



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of Resource Conservation

**Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.**, Governor  
**Michael S. Steele**, Lt. Governor  
**Lewis R. Riley**, Secretary  
**John R. Brooks, D.V.M.**, Deputy Secretary

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building  
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
TTY Users: Call via Maryland Relay  
Internet: [www.mda.state.md.us](http://www.mda.state.md.us)

410.841.5700 Baltimore/Annapolis  
301.261.8106 Washington, D.C.  
410.841.5736 Fax  
800.492.5590 Toll Free

To: Members of the Maryland General Assembly

From: Lewis R. Riley, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture

Date: December 31, 2004

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. 5,449 nutrient management plans have been officially submitted to the Department as of December 31, 2004 covering 1,121,605 acres.

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, 2004, 1,281 farmers have these forms on file with MDA indicating they are in the process of completing nutrient management plans on 208,633 acres of land.

Evaluation of the implementation of these plans has not been initiated. The Nutrient Management Summit held August 5, 2003 resulted in 55 recommendations for modifying the Nutrient Management Program. Legislation was passed in 2004 to address a number of these recommendations, the most contentious being the requirement that farmers sign off granting a right of entry to their property when they submit their nutrient management plan. We believe that this requirement has been the biggest obstacle to compliance.

Regulations to implement the new law changes became effective December 22, 2004. MDA sent a mailing to approximately 10,000 farmers explaining requirements for compliance with the Water Quality Improvement Act. Farmers who have submitted nutrient management plan information must submit an Annual Implementation Report by March 1, 2005 explaining how they implemented their nutrient management plan during 2004. Farmers who have a Justification for Delay form on file or who have not provided any information to MDA must submit nutrient management plan information by March 1, 2005.

MDA has conducted reviews of nutrient management plan implementation as demonstrations in conjunction with local workshops and field days. Additionally, MDA staff review of plans prepared by certified and licensed consultants is ongoing to assure regulatory requirements are addressed.

**Pursuant to Agriculture § 8-807**