

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural operators are required to develop and implement nutrient management plans to prevent and minimize the potential for nutrient impacts to waters of the state. Under COMAR 15.20.08.05E the consultant uses the fertility index value (FIV) to make a determination of whether the plan shall use nitrogen or phosphorous as the limiting nutrient. Chapter B in this section, “Determining Fertility Index Value (FIV) from Soil Test Results,” explains how to convert the soil test results from several regional soil testing laboratories to the FIV.

When the FIV is greater than or equal to 150, the consultant shall assess the risk of phosphorous movement. Chapter C in this section, “Phosphorous Site Index (PSI) for Maryland Agricultural Operations,” provides the factors that shall be evaluated to determine site-specific recommendations for phosphorus management as required under COMAR 15.20.08.05E.

Consultants developing plans for container or out-of-ground agricultural operations shall address the risk of nutrient movement using the “Environmental Risk Assessment for Out-of-Ground Production” in Chapter D. This provides an evaluation tool to determine risk to surface waters as required under COMAR 15.20.08.06D. If risk is determined to be in a medium or high category, management recommendations shall include the use of best management practices to reduce this risk under COMAR 15.20.08.07B. These practices are listed and explained in accordance with the type of management issue they address under Chapter E of this section “Best Management Practices for Container-Grown Operations.” A consultant and agricultural operator shall select those that are applicable to the site being managed.