

AG CONSERVATION LEASING: FOR THE FARMER

USING A LEASE PROTECTS FARMERS AND SUPPORTS CONSERVATION

WHY HAVE A LEASE?

- Risk Reduction
- Clear Expectations
- Allocation of Responsibilities

A lease can protect both the farmer and landowner by preventing miscommunication and providing clear guidelines of what is expected of both parties. Creating a lease, or revising an existing lease, gives the farmer and landowner the opportunity to discuss goals for the farm.

HOW TO DISCUSS CONSERVATION PRACTICES WITH THE LANDOWNER?

Communication

Identify issues on the farm that could be improved by conservation practices. Open a dialogue with your landowner about how conservation practices could be used in a way that benefits the farm.



HOW CAN A LEASE SUPPORT CONSERVATION PRACTICES?

A written lease can help a farmer overcome concerns about implementing conservation practices. Simple lease language related to the rental term, preferred types of conservation practices, division of cost-share, and compensation for maintenance responsibilities can help both parties to equitably implement practices.

RESOURCES

General leasing principles and sample leases: Agricultural Leasing in Maryland

Go.umd.edu/AgLeasingOverview

Agricultural Conservation Leasing Guide

Go.umd.edu/AgLeasingGuide

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Additional resources on the back.

WHO CAN HELP YOU IMPLEMENT CONSERVATION PRACTICES?

Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs)

Maryland has 24 SCDs that work directly with landowners and farmers to enhance farming operations while helping conserve soil and preserve water quality. In addition to providing technical assistance for installing conservation practices, SCDs can connect landowners and farmers with financial assistance options to help offset the costs of implementation. For more information about SCDs, visit https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/technical_assistance.aspx.

National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS provides technical support and offers cost-share assistance for several of their conservation practices. For more information about their programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

FSA works with NRCS to help implement conservation programs and provide funding for implementation. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)

MDA offers conservation grants and loans through programs such as MACS, cover crop, manure transport and matching service, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). For more information on MDA, visit <https://mda.maryland.gov>.

University of Maryland Extension (UME)

UME educates the public and shares information and guidance from research gathered across the state. UME can also offer advice on working with federal and state agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, to enroll in conservation programs. For more information about UME, visit <https://extension.umd.edu>.

Numerous Non-Governmental Organizations

Both local and national NGOs have programs to encourage implementation of agricultural conservation practices.