREDC is growing up! And recently, the website outgrew its navigational shell. The website now has a new navigation menu featuring sub menus. We hope the new navigation bar helps you better locate the resources you need. The new navigational structure will allow our MREDC team to keep expanding the site as we add new modules and resources for your use. As always, if you have any suggestions or questions about MREDC, please feel free to contact the MREDC web producer, Ellen Green, at egreen13@umd.edu or 301-432-2767 x307.

Recent Additions!

Since the last issue of *The Barn*, we have added two new resources to the Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center (MREDC) website and made one significant improvement.

New Tool! Assessing Your Farm Business Plan

(See article, page 1 of this newsletter.)

New Resource: Changing Ag Market Series

The Changing Ag Market Series are annual seminars coordinated by Ginger S. Myers, Regional Ag Marketing Specialist and Director of MREDC. The most recent seminar was held on March 31, Ag Entrepreneurship—Income Opportunities for Tight Times. Recordings of presentations are now available for viewing online. Access these recordings by visiting the Distance Learning Library at: <http://www.mredc.umd.edu/distanceworkshoprecordings.html>

March 31, 2010: Ag Entrepreneurship—Income Opportunities for Tight Times featuring:

- ▶ **A Bicycle for the Mind** – Presented by: Ginger S. Myers, Regional Marketing Specialist Ag and Natural Resources, University of Maryland Extension - WMREC
- ▶ **Ag Entrepreneurship** – Presented by Dr. Jeffery Hyde, Penn State University, University Park, PA
- ▶ **Adding Income with a Farm Visit** – Presented by: Nadine Fox, Buck Valley Ranch, Warfordsburg, PA
- ▶ **Income Opportunities with Sheep and Goats** – Presented by: Susan Schoenian, Sheep and Goat Specialist, University of Maryland Extension
- ▶ **Small Farm in a Small Town** – How Sustainability Makes Dollars and Sense; Presented by Pam West, West Farms, Lewisburg, West Virginia
- ▶ **Finding Your Numbers** – Presented by: Pam Saul, Rolling Acres Farm, Brookeville, MD
- ▶ **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center & Other Business Development Tools** – Presented by: Ginger S. Myers, Director, Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center and Regional Marketing Specialist Ag and Natural Resources, University of Maryland Extension - WMREC

Entrepreneur's Bootcamp: Dingman Jumpstart, August 16-27, 2010 Launch a Business in 2 Weeks!

Dingman Jumpstart is a 2-week intensive entrepreneurs' bootcamp for students and recent alums who want to experience entrepreneurship from idea generation all the way through testing business model and launching their business. Whether you have an idea, or are looking for one, Dingman Center's advisors will help you transform the idea into a business. This is also a great place to find team-mates to join you in your entrepreneurial journey. Entrepreneurial skills and thinking are indispensable whether one is running their own business or a department within a larger company. More about the program and a complete schedule:

<http://www.rhsmith.umd.edu/dingman/programs/jumpstart/>

For more information, contact:
Alla Corey Dingman Center for Entrepreneurship
301-405-9511

acorey@rhsmith.umd.edu
www.rhsmith.umd.edu/dingman/

FYI - Entrepreneurs



Got Lemons - Make Lemonade Got Cow Manure - Make CowPots™

You've probably seen them on television, having been featured on the Discovery Channel's popular series "Dirty Jobs," on CNN and a variety of national and local television shows. CowPots™ are recommended by The National Home Gardening Club and they've also won the Mail Order Gardening Association's Green Thumb Award.

CowPots™ are the invention of necessity. Brothers Matt and Ben Freund are second generation dairy farmers in the northwest hills of Connecticut. Their farm has always been on the cutting edge of new technologies, especially in areas related to efficient nutrient management. Since 1997, they are one of only a few farms across the United States to have continuously run a methane digester. This is a process in which the raw manure from the cows is heated and stored in a large tank. The methane gas is collected and burned. At the end of this process the solids are separated from the liquid. The liquid goes back to the field to grow next year's crops which feed the cows. The solids continue composting, producing a fibrous manure material.

Matt started experimenting with the manure fibers, forming them into pots and drying them in his wife's toaster oven. This didn't do much for his marriage, but it allowed him the ability to share his vision with other people. After many trials and tribulations, the brothers found a process in which they can mass produce pots of limitless sizes and shapes at an economical cost. These pots can withstand months in the greenhouse, but within 4 weeks of being planted in the ground they dissolve and continue to feed the plant.

The Freunds have green dreams far beyond CowPots™, though most are too proprietary to divulge. Just one? "Think about golf tees made of composted manure that fertilize greens when discarded." With other local dairy-men, they are looking into the feasibility of a cooperative venture to combine the methane gas produced by 2,500 cows on three farms to contribute to the power grid.

Source: <http://www.cowpots.com/history.html>

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

Solutions in your community

For more information visit:

Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center
<http://www.mredc.umd.edu/>

Ag Marketing Program
<http://AgMarketing.umd.edu>

Western Maryland Research & Education Center
<http://wmrec.umd.edu>

University of Maryland Extension
<http://www.extension.umd.edu/>

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The **BARN** is published quarterly featuring the programs and resources of the University of Maryland Extension's (B)usiness Development, (A)g Marketing, and (R)ural and Community Economic Development (N)etwork.

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<http://www.agmarketing.umd.edu/Pages/Newsletters/Newsletters.html>

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