Reporting Forms DUE MARCH 1

Online Reporting Option Now Available

Farmers and turfgrass pros have until March 1 to submit their annual implementation reports (AIRs) and fertilizer application reports (AFARs) to the department. These reports can now be submitted online through Maryland OneStop.

Following through on Governor Larry Hogan’s promise to improve access to government services, Maryland OneStop serves as a central hub for licenses, forms, certificates, permits, applications, and registrations from across the state’s many agencies and departments.

E-filing offers many advantages over paper including faster processing time, less errors—it does the calculations for you!—and delivery confirmation. Follow the directions on page 4 to set up your Maryland OneStop account. For those who want to continue to submit paper reports, a mail-in option remains available this year at mda.maryland.gov. Either way, all reports are due March 1.

Scheduled Phase-In of the PMT Moves Forward

Maryland farmers with soil phosphorus levels that call for the use of the Phosphorus Management Tool to enhance water quality protection should continue to follow the current implementation schedule that is in place. These farmers have Soil Phosphorus Fertility Index Values of 150 or greater. Here are the guidelines:

- Updated nutrient management plans should be developed based on Phosphorus Management Tool calculations.
- Phosphorus applications are incrementally lowered during the phase-in period.
- All three tier groups—A, B and C—have until July 1, 2021 to fully transition to the PMT.
- Questions? Contact your regional nutrient management specialist listed on the back of this newsletter.

Message from Secretary Bartenfelder

On December 14, 2020, the Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) Advisory Committee voted overwhelmingly to proceed with the planned schedule for the PMT. I agree with their assessment. The PMT will move toward full implementation on July 1, 2021.

The department continues to identify new opportunities that provide farmers, producers and allied industries with needed resources during this transition. Earlier this year, MDA outlined a series of initiatives to address priorities identified by a study conducted by BEACON at Salisbury University. This process is ongoing, and we welcome input and ideas from the industry and stakeholders.

The Hogan-Rutherford Administration remains committed to the protection and enhancement of our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. The PMT is an integral part of our efforts to reduce nutrient runoff. Maryland agriculture is often viewed as the standard bearer for resource conservation and sustainable farming practices, and we look forward to continuing that legacy.

With best wishes for a safe, healthy and productive 2021.

Joe Bartenfelder
Maryland Agriculture Secretary
Urban Update

Fertilizer Blackout Dates in Effect

Maryland’s lawn fertilizer blackout dates are now in effect. Lawns may not be fertilized with products containing nitrogen or phosphorus during the blackout dates. Potassium and lime may still be applied, since they are not considered a threat to water quality. Fertilizer applications containing N and P may be resumed March 1, 2021 as long as the ground is not frozen or heavy rain is not predicted.

Fertilizer Reports Due by March 1

Annual Fertilizer Application Reports (AFARs) summarizing total nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium applied to turf are due by March 1. New this year, businesses can e-file their annual fertilizer reports using Maryland OneStop. Follow the instructions on page 4 to set up your account. Not ready to e-file? Go to mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer to download a paper reporting form.

No Contact Fertilizer Record Reviews

To help stop the spread of COVID-19, all fertilizer record reviews will be conducted electronically until further notice. We will work with businesses to find other non-contact solutions if electronic submission of fertilizer records is not feasible.

New CEU Cycle

A new three-year continuing education credit cycle took effect July 1, 2020. Professional fertilizer applicators are now required to earn six continuing education credits within a three-year cycle. The current cycle ends June 30, 2023. Credits may not be carried over into the next three-year cycle. Professional Turfgrass Fertilizer Applicator Certificates still need to be renewed yearly for a $100 fee and verification of compliance with continuing education requirements.

Exams Suspended Until Spring

Professional Fertilizer Applicator exams have been suspended for the winter due to Covid-19 safety concerns. Exams will resume in the spring when testing can be performed outdoors. If you are interested in taking the exam, email judy.mcgowan@maryland.gov and you will be notified by email when new exams are scheduled.

Online Recertification Seminars

Until further notice, all MDA-sponsored recertification seminars will be held online. Please see the Training Calendar for dates.

Questions?

Contact Judy McGowan at judy.mcgowan@maryland.gov or 410-980-9084.

Manure Injection

This practice offers big rewards for farmers who want to cut down on odors, soil erosion and nutrient losses when spreading manure. Special equipment is used to inject all types of liquid manure below the soil surface instead of spreading it on top. The practice works well with no-till and strip-till systems.

State cost-share funding of up to $45 an acre is available to hire custom operators, rent or lease equipment, or offset operating costs associated with manure injection. Contact your local soil conservation district to apply for these grants. Work can begin March 1 as long as the ground is not frozen or snow covered.

Farmers: Get a Load of This!

Maryland’s FastTrack grants now pay up to $22.50 per ton to haul poultry manure to qualifying farms. FastTrack grants make it easy to switch to poultry manure to build healthy soils and save on commercial fertilizer costs. Here’s how they work:

• You arrange for manure delivery and pay the costs up front.
• You will be reimbursed for eligible costs—up to $22.50 per ton.
• The website has everything you need to make the switch, including a list of manure brokers and custom spreading services.

Farmers with qualifying fields (soil phosphorus levels below MD P-FIV 101) should visit mda.maryland.gov/manure or call 410-841-5864 to get started.
All livestock operations—regardless of size—are prohibited from spreading manure on fields in winter.

What Not To Do...
- Do not apply organic nutrient sources to fields before March 1.
- Do not apply organic nutrient sources if fields are saturated, snow covered, or hard-frozen.
- Do not apply chemical fertilizer before March 1. There are exceptions to this rule. Please contact your regional nutrient management specialist or University of Maryland Extension advisor for guidance.

What To Do...
- Do store liquid manure sources generated on the farm in structures.
- Do apply potash and liming materials, if needed.

Did You Know?
- Manure deposited directly by livestock is not restricted.
- Spreading can resume March 1 as long as fields are not frozen or snow covered.
- Maryland’s winter manure spreading restrictions apply to all livestock operations—large and small. Farmers should contact their soil conservation district to discuss storage solutions, if needed.

Emergency Winter Spreading Needs Approval
   Spreading manure in winter is not allowed in Maryland. If winter spreading becomes unavoidable, call 410-841-5959 before any spreading takes place. The department will work with you to prevent overflows from storage structures and minimize impacts to water quality. Stackable solids may not be applied to fields in winter, but temporary stockpiling is allowed for solid manures.

Rules for Temporary Stockpiles
   Temporary field stockpiling of chicken litter and other “stackable” organic nutrient sources (60 percent or less moisture content) is allowed only when all other storage options are unavailable. Here are the rules:
- Stack the stockpile at least 6 feet high with a peak to allow it to shed rainfall.
- Make certain that the stockpile area is:
  —At least 100 feet from surface water and irrigation or treatment ditches
  —At least 35 feet away if a vegetative buffer is in place
  —At least 150 feet from wells, springs, and wetlands
  —At least 300 feet from wells that are downhill from the stockpile
  —At least 200 feet from homes not on the operator’s property
  —Outside flood prone areas and areas prone to ponding
  —No farther than 150 feet from the top of a 3 percent slope with no diversion
- Spread stockpiled manure on fields no earlier than March 1 the first spring after the stockpile was created. Follow your nutrient management plan.
- After the stockpile is removed, thoroughly scrape or clean the ground and restore the area to its original condition.
- Reseed the area with grass or a crop.
FOR FARMERS and TURFGRASS PROS
How to Submit Your Annual Implementation Report (AIR) or Annual Fertilizer Application Report (AFAR):

1. Go to: onestop.md.gov
2. Log into your account.
3. FARMERS: Type "AIR" in the search box on the home page.
   TURFGRASS PROS: Type "AFAR" in the search box.
4. Select the AIR (farmers) or AFAR (turfgrass pros) from the search results.
5. Click the "Apply Online" button and complete your AIR (farmers) or AFAR (turfgrass pros).

FOR FARMERS and TURFGRASS PROS
How to Complete the Reporting Form:

1. Once inside the reporting form, fill in the form fields.
2. Fields that require a response will be starred with a red asterisk. Responses will be validated to ensure accuracy.
3. Add your e-signature in the space provided on the last page of the form.
4. Carefully read the certification affirmation before adding your e-signature. You may type or draw your e-signature in the box.

How to Track the Status of your Submitted Report:

1. Check your OneStop dashboard to track your report’s status.
2. If you are required to complete an action, you will see the report appear in the “Reports Requiring Your Action” table of your dashboard.
3. Questions? Please email: onestop.support@maryland.gov or contact your regional nutrient management specialist.
Training Calendar

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

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How to Write a Nutrient Management Plan Workshop

| Dates | March 8 – March 12, 2021  |
| Format | Webinar  |
| Who Should Attend | Certified consultants and farmers who want to learn how to write nutrient management plans using the NuMan Pro nutrient management planning software. Awards 6 continuing education credits to newly certified consultants.  |
| How to Register | Visit mda.maryland.gov and type “Nutrient Management Training” in the search box at the top of the page. Follow the link to training classes.  |

Learn and Earn Continuing Education Credits On-Line

| Ongoing | Many education programs qualify for Maryland Nutrient Management continuing education credits. 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 type ”Nutrient Management Training” in the search box at the top of the page. Follow the link to training classes.  |

Turfgrass Nutrient Management Program

| Professional Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training/Exam | Dates | All certification exams have been postponed until spring when they can be held safely outdoors.  |
| Website | Visit mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer for the latest updates.  |

| Format | Zoom Meeting  |
| Who Should Attend | Certified professional fertilizer applicators who need to renew their certifications.  |
| How to Register | Visit mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer for the latest updates.  |

Need Buffers?

A new funding option is now available to farmers who want to plant streamside buffers on their farms to protect water quality.

Maryland’s Conservation Buffer Initiative offers attractive incentive payments, a buffer option for field ditches, flexible site management, and shorter contract terms.

Three types of buffers are eligible for funding and free technical assistance under this pilot program: riparian forest buffers, grass buffers, and watercourse access control areas adjacent to pastures.

Apply for these grants January 11 through February 5, 2021. Go to: bit.ly/MDA_Buffer

Updated Soil Data Due in 2021

Maryland’s Phosphorus Management Tool regulations require updated soil data to be submitted to the department once every six years. This data was last collected in 2015. In 2021, consultants and certified farmers will again need to report soil phosphorus Fertility Index Values (FIVs) for all fields covered by nutrient management plans that they have prepared. Instructions will be mailed in the spring. Questions? Email bryan.harris@maryland.gov

Big Year for Cover Crops

Maryland farmers signed up to plant more than 640,000 acres of cover crops this fall during the Maryland Cover Crop Program’s first ever mail-in enrollment. Getting those cover crops in the ground, however, proved challenging. Persistent rain and poor field conditions made planting a soggy business. By mid-December, soil conservation districts had certified 420,000 acres of cover crops with more fields to be counted.
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Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
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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

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Nutrient Management
COVID-19 Update:

COVID-19 ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR FARMERS
• If you have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit our website for a list of state, federal and private financial assistance programs. Go to: mda.maryland.gov/Pages/farmer-relief.aspx

• We’re still open! To serve you better during temporary building closures, we have updated our mail and phone directories at left.

• To help stop the spread of COVID-19, all farm audits and turfgrass fertilizer record reviews will be conducted electronically until further notice. We will continue to work with farmers and business to find other “non-contact” solutions if electronic submission of required documents is impractical.

• Continuing education classes have moved online for the time being. Please note that all crop production meetings qualify for voucher and continuing education credits. As always, we will work with farmers who lack internet access. Contact your regional nutrient management specialist if you have questions or concerns.