

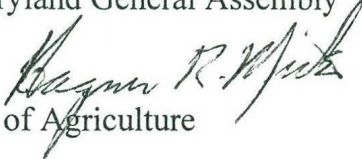
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**STATE OF MARYLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

To: Members of the Maryland General Assembly

From: Hagner R. Mister   
Maryland Secretary of Agriculture

Date: December 31, 2002

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. 4,331 plans have been officially submitted to the Department as of December 31, 2002 covering 799,913 acres. Evaluation of the implementation of these plans has not been initiated as farmers have until December 31, 2002 to begin implementation according to the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998.

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, 2002, 2,443 farmers have filed these forms indicating they were in the process of completing nutrient management plans on 523,947 acres of land.