



Winter 2017

Maryland



Nutrient Management News

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY BARTENFELDER

Sometimes, environmental laws and regulations look good on paper, but prove impractical in the field. Five years down the road, the department has found this to be the case with certain aspects of *Maryland's Revised 2012 Nutrient Management Regulations*. To address the realities of farming, changing weather patterns, and research on the benefits of minimal soil disturbance, the department has revised its nutrient management regulations. The revisions were adopted on December 13 and are explained on our website at mda.maryland.gov.

There are some aspects of Maryland's nutrient management regulations,

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ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS DUE BY MARCH 1

Annual Implementation Reporting Forms describing nutrient applications made during calendar year 2016 are due to the department by **March 1, 2017**. Reporting forms and instructions were mailed to all farm operators earlier this month and are available online at mda.maryland.gov under "Hot Topics."

Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) operating under a permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment submit **one** combined Reporting Form along with a manure analysis to the Nutrient Management Program.

This year's reporting form is similar to last year's form with the addition of several questions concerning innovative practices used to manage manure

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DEPARTMENT MODIFIES NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

The department's revised Nutrient Management Regulations were adopted on December 13, 2016 and include the following modifications:

- An emergency provision to allow the department to work with farmers to prevent an overflow from liquid manure storage structures during winter, when spreading manure is otherwise prohibited. This exemption is only for on-farm generated manure that the farmer cannot store due to extraordinary circumstances. It does not apply to biosolids or food waste.
- A provision prohibiting farmers from applying manure if the ground is frozen or snow covered. A 100-foot setback from surface waters is required for any emergency spreading that takes place during winter.
- An emergency exemption for farmers that have demonstrated intent to build additional manure storage facilities. This exemption addresses a backlog of requests for technical assistance and cost-share grants to construct these facilities.
- Removing the incorporation requirement for spring and fall manure spreading. Studies conducted by the USDA Natural Resources

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7 REASONS WHY FARMERS FAIL FARM AUDITS

1. Expired Nutrient Management Plan

Check the expiration date on your plan. Most plans are written for one year and not all plans have a specific end date. Some plans are written for a specific growing season(s) and may need to be updated sooner.

2. Missing Fertilizer Application Records

Keep three years of fertilizer application records and receipts for all fertilizer purchased.

3. Incomplete Nutrient Management Plan

Make certain that your plan accounts for all nutrient sources generated on your farm or that you import. Soil tests may be no older than three years. Farmers who use manure must have it analyzed for nutrient content at least every other year.

4. Failure to Follow the Nutrient Management Plan

Do not apply organic or chemical nitrogen or phosphorus to fields before March 1.

5. Missing Setbacks

Fertilizer setback zones ranging from 10-35 feet are required next to surface waters and streams. See your nutrient management plan for specifics.

6. Lack of Training

Farmers who apply nutrients to ten or more acres of cropland are required to attend a two-hour nutrient applicator training course once every three years. *(Farmers certified to write their own nutrient management plans are exempt from this requirement.)* See the training calendar on page 5 for upcoming classes.

7. Failure to Submit an Annual Implementation Report

Reports are due to the department by March 1 of each year.

RULES FOR EMERGENCY SPREADING OF MANURE IN WINTER

Farmers with inadequate liquid manure storage require permission from the department to spread manure in winter. Requests for emergency waivers should be made directly to the Nutrient Management Program by calling 410-841-5959. Farmers also may contact their regional nutrient management specialist who will work with headquarters to process the request.

Farmers seeking an emergency waiver are required to submit proof that they have attempted to obtain adequate manure storage. Once approved, they must implement environmental protections to safeguard water quality including the application of manure on vegetative cover and use of a 100 ft. buffer zone next to waterways. As a reminder, spreading manure is prohibited when the ground is saturated, snow covered, or hard frozen two inches or more.



STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

In December, the U.S. Department of Agriculture sent out nearly one million preliminary surveys to help identify active farms and ranches in the United States. The Maryland Department of Agriculture encourages anyone who has received this survey to respond by the January 30, 2017 deadline. The results of this preliminary survey will determine who receives a census of agriculture questionnaire next December.

The census of agriculture is conducted every five years by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). According to NASS, it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data for every county in the nation. Through the census, producers are able to demonstrate the value and importance of agriculture and influence decisions that will shape the future of the industry.

The census defines a farm as any place, big or small, that produces and sells, or could sell, \$1,000 or more of agricultural products within a calendar year. All information reported is protected by law.

NASS will begin collecting data for the 2017 Census of Agriculture in late 2017. Visit agcensus.usda.gov for more information.



NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE



Nutrient Management Plan Submissions

All new farming operations are required to submit copies of their nutrient management plans to the department. As of June 30, 2016, the department had nutrient management plans on file for 98 percent of the state's 5,448 regulated farm operations.

Annual Implementation Reports

By June 30, 2016, 97.5 percent of regulated farm operations managing about 1.3 million acres of land had submitted their 2015 annual implementation reports to the department.

On-Farm Audits and Inspections

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016, enforcement specialists conducted 739 random on-farm audits and 283 targeted audits of farms with suspected violations for a total of 1,022 audits. Sixty-six percent of the randomly selected farms were found to be in compliance, and 46 percent of the targeted farms were in compliance. The department is actively pursuing full compliance for all audited operations. In Fiscal Year 2016, the department issued \$26,000 in fines against 46 farmers who failed to take corrective actions by prescribed deadlines.

GOT SOIL DATA?

Last year, certified nutrient management consultants began submitting soil data to the department as required by Maryland's Phosphorus Management Tool Regulations. Soil phosphorus Fertility Index Values (FIVs) are required for every field managed under a plan. The data will be used to build a complete inventory of soil phosphorus levels statewide to assist in future planning. To date, data has been received and recorded for approximately 1 million acres or 80 percent of Maryland's 1.3 million acres of farmland regulated by the Nutrient Management Program. The department is still missing data, particularly for farms located on the lower Eastern Shore.

Consultants who have not submitted soil information for farms that they service should do so immediately to avoid possible loss of nutrient management certification and/or license. Contact Bryan Harris, Implementation Coordinator, at 410-841-5951 or bryan.harris@maryland.gov for guidance.



Here We Grow Again

Maryland farmers signed up to plant nearly 700,000 acres of cover crops on their fields last fall, shattering the previous sign-up record by more than 35,000 acres.

INTRODUCING FAST TRACK



Are you ready?

Responding to a need by farmers to move poultry litter out of nutrient-sensitive areas more quickly and with less red tape, the Maryland Department of Agriculture has improved its Fast Track Manure Transport grants to move poultry litter.

A new, simplified application process is now available that *does not require submission of a nutrient management plan*. Instead, farmers submit a soil analysis and map showing fields where manure will be applied. If the soil from the receiving field has a phosphorus Fertility Index Value (FIV) of 100 or less and the farmer plants a corn crop, he/she will be approved to apply 3 tons of poultry litter per acre. It's that simple.

Qualifying farmers receive cost-share grants of up to \$18 per ton to help cover transportation costs associated with moving manure. The Fast Track approval will take place in as little as 48 hours. Farmers may apply for Fast Track grants online at mda.maryland.gov/manure or contact their local soil conservation district for assistance.

URBAN UPDATE

Annual Fertilizer Application Reports Due March 1

License holders are required to file an Annual Fertilizer Application Report with the department by March 1 of each year outlining total nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium applied to turf by county. Reporting forms and instructions will be mailed to all licensees in January. Go to mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer to download the forms online.

Recertification Training

Professional Fertilizer Applicators are required to complete two hours of continuing education each year in order to renew their certifications. Check out the Training Calendar on page 5 for the latest classes and visit mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer to register.

Enforcement

During Fiscal Year 2016, the program conducted 197 record reviews to assess compliance. Sixteen warnings were issued and all but two have been resolved through follow-up inspections and education.

Reports Due March 1 cont. from page 1

resources and help Maryland to meet its Chesapeake Bay restoration commitments. ***Follow these guidelines when completing your report:***

- Use the pre-filled reporting form that was mailed to you. Additional reporting forms and instructions can be downloaded from the website.
- Do not leave spaces blank. If you did not apply nutrients, place a zero in the box.
- If the information requested does not apply to your operation, write N/A in the box.
- Use the pre-printed envelope to mail your report by the March 1 deadline. Affix appropriate postage.
- Failure to submit your reporting form may result in fines and/or loss of eligibility to receive cost-share funds.

CHESAPEAKE BAY SHOWS IMPROVEMENT



The amount of nutrient and sediment pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay fell significantly between 2014 and 2015 according to researchers at the Chesapeake Bay Program. Experts attribute the decrease to dry weather and below normal river flow, but note local efforts to reduce pollution also played a role. According to data from the Chesapeake Bay Program and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), between 2014 and 2015 nitrogen loads to the bay fell 25 percent, phosphorus loads fell 44 percent, and sediment loads fell 59 percent. Go to chesapeakebay.net/presscenter/release/chesapeake_bay_water_quality_improving to read the full report.

TRAINING CALENDAR

AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Consultant Nutrient Management Exam

Date / Location	February 10, 2017	Annapolis
Who Should Attend	Individuals who want to become certified to write nutrient management plans for farmers.	

Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training and Recertification

The department and the University of Maryland Extension offer free voucher training and renewal courses to farm operators who apply nutrients to 10 or more acres of cropland. The two-hour course is required once every three years. Register at your local Extension office.

Anne Arundel	March 14, 2017	Call 410-222-3906
Caroline	February 22, 2017	Call 410-479-4030
Carroll	February 9 or February 23, 2017	Call 410-386-2760
Dorchester	February 7, 2017	Call 410-228-8800
Frederick	February 22, 2017	Call 301-600-1594
Harford	February 14, 2017	Call 410-638-3255
Queen Anne's	March 3, 2017	Call 410-758-0166
Talbot	February 28, 2017	Call 410-822-1244

Farmer Certification Workshops

Dates / Locations	January - February 2017	Frederick, Howard and Prince George's Counties
Who Should Attend	Farmers who want to become certified to write nutrient management plans for their own operations. This program is for producers with cropland and pastures who use commercial fertilizer and/or manure. Training for nursery operations will be offered as well. Both programs include about 11 hours of classroom lecture and practice in writing plans.	

Learn and Earn Continuing Education Credits On-Line

Ongoing	Many educational programs qualify for Maryland Nutrient Management continuing education credit. Even if you can't attend a webinar session "live," you might be able to earn continuing education credits at a later date.	
Register Online	Visit mda.maryland.gov and click on Nutrient Management in the Quick Links Bar. Follow the link to training classes.	

TURFGRASS NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Professional Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training/Exam

Dates / Locations	February 27, 2017	MDA Headquarters, Annapolis
	February 6 and March 20, 2017	Montgomery County Extension Office
Who Should Attend	Individuals who want to take the exam to become certified to apply fertilizer to lawns that they manage. Optional training sessions are available.	

Professional Fertilizer Applicator Continuing Education Offerings

Dates / Locations	February 9, 2017	St. Mary's Agricultural Service Center
	February 15, 2017	MDA Headquarters, Annapolis
	February 21, 2017	Harford County Extension Office
	March 2, 2017	Montgomery County Extension Office
	March 7, 2017	Washington County Extension Office
	April 12, 2017	Allegany County Fairgrounds
Who Should Attend	Individuals who are currently certified by the department. The class satisfies the two-hour continuing education requirement for recertification.	
Register Online	Visit mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer . Check back often for new offerings.	

Secretary's Message cont. from page 1

however, that are not impractical or unreasonable to implement. I am referring to the requirement that certified consultants submit soil data to the department for all fields that they manage. As of December 30, we have received soil data for approximately 80 percent of Maryland's farmland.

By law, the department is required to keep soil data information completely confidential. If you are a consultant and have not submitted this information, I urge you to do so immediately, as this missing soil data reflects poorly on agriculture in general and the farmers that you work with. Contact Bryan Harris, Implementation Coordinator, at 410-841-5951 or bryan.harris@maryland.gov with soil data information as soon as possible.

Winter can be a productive time for farmers. I hope that you will use the time to catch up on paperwork, attend a voucher training course, or register for a farmer training and certification workshop to learn how to write a nutrient management plan for your own operation. Most importantly, please use the time to begin gathering records needed to complete your farm's Annual Implementation Report that is due to the department by March 1.

With best wishes for a safe, healthy, and productive new year.



Joe Bartenfelder
Maryland Agriculture Secretary

Regulations Modified cont. from page 1

Conservation Service (NRCS) show that soil health is improved with little or no soil disturbance other than planting.

- Extending the date for spreading manure in the fall to December 15. Under the new requirements, farmers statewide will be prohibited from spreading manure between December 16 and March 1.

Read Maryland's modified Nutrient Application Requirements. Go to mda.maryland.gov and click on Nutrient Management in the left menu bar. The changes are listed under "News and Briefs."



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Boyd K. Rutherford, *Lt. Governor*
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Maryland Department of Agriculture Nutrient Management Offices

Western Maryland

Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties
12407 Naves Cross Road, NE
Cumberland, MD 21502
Contact: Keith Potter, 301-777-1747, ext. 116
or keith.potter@maryland.gov

Frederick County
92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 110
Frederick, MD 21702
Contact: Moana Himes, 301-694-9290, ext. 136
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92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 110
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Contact: Jessica James, 301-694-9290, ext. 137
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Central and Southern Maryland

Baltimore, Cecil and Harford counties
2205 Commerce Road, Suite C
Forest Hill, MD 21050
Contact: Darren Alles, 410-838-6181, ext. 118
or darren.alles@maryland.gov

Anne Arundel, Carroll and Prince George's counties
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Suite 201
Annapolis, MD 21401
Contact: (John) Adam Lyon, 410-841-5949
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Contact: Weylin Anderson, 301-475-8402, ext. 122
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Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties
28577 Mary's Court, Suite 4
Easton, MD 21601
Contact: Howard Callahan, 410-822-8126
or howard.callahan@maryland.gov

Caroline and Dorchester counties
28577 Mary's Court, Suite 4
Easton, MD 21601
Contact: Dan Schwaninger, 410-822-8120
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27722 Nanticoke Road, Unit 2
Salisbury, MD 21801
Contact: Steven Dorsey, 410-677-0802, ext. 4
or steve.dorsey@maryland.gov

Nutrient Management Notes

▶ NEW PHONE NUMBERS COMING

Several regional offices will be assigned new phone numbers in upcoming months. The department will mail postcards to farmers with the new phone numbers as soon as they are assigned.

▶ HAVE YOU MOVED?

Please help us keep your contact information up-to-date. Call your regional nutrient management office with address, email or telephone changes as soon as possible.

▶ SUBSCRIBE TO MARYLAND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT NEWS ON-LINE

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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 nminfo.mda@maryland.gov or call 410-841-5959.

