

## Nutrient Management

The University of Maryland Extension's Agricultural Nutrient Management Program was established in 1989 as a cooperative effort between the University of Maryland Extension (UME) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to specifically address issues of nutrient management planning. During this time, nutrient management plans were based on nitrogen recommendations only and adoption of these plans was mainly voluntary. However, in 1998 the Water Quality Improvement Act (WQIA) was enacted and many changes were brought about which affected Maryland's agricultural community. These changes included:

- nitrogen and phosphorus-based nutrient management plans
- reduction of the phosphorus in manure via feeding regimes
- provisions for transporting manure from fields with excessive phosphorus to fields needing additional nutrients
- increased scrutiny of record keeping
- additional evaluation of the nutrient phosphorus

As a result of the WQIA, Maryland promulgated the Maryland Nutrient Management Regulations to provide guidance on the implementation of the WQIA.

### **What is a Nutrient Management Plan?**

A nutrient management plan is a document that combines soil test results, yield goals, and estimates of residual nitrogen in order to generate field-by-field recommendations. The purpose of the nutrient management plan is to help producers reduce nutrient pollution by balancing nutrient inputs with plant nutrient requirements, while at the same time optimize farm profits.

### **Do You Need a Plan?**

**You need a nutrient management plan if you have:**

- \$2500.00 in gross annual income from your agricultural operation
- OR**
- 8 animal units or more (number of animals per unit vary depending on species)

### **Animal Units (AU.)**

- 1 AU. equals 1000 lbs. of live animal.
- **Beef cattle:** steers are 1 AU, cow/calf pairs are 1.2 AU, feeder calves are 0.7 AU
- **Pork:** over 300 lbs. are 0.4 AU, 55-300 lbs. are 0.3 AU, under 55 lbs. are 0.05 AU
- **Sheep and Goats:** 0.1 AU
- **Chickens:** broilers are 0.033 AU, chicken over 5 lbs. are 0.005 AU, chickens under 5 lbs. are 0.003 AU
- **Turkeys:** over 5 lbs. are 0.018 AU, under 5 lbs. are 0.005 AU
- **Ducks:** 0.01 AU
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### **How Do You Get a Plan?**

You have a number of options available to you in the preparation of your nutrient management plan:

#### **Hire a Private Nutrient Management Consultant:**

A list of private Nutrient Management Consultants can be found on University of Maryland Extension (UME) website.

#### **Sign up to have UME write your plan:**

Anne Arundel UME- (410) 222-3906

Calvert UME- (410) 535-3662

Charles UME- (301) 934-5403

Prince George's UME- (301) 868-9366

St. Mary's UME- (301) 475-4482

#### **Become farmer certified and write your own plan**

MDA offers a farmer certification program that allows you to write your own plan. Visit the Nutrient Management Training Classes website, on UME's website.

### **What If You Already Have a Plan But Need to Update It?**

COMAR 15.20.07 (Agricultural Operation Nutrient Management Plan Requirements .04 Nutrient Management Plan – Plan Development and Implementation Deadlines) of the Maryland Nutrient Management Regulations mandate that updates be done at least every three years based on the date of your last soil test. Are your soil tests over three years old? If so, you must have an update to your original plan. See the “How Do You Get a Plan?” section above for details.

### **What Information Do You Need to Get a Plan Done As Quickly As Possible?**

You and your Nutrient Management Advisor will need to gather the following information:

#### **1. Soil tests**

Now that the UME Soil Lab is closed you must use a private soil analysis lab. If the operation has a soil analysis no older than 3 years it may be used. But remember that the length of the plan is tied to the date of the soil test. You can't use a 2-year old soil test for a three-year plan! A list of regional soil testing laboratories and a cost comparison of those labs is available

#### **2. Maps of all property in production**

Soil Conservation and Farm Service Agency can provide you with maps.

#### **3. Property Account Identification Numbers**

The property account ID numbers (not a social security or federal tax ID number) will be needed for all the ground in production. If a farm/property has been subdivided or has more than one property account ID number, the operator will need to obtain these numbers. The property owner can find the account ID number on their assessment or tax bill. There are other resources to help a property owner find their account ID number including:

- Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation website
- Local Soil Conservation District office
- Nutrient management specialists in regional MDA offices (by appointment)
- Department of Assessments and Taxation offices in each county

Why include these numbers you ask??? This is how the Maryland Department of Agricultural assesses compliance with the WQIA.

#### **4. Operation records**

Details on the type of operation you have and how you manage it, including:

- Planned cropping cycles and yield histories (based on an average of the last 5-10 years if possible)
- Past fertilizer practices
- Number of animals and how they are raised (whether or not they are confined)

#### **5. Nutrient information**

If you have any collected manure associated with your operation you will need:

- Manure analysis
- How much you have spread
- Where it has been spread

If all your collected manure is removed from your operation

Name, address, and phone number of any manure removal services used and their service records. A service record must contain the date the manure was hauled and how much was hauled away.

NOTE: If the operator is spreading manure or fertilizer on 10 acres or more, a Nutrient Applicator Voucher is required. For more information on whether you need a Voucher go to the Maryland Department of Agriculture's website and view the requirements for Nutrient Applicators.

You can find more information about the Nutrient Management Program here:

<http://extension.umd.edu/anmp>