

CONSUMER

INFORMATION SHEET

CIS-3

05/07/09

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 **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 the previous year).

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:

- ◆ Maryland Cooperative 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,
- ◆ 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 nutrient management compliance, 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 Maryland Cooperative Extension Agricultural Nutrient Management Program's web site at www.anmp.umd.edu or call 301-405-1319.

Email: kent@umd.edu ◆ Web: www.kent.umd.edu

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Photo by Wayne Gilcrest

Keeping the Bay Blue

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

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

YOUR BEST SOURCE FOR RESEARCH-BASED INFO.

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