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BERKSHIRE
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

A belated Happy New Year! As we and our land emerge from the longest nights of the season, the planning and looking ahead to the busy growing season has begun. Here are a few updates and news of the District.

Welcome to our new Board of Supervisors and Staff!

The District is thrilled to announce the addition of Max Prum and Jocelyn Latvalla to our Board of Supervisors. With a background and interest in tree crops, permaculture and regenerative agriculture, Max is a great addition to our team. And I'm sure his talents as a video editor will be most welcome! Jocelyn earned a BS in sustainable food and farming as well as community development from UMass Amherst. She has worked at High Lawn Farm and is currently an economic associate at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Jocelyn also brings a variety of talents to our team.

We have also hired a Strategic Program Assistant to help the District with planning events and programs, long-range plans and grant writing. Jill Wenner brings many years of experience including an intimate and recent knowledge of NRCS assistance programs relating to Berkshire County farmers. Some of her many other talents include identifying funding opportunities for non-profits, marketing and outreach, planning, coordinating and executing events and grant writing. Jill holds a BS in environmental science from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry as well as a JD and Masters in Environmental Law from Vermont Law School.

Welcome all to the BCD team!!

NoTill Seed Drills For Rent

2019 ESCH 5512



*10 acre minimum

Now Booking!

2023 ESCH 5607



*2 acre minimum

Schedule Your Rental of One of Our No-Till Seeder Drills Now!

The District is currently taking schedule requests for both of our no-till seeder drills. Both drills were built in Pennsylvania. We have a 7' no-till seeder drill (the latest addition to our rental library) which provides no-till farming practices accessible to smaller farms that previously faced equipment limitations. This drill is able to be operated with a 50 horsepower tractor and transported using a ½ ton tow vehicle with a 2 5/16" ball, both of which are much more common on smaller farms. It features a no-till coulter with tapered roller bearings and a small seed tube behind double disc. It comes with replaceable wear bushings and adjustable seed depth with its T-handle. Minimum 2 acres for rental.

Our 12' no-till drill is popular with larger farms and needs access to a 125-horsepower tractor to operate and a vehicle rated for towing 9,000 pounds (without trailer brakes) is required to tow it to the field. This drill has 5.5" seed spacing and is equipped with a foam marker. It has a swing tongue that allows it to fold to 8'8" for easy road transport. Minimum 10 acres for rental.

This equipment was purchased through grant funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Reserve either our Esch 5512 (12') or our new 5507 (7') now for your spring planting. Visit the [No-Till Program page](#) on our website to fill out a Rental Agreement online and additional program requirements. Delivery fees, if needed, are extra. An additional subsidy is available with rentals for soil testing to determine what soil amendments and in what amount, are needed.

Contact Ambrose Clausen, our [Program Manager](#) today for more information.



We are planning the next Native Plant Sale!

Next week (February 3rd) marks the halfway point between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox, the light is extending and the plants are taking notice. In preparation for our Annual Plant Sale, and to better serve our clientele, please take a few minutes to follow this link to a very short 6 question [survey](#). Thank you!



Berkshire County Farmers: What is your Climate Story?

The Berkshire Conservation District would like to get feedback from Berkshire County farmers and those who work with them.

What is your climate story? You've likely experienced some changes yourself: Increasing temps, humidity and number of days above 90 degrees, extreme weather events, different insects, seasonal shifts or other evidence of a changing climate. You're not alone. Farmers in Massachusetts and elsewhere feel that "there is no more normal" in any given year. These changes are directly impacting farmers' ability to grow food and feed us, both locally and around the world. While it can be difficult to discuss these issues with customers and others, solutions can lie within our own communities, especially when more people learn to buy local.

What is your own climate story? How are you trying to make your farm more resilient and sustainable? Are you a farmer, or do you know of a farmer, who is adapting to these challenges by implementing new and effective practices? Please share these stories with us - through written words, photos or videos. Your climate story could help your community and help us support you better as we move forward. Please send your stories to BCD's Strategic Program Assistant at: jill@berkshireconservation.org. Thank you!!

Farmer Dinner & Discussion



Ambrose Clausen, BCD Program Manager led a roundtable discussion with North County farmers at the Bounti-Fare in Adams on January 22nd. Over dinner and a short presentation by American Farmland Trust's Max Breitneicher, farmers shared their steep challenges and hopes for partnership. They reflected on the need for coordinated resource sharing between neighbors to reduce the burden on an individual farmer, the gaps in

years of renewed capacity and grant funding.

Biochar Survey



If you are a farmer applying or interested in applying biochar, please take our [national biochar survey](#), led by American Farmland Trust's Climate and Soil Health Initiative alongside the Social Science Research team. You have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win a \$100 gift card as a thank you for your participation. The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete.

If you are an ag service or biochar provider, please share this survey broadly with your network to get it into the hands of farmers who use or are interested in biochar. We greatly appreciate any help in widely disseminating this national survey!

The goal of this survey is to better understand who is applying biochar and why and where. We aim to identify the factors influencing farmers' success and persistence with applying biochar on their farms and examine the possible barriers. The survey results will provide a blueprint for supporting greater successful adoption of sustainable, fit-for-purpose biochar use among farmers.

This survey is funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) On-Farm Trials Conservation Innovation Grants national program (NR233A750011G029) and was designed in collaboration with AFT's biochar partners. For questions or inquiries, contact Ellen Yeatman, social science analyst, at eyeatman@farmland.org.

Thank you for helping us reach as many farmers as possible to complete this first-of-its-kind national biochar survey!

Sound Good? Join Us!

Our Board of Supervisors guide the District in all our programs and initiatives. We've got a talented, dedicated crew and are always looking to welcome more Berkshire folks to help chart our course and steer this ship,

If you were forwarded this newsletter, please subscribe to the [BCD newsletter](#) to get future news directly!



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