

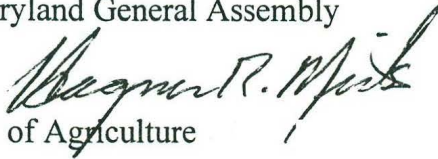
PARRIS N. GLENDENING, *Governor*
HAGNER R. MISTER, *Secretary*
BRADLEY H. POWERS, *Deputy Secretary*



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STATE OF MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION

To: Governor Parris N. Glendening
Members of the Maryland General Assembly

From: Hagner R. Mister 
Maryland Secretary of Agriculture

Date: December 31, 2001

RE: Nutrient Management Plans in Maryland

Pursuant to §8-807 Annotated Code of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Agriculture is reporting on the coverage, implementation and evaluation of nutrient management plans.

Farmers are required to file nutrient management plans beginning December 31, 2001 and begin their implementation by December 31, 2002. As of December 31, 2,152 plans have been officially submitted to the Department covering 338,392 acres. MDA has reviewed plans completed with state cost share assistance to assure they meet technical standards. The content of non-cost shared plan submittals is examined for completeness only. Evaluation of the implementation of these plans will not be conducted prior to December 31, 2002.

The law also allows farmers who have been unable to obtain the services of a nutrient management consultant to file a "Justification for Delay" form with the Department. As of December 31, 2001, 2,993 farmers filed these forms indicating they were completing nutrient management plans on 757,535 acres of land. MDA will conduct a detailed data analysis to determine if targeting of resources is warranted, however, after preliminary analysis of information submitted, it appears the capacity exists to complete "delayed" plans by December 31, 2002. The challenge is to assure existing plans can continue to be updated while the backlog of new plans is addressed.

MDA will be organizing and cross-referencing available data sets to implement a process of notification to identify and bring agricultural operators who have failed to submit any information into compliance. This will include the levying of progressive penalties if agricultural operators continue to ignore requirements or make no efforts to comply.