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Welcome to *The Buzz*! Our twice-monthly newsletter is for all teachers of agriculture, formal and non-formal, community leaders in food systems and those who educate through agricultural practice. Please feel free to send us your workshop, news and event announcements to share with our MAEF list-members. Emails are never shared or sold. The Buzz is strictly for information and opportunity sharing in agriculture education. Contact Peggy Eppig at peppig@maefonline.com

Future Harvest- CASA 13th Annual Conference, Lansdowne, VA - Jan. 13-14, 2012

The Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture offers its 13th annual conference to farmers and all those working in the multi-faceted field of sustainable agriculture. Themes and intensives this year include Beginning Farmers, Farm-to-Institution, Grass-Based Systems, Local Food Communities, Organic Production, Profitability and Added Value. For full conference schedule, lodging and scholarships:

www.futureharvestcasa.org

Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, PA - Jan. 7-14, 2012

Celebrate Pennsylvania agriculture at the 96th Annual Farm Show – the largest indoor agricultural show and celebration in the nation! Teachers will find lesson plans and activities that correspond to a Farm Show visit with their students under the Education tab on website! A great family day out – and it's free! Check out the PA Farm Show website:

<http://www.farmshow.state.pa.us>

Farm-Based Educators Association – Free to Join!

“The FBEA is a free member network established to strengthen and support the work of educators and administrators providing public access to their productive working farms.” A very useful professional group that recognizes and supports the great work of agricultural educators who work in non-formal, field-based teaching venues on farms! MAEF and Hard Bargain Farm are teaming together in fall 2012 to offer the first state meeting of FBAE! Mark your calendar for November 17, 2012 @ Hard Bargain Farm!

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<http://www.farmbasededucation.org>

Cornell Research Shows Vermicompost Helps Suppress Plant Disease (ATTRA)

“Cornell University researchers have found that vermicompost -- the product of composting using various species of worms -- is not only an excellent fertilizer but could also help prevent a pathogen that has been a scourge to greenhouse growers. Researchers found that beneficial microbes in vermicompost can colonize a seed's surface and protect it from infection.” Vermicomposting – farming worms (!) is one of my favorite lessons to share with students and teachers in environmental science – it is great to see applied research confirming what we knew all along – worms = great soil + healthy plants! ATTRA has a great resource for wanna-be worm farmers (vermicomposting):

<https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=256>

Baltimore Urban Agriculture Update! (Baltimore Office of Sustainability)

In March 2011, the City of Baltimore released a Request for Qualifications seeking experienced farmers who could put together sound business plans and management models for new, entrepreneurial farms to be started in the City. Ten farming organizations applied, and five were qualified over the course of the summer. The Baltimore Office of Sustainability is now working with the farmers to find appropriate vacant, city-owned sites for their farm sites, and plan to officially launch the program and leases this spring. The selected farmers currently qualified under the program are: Big City Farms, Five Seeds Farm, Our Farm Next Door, Real Food Farm, and Seed & Cycle. To learn more visit :

<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Planning/BaltimoreFoodPolicyInitiative/UrbanAgriculture.aspx>

Graduate Courses in Agricultural Education (MAEF/UMES/BMI)

Registration for UMES Certification, APC, Graduate and CTE Masters Courses opens next Monday - Jan 9, 2012. Below is a list of graduate courses to be offered in Spring 2012 by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore through the Staff Development Center at Baltimore Museum of Industry. Two courses listed under Agricultural Education – AEED 426 and 699 are offered. AEED 426 is an FFA online course from North Carolina State University. Based on feedback for Maryland agricultural teachers who took the course last spring, it is excellent for new as well as experienced teachers. Please consider taking this as part of a graduate program or for certificate renewal or even program and professional enrichment.

For more information about the courses, contact David Miller, 301-663-4192 x 2225 (office), 301-788-7774 (cell) or email dmiller@maefonline.com. For questions about registration, enrolling graduate

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school at UMES, etc. please contact JoAnn Norris at 410-727-4808 x 164, jenorris@umes.edu or Mike Shealey 410-727-4808 x 147, mshealey@thebmi.org at the Baltimore Museum of industry.

New Classroom Action Guide Asks "What's On Your Fork?" (NAAEE)

Does what you eat really have impact on our planet? Could mealtime choices actually help promote clean drinking water? What's On Your Fork? is a new, free downloadable action guide and collection of supplementary educational tools from EarthEcho International designed to help educators and students explore the environmental and community impact of daily food choices. This new resource is part of EarthEcho's Water Planet Challenge, a Web-based interactive program exploring a myriad of topics that engage and empower middle and high school-aged youth to design, create, and implement service-learning projects in their communities. Rich in academic connections, the What's On Your Fork? step-by-step action guide includes stimulating content, student organizers for discussions and planning, and examples of youth taking action. Visit the Web site to learn more about NEA Foundation Water Planet Challenge educator grants and an upcoming What's On Your Fork? Webinar hosted by Philippe Cousteau, Jr.

<http://www.WaterPlanetChallenge.org>