

You and The Chesapeake Bay: Nutrient Management Planning In Maryland Keeping the Bay Blue



Photo by Wayne Gilchrest

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING in MARYLAND - **Fact or Fiction**

- **Water Quality Improvement Act (WQIA) is the Maryland Nutrient Management Law. - Fact**
- **Nutrient management plans use soil tests to determine the Concentration of nutrients that are present in the soil. - Fact**
- **Nutrient management plans recommend the amount of fertilizers that can be applied based on crop needs. These recommendations are based on University research. - Fact**
- **Nutrient management plans are audited to verify that application rates don't exceed recommendations. - Fact**

UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND EXTENSION...
your source for research-based information.

Contact: www.extension.umd.edu or call your local University of Maryland Extension Office.

You and The Chesapeake Bay: Nutrient Management Planning in Maryland

Why are Nutrient Management Plans Required?

The Water Quality Improvement Act (WQIA), also known as the Maryland Nutrient Management Law, was passed in 1998 by the Maryland State Legislature. The goal of nutrient management planning is to reduce non-point source pollution (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus from cropland) by balancing nutrient applications with crop nutrient requirements. Nutrient management planning, which is an array of best management practices (BMPs), is considered to be one of the most cost-effective means of controlling excessive nutrient applications.

Who Needs a Nutrient Management Plan?

Under provisions of the WQIA, all Maryland agricultural producers (crop producers, animal operations, and nursery and greenhouse industries) are required to implement a nutrient management plan if they have:

- ◆ an annual gross income of \$2,500 or more from an agricultural enterprise **OR**
- ◆ livestock operations with more than 8 animal units, which equals approximately 8,000 pounds of live animal weight.

What is a Nutrient Management Plan?

A nutrient management plan is a formal document that details how a producer can balance crop nutrient needs with nutrients that are applied in any form (commercial fertilizer, animal manure, or bio-solids). A plan contains many components including:

- ◆ soil test results,
- ◆ manure and bio-solids analyses (when applicable),
- ◆ crop yield goal information,
- ◆ estimates of residual nitrogen (i.e., how much available nitrogen is left in the soil from previous year's cropping.).

This information is used to generate field-by-field nutrient recommendations, which are the backbone of the nutrient management plan.

Who Can Develop a Nutrient Management Plan?

Nutrient management plans are developed by:

- ◆ University of Maryland Extension advisors who are certified and licensed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA),
- ◆ private consultants certified and licensed by MDA,
- ◆ farmers who are certified by MDA to develop plans solely for their own operations.

What are the Benefits of Nutrient Management Planning?

Nutrient management planning has many benefits for farmers and non-farmers including:

- ◆ minimizing nutrient losses to surface water, ground water and the atmosphere.
- ◆ maintaining optimum conditions for crop growth,
- ◆ optimizing economic use of nutrient resources and enhancing farm profitability.



Where Can I Find More Information About Nutrient Management Planning?

For more information regarding compliance with nutrient management regulations, please visit the Maryland Department of Agriculture web site at www.mda.state.md.us and click on "Nutrient Management" or call 410-841-5959.

For technical information and assistance with nutrient management, please visit the University of Maryland Extension Agricultural Nutrient Management Program's web site at www.anmp.umd.edu or call 301-405-1319.

You and The Chesapeake Bay: Nutrient Management Planning In Maryland Keeping the Bay Blue

Authored by:

Jenny Rhodes, UME, Queen Anne's Co., Shannon Dill, UME, Talbot County, John Hall, UME, Kent County

Reviewed by:

Frank Coale, University of Maryland Professor & Chair, Environmental Science & Technology
Joshua McGrath, University of Maryland Assistant Professor, Environmental Science & Technology
Charles Schuster, University of Maryland Senior Agent, Ag & Natural Resources, Commercial Horticulture

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, University of Maryland, College Park, and local governments. Cheng-i Wei, Director of University of Maryland Extension.

The University of Maryland is equal opportunity. The University's policies, programs, and activities are in conformance with pertinent Federal and State laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or disability. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; title IX of the Educational Amendments; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990; or related legal requirements should be directed to the Director of Human Resources Management, Office of the Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Symons Hall, College Park, MD 20742.