



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

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**Michael S. Steele**, Lt. Governor

**Lewis R. Riley**, Secretary

**John R. Brooks, D.V.M.**, Deputy Secretary

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December 31, 2006

To: Members of the Maryland General Assembly

From: Lewis R. Riley, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture

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 Report by March 1 of each year. The annual report documents elements of plan implementation during the previous calendar year.

A total of 6,048 farmers have submitted nutrient management plans covering 1,256,166 acres as of December 15, 2006. This represents 90 percent of farmers and 94 percent of agricultural acreage estimated to be regulated by the Water Quality Improvement Act. The number of farmers subject to the Water Quality Improvement Act has been updated and modified from the approximately 8,000 originally projected. As MDA receives new information, we have made adjustments and now estimate 6,700 farmers managing 1.34 million acres to be subject to the law. We anticipate there will be annual adjustments as agricultural operations change, and we learn about other operations and development pressures which impact land use.

In June of 2005, MDA began conducting enforcement procedures to bring into compliance more than 2000 farmers identified as potentially being in violation of requirements requiring submission of a nutrient management plan. MDA began notifying each farmer of MDA's intent to first conduct a site inspection to verify whether the farmer is regulated under this law before taking additional enforcement actions. As of December 31, 2006 more than 1500