



Nutrient Management News

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SUMMER 2023

Letter from Secretary Atticks



As the updates to the nutrient management plan writing program begin to roll out over the next few months, concerns about changes to the current model may run high. The plan writing services currently offered by the

University of Maryland Extension have been relied upon by members of the ag community for many years. But as much has changed in the years following the COVID pandemic, it's an opportune time to evolve the program.

Throughout the discussions between MDA and the University of Maryland on how to transition to this new model, the topic of what this means for our ag community has remained at the forefront. It's important to highlight several key points as we move forward with implementing this new plan.

First and foremost, MDA will continue to fund specialists at UMD to maintain and continue a scaled back version of the plan writing program. MDA and the University both agree this is vital for farmers—especially those with smaller operations—while freeing up capital to put toward cost-share for the 70% of operations already utilizing private plan writing firms.

Next, remodeling this plan will allow the department and University to shift their focus back to their respective strengths—education, training and research through the University, and regulatory and technical assistance by MDA. Reevaluating and realigning where resources are used will allow farmers to more quickly and efficiently access the

continued on page 4

MDA Updates Nutrient Management Plan-Writing Options

What You Need to Know

Earlier this month, Secretary Atticks announced that nutrient management plan writing services will become fully privatized beginning August 31, 2023. The move was made *to meet increased demand for nutrient management plan writing services*. Here's what farmers need to know:

What's Going to Change?

- This summer, MDA will begin offering farmers cost-share assistance to hire a nutrient management plan writer:
 1. MDA is reviewing cost-share programs in neighboring states to offer Maryland farmers the best possible product.
 2. To save farmers time, MDA is considering multi-year cost-share options for nutrient management plans.
 3. The final cost-share plan will be announced at the July 17 summit.
- The Farmer Training and Certification Program (FTCP) will be expanded to empower more farmers to prepare their own plans.

continued on page 2

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SUMMIT

July 17, 2023
9:30 am – 1 pm

Pascal Center for Performing Arts
ANNE ARUNDEL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Please [click here to register](#). Questions? Please reach out to the Nutrient Management Program at 410-841-5959.



Nutrient Management Plan-Writing Options continued...

- The free nutrient management plan-writing service from University of Maryland Extension advisors will be phased out by August 31, 2023.

Background

Maryland law requires all farmers that generate \$2,500 or more in gross income or have 8,000 pounds or more of live animal weight to follow nutrient management plans when fertilizing crops and managing animal manure. These plans specify how much fertilizer, manure, or other nutrient sources may be safely applied to crops to achieve yields and prevent excess nutrients from impacting local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. They are a major feature in Maryland's Bay restoration efforts.

- **Most plans are written for one or three years.** They must be revised and updated before they expire to ensure their effectiveness in protecting water quality.
- **Expired plans consistently top compliance issues** identified by MDA nutrient management specialists during on-farm audits.
- MDA's Conservation Grants Program has seen an **uptick in cost-share application rejections** due to expired nutrient management plans.

Why Are You Eliminating the Free Plan Writing Service from UME Advisors?

In recent years, the University of Maryland has experienced challenges in staffing qualified nutrient management advisors. This has resulted in delays for farmers needing updated nutrient management plans at the start of the busy growing season. By expanding farmers' access to nutrient management plan writers and plan writing services, MDA aims to make it easier for farmers to comply with environmental requirements and manage their farms more efficiently.

Nutrient Management Listening Session

Thursday, July 13, 2023
3 pm — 5 pm

Talbot County Community Center
10028 Ocean Gateway
Easton, MD 21601

Join Secretary Atticks and the NMP to voice your questions or concerns over recent program changes. For more information, please call 410-841-5959.

What Is the University of Maryland's Role Moving Forward?

The University of Maryland will continue to provide the program with research, tools, educational resources, and technical expertise. They will:

- Oversee the **Farmer Training and Certification Program** for farmers. This program will be expanded under the new model.
- Provide farmers with learning opportunities through crop meetings, field days, and webinars.
- Advise planners and farmers on the plan-writing process and, in some cases, assist in writing nutrient management plans.

My NMP is Prepared by an Extension Advisor—What Should I Do?

You have two options:

- Enroll in a 2-day Farmer Training and Certification workshop to become certified to write a plan for your operation. Farmers who have undergone this training report a greater understanding of managing nutrients for increased farm profitability.

- Apply for cost-share assistance, which will be available later this summer. Applications will be accepted at local soil conservation districts across Maryland.

What About Small Farms?

Small farms have 3 options:

- Contact your MDA regional nutrient management specialist for a list of UMD specialists that prepare plans for small farms.
- Apply for cost-share assistance to help cover the cost of hiring a private consultant.
- Sign up for a 2-day Farmer Training and Certification workshop to certify you to prepare your plan.

How Will You Grow the Farmer Training and Certification Program?

MDA-funded UMD specialists will expand the Farmer Training and Certification Program to include **monthly nutrient management plan writing workshops** for all Maryland farmers. Laptop computers will be provided to allow farmers to prepare their plans using the NuMan Pro plan-writing software program. Classes will be announced on the website at bit.ly/NMP_Training. Here is how the program works:

Day 1: Farmers undergo training and take an **open-book exam**.

Day 2: Farmers write their plans with help from UMD and MDA nutrient management specialists.

How Will I Be Notified When Cost-Share Becomes Available?

MDA will mail cost-share information to all regulated farmers later this summer. Questions? Please contact the NMP at 410-841-5959.

Hello & Welcome!



Ashby Ruddle joins the NMP as the new nutrient management specialist for Allegany, Washington, and Garrett counties. Ashby is no stranger to agriculture or Western

Maryland. He is a former Extension nutrient management advisor for Allegany County. He has extensive experience performing soil analyses and helping farmers with manure spreader calibrations and yield goal checks. Ashby grew up on his family's beef cattle farm in Franklin, West Virginia, and earned a B.S. in Agricultural and Environmental Education from West Virginia University. He is a good fit for MDA. You can reach Ashby at 410-279-3506 or ashby.ruddle@maryland.gov.



Tia Randall-Murray is the new administrative specialist for the Agricultural Nutrient Management Program. Tia brings a wealth of administrative experience to the

program. She has worked in various administrative and fiscal roles for the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources and Juvenile Services and is a welcome addition to our team. Contact Tia at 410-841-5957 or tia.randall-murray1@maryland.gov.



Cover Crop Sign-Up is Now Open



Plant a Cover Crop Mix for Improved Soil Health

Sign-up for Maryland's 2023-2024 Cover Crop Program runs through July 17, 2023 at soil conservation district offices statewide. This is your opportunity to apply for attractive grants to help pay for seed, labor, and equipment costs to plant fall cover crops. This year marks a return to in-person registration at local soil conservation districts, where conservation staff are ready to assist you with your application.

2023-2024 Program Highlights

- The minimum payment for incorporated seed has been raised to \$60/acre.
- The incentive payment to plant rye and mixed species has increased to \$20/acre.
- Triticale now qualifies for a \$20/acre incentive.
- Drones may be used as an aerial seeding option.
- You must plant at least 10 acres to be eligible for MDA's cover crop grants.
- For a second year, a *Cover Crop Plus+ Program* with higher incentive payments will be offered to farmers who agree to a multi-year commitment.

So Long & Thank You!



Judy McGowan, MDA's long-serving turfgrass nutrient management specialist, retired on June 1. Judy joined the NMP in 2002. At that time, the program regulated about 700 individuals and companies that applied fertilizer to 10 or more acres of non-agricultural land. Judy performed inspections, training, and follow-up compliance visits for the program. When

Maryland lawmakers passed the Fertilizer Use Act of 2011, the program expanded to cover all professionals hired to fertilize turf. Judy wrote the regulations for the program, worked with the University of Maryland to develop a training and education program for 1,500 turfgrass professionals, and performed annual inspections and reviews for some 800 license holders. She's been at it ever since. Congratulations, Judy, on a job well done.

Find your PERFECT MATCH



tools they need. Farmers will be empowered to develop their plans through University-led Farmer Training Certification (FTC) and MDA-hosted workshops around the state, and gain further knowledge and access to the resources offered to those with nutrient management plans.

And finally, these changes will provide new opportunities for Maryland-based agricultural organizations to build alliances with privatized nutrient management planning services. Whether as a member benefit through a group or institution, farmers in these organizations will have more options for writing their plans.

This summer, we will hold a number of listening sessions around the state to hear from farmers how they would like to see the actual requirements of the plan evolve to keep up with new practices, while also making the plan more productive and informative. In addition, we will hold a Nutrient Management Summit on July 17 at Anne Arundel Community College.

I have toured our state and met with farmers from many ag sectors during my tenure as Secretary. Each has their own story, their unique history, and their own practices, but all share the common goal of making their farms more profitable and more resilient. I share that goal, and intend to be practical and intentional in meeting the needs of the industry, while continually acknowledging our role in improving the health of the Bay. Maryland farmers will succeed and thrive; there is no reasonable alternative. I look forward to continuing the discussion about this plan over the next several months and welcome all feedback on what is—and isn't—working.

Kevin M. Atticks
Maryland Agriculture Secretary



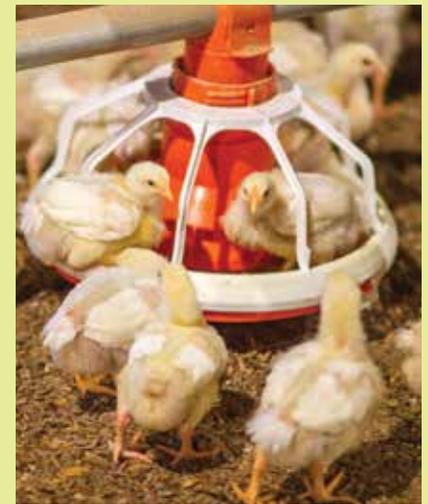
Manure Transport and Injection Grants

MDA's manure transport and injection grants are the perfect match for farmers who want to improve their soil's health and protect local water quality. These grants help farmers offset costs to inject liquid manure into the soil to prevent nutrient runoff, reduce odors, and preserve beneficial surface residue. MDA pays up to \$45/acre for costs associated with injecting manure into the soil. Cost-share grants to transport dairy and livestock manure pay up to 87.5% of eligible costs. Funding is available for spring or fall planted crops. Contact your local soil conservation district to apply for these grants.



Need Chicken Litter?

Get the app. The Delmarva Chicken Association's free mobile app, **Litr.**, connects growers with chicken litter with those who want it. With MDA's FastTrack grants, qualifying farmers or brokers can receive up to \$28 per ton to haul chicken litter to qualifying farms. Visit the website at mda.maryland.gov/manure for details.



Urban Update



Have You Filed Your Annual Fertilizer Report?

Annual Fertilizer Application Reports for the calendar year 2023 were due to the department by March 1. Most firms have submitted their reports, but some reports are still outstanding. If you still need to submit your information, please do so immediately. Remember that a report is required even if it shows no activity. Count each area once, regardless of how many times it was fertilized. Please keep a copy of your report.

Good Record Keeping Makes Reporting Easier

Keep the following records of fertilizer applications:

- Name of the fertilizer applicator
- Size of the area fertilized
- Date of nutrient application
- Address and location of the client
- Rate of application (Example: 2 pounds of fertilizer per 1,000 square feet)
- Total amount of fertilizer used per application
- Analysis of the fertilizer product used
- An original or legible copy of the fertilizer label (cell phone photos accepted!)



TRAINING CALENDAR

AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Maryland Nutrient Management Consultant Certification Exam

Date	August 4, 2023
Format	In Person
Locations	Annapolis, Keedysville, and Easton
Who Should Attend	Individuals who want to become certified to write nutrient management plans for farmers.
How to Register	Go to bit.ly/NMP_Training

Farmer Training and Certification

Dates	Classes Forming Soon
Who Should Attend	Farmers who want to become trained and certified to prepare nutrient management plans for their own operations.
How to Register	Check bit.ly/NMP_Training for updates

Learn and Earn Continuing Education Credits On-Line

Dates	Our on-demand webinar library lets you earn continuing education credits anytime.
How to Access the Webinar Library	Go to bit.ly/NMP_Training and scroll down to Learn and Earn CEUs Online. Click the link to go to the webinar library. Don't forget to download the quiz for the webinar you plan to attend before you begin.

TURFGRASS NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Professional Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training/Exam

Dates and Locations	August 15, 2023—Annapolis October 4, 2023—Derwood
Who Should Attend	Individuals who want to become certified to apply fertilizer to lawns that they manage. Optional training sessions are available.
How to Register	Go to mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer . Check back often for new offerings.

Professional Fertilizer Applicator Continuing Education Classes

Dates	Available anytime.
Format	On demand webinars; earn 1-2 continuing education credits.
Who Should Attend	Certified professional fertilizer applicators who want to renew their certifications.
How to Register	Go to mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer . Check back often for new offerings.

Soil Testing

Soil tests must be taken for each new customer and once every three years thereafter if phosphorus will be applied to the property. An approved lab must be used to test the samples. Follow University of Maryland recommendations included in these fact sheets:

TT-115 (turf maintenance), **TT-116** (seeding) and **TT-118** (golf courses). Download the fact sheets at mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer.

Nitrogen Limits

A single application may not exceed 0.9 pound total nitrogen per 1,000 square feet and 0.7 pound of soluble nitrogen per

1,000 square feet, except when using enhanced efficiency fertilizer. Annual limits may not exceed University of Maryland recommendations.

Newly Established Lawns

Turf fertilizer used for routine maintenance applications may not contain phosphorus unless a current soil test (less than three years old) indicates the need. When establishing turf after a tillage operation or more drastic disturbance, such as construction, phosphorus may be applied without a soil test following University of Maryland recommendations for seeding. (See fact sheet **TT-116** at mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer)



Maryland Department of Agriculture

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Aruna Miller, *Lt. Governor*
Kevin M. Atticks, *Secretary*
Steven A. Connelly, *Deputy Secretary*

Maryland Department of Agriculture Nutrient Management Offices and Staff Directory

Western Maryland

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Nutrient Management News

2023 SUMMER

What's Inside:

- Changes to the Nutrient Management Plan Writing Program: What You Need to Know
- Cover Crop Sign-Up Runs June 21 through July 17
- Turfgrass Update

Maryland Nutrient Management News is published by the Maryland Nutrient Management Program. It is designed to help farmers, consultants, and lawn care professionals comply with Maryland's nutrient management regulations. Comments and suggestions should be directed to the Maryland Nutrient Management Program, Maryland Department of Agriculture. Email: ninfo.mda@maryland.gov

