



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

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

410.841.5700 Baltimore/Annapolis
301.261.8106 Washington, D.C.
410.841.5914 Fax
800.492.5590 Toll Free

To: Members of the Maryland General Assembly
From: Lewis R. Riley, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture
Date: December 31, 2005
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.

The Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998 required most farmers to file nutrient management plans beginning December 31, 2001 and begin their implementation by December 31, 2002. Amendments to the law, which took effect when regulations were promulgated in December, 2004, streamlined the program. The regulations required farmers who had already filed a Nutrient Management Plan to submit an Annual Implementation Reports by March 1, 2005 which documented elements of plan implementation. Farmers who had not yet filed a plan were given the opportunity to file by March 1, 2005 and avoid penalties.

As of December 31, 2005, 6,491 farmers have submitted nutrient management plans covering 1,225,030 acres. This represents 79% of farmers and 80% of agricultural acreage estimated to be regulated by the Water Quality Improvement Act.

In June of 2005, MDA began incrementally implementing enforcement procedures on over 2000 farmers identified as potentially being in violation of requirements for failing to submit a nutrient management plan. MDA is notifying each farmer of their intent to first conduct a site inspection to verify whether they are regulated under this law before taking additional enforcement actions. As of December 31, 2005 over 600 farmers had been notified and 93% of these agreed to cooperate and are now in compliance. Warning letters have been sent to the others as required by the law, prior to assessing any penalties.

Evaluation of nutrient management plan implementation was initiated with receipt of 3,898 Annual Implementation Reports. Field reviews of implementation will be initiated in 2006.