



Nutrient Management News

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

WINTER 2020



STATEMENT FROM Secretary Bartenfelder on the PMT



On December 13, 2019, the Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) Advisory Committee voted not to recommend a one year delay in implementing the Phosphorus Management Tool. Based on the outcome of the committee's vote, there is no need to delay the PMT implementation schedule at this time.

The department continues to work hard to identify opportunities to partner with allied industries and stakeholder groups to ensure that we have adequate resources in place to move forward with the PMT as scheduled. This will include adjustments to make the Manure Transport Program more efficient and further efforts to identify alternative sites and uses for litter and manure. Enhancing and protecting our water-

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PMT Implementation Schedule

Maryland farmers with soil phosphorus levels that require the use of the Phosphorus Management Tool (PMT) should follow the schedule outlined below. Updated nutrient management plans for these farms should be developed based on Phosphorus Management Tool calculations. Phosphorus applications should be incrementally lowered during the phase-in period. All groups have until July 1, 2021 to fully transition to the PMT.

LOW RISK GROUP – TIER A (Soil Phosphorus Fertility Index Value 150-299)

This group begins transitioning to the PMT in 2020. It includes 1,313 operations managing 122,705 acres.

MEDIUM RISK GROUP – TIER B (Soil Phosphorus Fertility Index Value 300-449)

This group began transitioning to the PMT in 2019. It includes 252 operations managing 54,271 acres.

HIGH RISK GROUP – TIER C (Soil Phosphorus Fertility Index Value 450-499)

This group began transitioning to the PMT in 2018. It includes 96 operations managing 10,894 acres.

The PMT will be fully implemented by all risk groups by **July 1, 2021**.

AIRs Must Now Account for Manure

Last spring, state lawmakers passed legislation requiring the Nutrient Management Program to track manure moving in and out of the state. As a result, this year's Annual Implementation Reporting Form (AIR) will include additional questions on manure and other organic products—including poultry residuals, sewage sludge, and compost—that have been imported or exported from Maryland farms.

In the past, farm operators reported that they applied a soil amendment without specifying the

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New Faces



TIM ZANG is the program's new nutrient management specialist providing urban record assessments, reviews of nutrient management plans written by consultants, and on-farm evaluations.

A life-long resident of Anne Arundel County, Tim grew up on a diversified family farm in Harwood that produced tobacco and hay and raised cattle. The farm later transitioned to fruits and vegetables. Tim worked for the Green Industry for many years and was formerly employed at Southern States. He currently grows cut flowers and has participated in the Anne Arundel County Farmers Market for many years. Contact Tim at 410-841-5949 or timothy.zang@maryland.gov.



ROBIN CULVER is the new nutrient management specialist for Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties. She previously worked for the department's Conservation

Grants Program and has extensive knowledge of best management practices that are cost-shared by the department. Prior to joining the department, she worked for the University of Maryland Extension developing nutrient management plans for farmers. Robin is from the area and has more than 20 years of experience working with farmers. Contact her at 410-677-0802, ext. 4 or robin.culver@maryland.gov.



\$1 Million Grant to Promote Soil Health Awarded to MDA

The department has been awarded a \$1 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund to promote healthy soil practices to farmers. The grant will fund soil health education, outreach, and certain practices, including **precision nutrient management**. Farmers who are interested in field-testing this practice or other innovative soil health practices should contact their local soil conservation district right away.

HELP WITH BUFFERS

CREP Now Open

The USDA has announced that the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is now accepting applications from farmers seeking financial assistance to plant streamside buffers. CREP is a federal-state partnership program that pays farmers attractive annual rental payments to plant streamside buffers of grasses or trees to protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat.

This voluntary program offers a \$100 an acre-signing bonus, reliable annual rental income for the life of the contract—usually 10 to 15 years, and a one-time incentive payment worth 40 percent of the total cost of establishing a qualifying practice. There is even cost-share assistance to help farmers install fences, livestock crossings and watering troughs. Plus, CREP buffers meet all Maryland setback requirements. Want to learn more? Contact your soil conservation district or USDA Farm Service Agency to see what CREP can do for your farm.

SAVE ON FERTILIZER

Switch to Poultry Litter

Qualifying farmers who want to improve their soil's health, increase yields, and save on commercial fertilizer costs should consider switching to poultry litter as a fertilizer. Poultry litter makes an excellent crop fertilizer and soil conditioner. It contains nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium plus a host of micronutrients that would cost extra in commercial fertilizer products. As a bonus, poultry litter's high organic content promotes water and nutrient retention.

MDA's Manure Transport Program makes it easier than ever to start using poultry litter. With the new Fast Track application, farmers can be approved to haul poultry litter in as little as 48 hours. Farmers should visit the website at mda.maryland.gov/manure or contact their local soil conservation district for free assistance. Questions? Call the program directly at 410-841-5864.

Winter Restrictions: RUN DECEMBER 16 - FEBRUARY 29

Follow these Dos and Don'ts

- **Do** store liquid manure sources generated on the farm in structures.
- **Do** apply potash and liming materials if needed. Use of potash and liming materials is not restricted.
- **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 for certain crops. Contact your regional nutrient management specialist or University of Maryland Extension advisor for guidance.



Remember...

- Manure deposited directly by livestock is not restricted.
- Spreading can resume March 1 as long as fields are not frozen or snow covered.
- This is the last year that smaller operations with less than 50,000 lbs. of live animal weight will be exempted from winter manure spreading restrictions. These farmers are encouraged to contact their soil conservation districts to discuss storage solutions.
- For more information, go to the Maryland Nutrient Management Manual at: mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/nm_manual.aspx



Emergency Winter Spreading Needs Approval

Maryland's nutrient management regulations do not allow manure to be spread in winter due to the increased risk for nutrient runoff. If winter spreading becomes unavoidable, farmers are required to contact the Nutrient Management Program for authorization **before any spreading takes place**. The department will work with farmers 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 (see accompanying article). Contact the Nutrient Management Program at 410-841-5959 if you have storage concerns.

Temporary Stockpiles

Temporary field stockpiling of poultry litter and other "stackable" organic nutrient sources with 60 percent or less moisture

content is allowed **only** when all other storage options are unavailable. **Follow these rules:**

- Spread stockpiled manure on fields the first spring after the stockpile was created and no earlier than March 1, following the farm's nutrient management plan.
- 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
- 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.

NEW Cost-Share for Drainage Practices

Several new conservation drainage management practices are now eligible for cost-share funding of up to 87.5 percent through the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program. The new suite of practices aims to help farmers manage subsurface drainage water in areas with high water tables or artificially drained fields, like the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The following practices are now eligible for cost-share funding through MACS:

- Saturated Buffers
- Subsurface Denitrifying Bioreactors
- Wetland Creation
- Subsurface Drains
- Underground Outlets

Interested farmers should contact their local soil conservation district to apply for cost-share funding and receive free technical assistance to install their project. Applicants must be in good standing with MACS and in compliance with Maryland's nutrient management regulations.

Best Practice Spotlight



Liquid Animal Waste Storage Structure

Concrete tanks or glass-lined steel tanks help farmers keep a step ahead of manure produced by livestock. The type and size of the storage structure depends on the livestock operation, manure management system, and the farm's nutrient management plan. Storage structures can clean up an operation, protect manure from rainwater runoff until it can be safely land applied, and reduce the need for frequent hauling and land spreading. Beginning March 1, 2020, all livestock operations—regardless of size—will be barred from applying manure to fields in winter. If you need additional storage, now is the time to begin planning. Consider these advantages:

- Storage structures reduce odors and preserve ammonia nitrogen
- Manure can be pumped, pushed, flushed, or scraped into a storage structure
- Stored manure has a higher nutrient content and value
- Storage structures can be co-cost-shared using state and federal funds
- Soil conservation districts provide free technical and engineering services and can help you apply for cost-share grants...contact your local district today!

"Secretary's Statement"

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ways and the Chesapeake Bay is a top priority for the Hogan administration, and the PMT has been a major part of our efforts to reduce nutrient runoff.

When Governor Hogan enacted the PMT in February 2015, it was embraced as a landmark agreement between the agricultural and environmental communities. I look forward to continuing the governor's legacy as we work toward our shared responsibility to preserve our agricultural and natural resources. With best wishes for a safe, healthy and productive 2020.

Joe Bartenfelder
Maryland Agriculture Secretary



"AIRs" *continued from page 1*

type. Now, they will need to indicate the type and amount of manure or organics imported, exported, or land applied.

The goal of the legislation is to ensure better compliance with Maryland's Phosphorus Management Tool regulations. Farmers have until March 1, 2020 to submit their Annual Implementation Reporting Forms to the department. The forms outline nutrient applications made in calendar year 2019. Failure to submit an Annual Reporting Form may result in fines and loss of eligibility to receive cost-share funds. Forms will be mailed to farmers in January and are now available at mda.maryland.gov under "Hot Topics."

If you have questions or need assistance completing your AIR, please contact the regional nutrient management specialist serving your area. A list of consultants can be found on the back of this newsletter.

Urban Update

Fertilizer Blackout Dates Now in Effect

Blackout dates authorized by Maryland’s Lawn Fertilizer Law are now in effect. Lawn care professionals and citizens are prohibited from fertilizing lawns with products containing nitrogen or phosphorus during the blackout dates. Because they are not considered a threat to water quality, potassium and lime may still be applied during the blackout dates. Lawn fertilizer applications containing nitrogen and phosphorus may be resumed on March 1, 2020 as long as the ground is not frozen or heavy rain is not predicted.

Annual Fertilizer Application Reports Due by March 1

Annual Fertilizer Application Reports summarizing total nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium applied to turf are due by March 1. Reporting forms will be mailed to all license holders in January. Additional forms will be posted to the website at mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer. Businesses that fail to file their annual fertilizer reports will not have their licenses renewed.

Fertilizer Record Reviews

In Fiscal Year 2019, the urban program reviewed the fertilizer records of 192 companies. Approximately 77 percent of the companies reviewed were in compliance. Program staff are working to bring the remaining firms into compliance.

Questions?

Contact Judy McGowan at 410-841-5955 or judy.mcgowan@maryland.gov

Training Calendar

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training and Recertification	
Dates	January, February and March 2020
Locations	Various locations and counties throughout Maryland
Who Should Attend	Farm operators who apply nutrients to 10 or more acres of cropland are required to attend a free, two-hour voucher training and renewal course once every three years. (Farmers who are certified to write their own nutrient management plans are not required to attend voucher training.)
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.
Farmer Training and Certification Workshops	
Dates and Locations	Queen Anne’s County – January 21 and February 4 Frederick County – January 28 and February 11
Who Should Attend	Farmers who want to become certified to write nutrient management plans for their own operations. Both sessions are for producers with cropland and pastures who use commercial fertilizer and/or manure.
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 and Locations	February 10, 2020 – Derwood, MD May 7, 2020 – Annapolis, MD July 7, 2020 – Derwood, MD Additional dates in Boonsboro and Annapolis TBD
Who Should Attend	Individuals who want to become certified to apply fertilizer to lawns that they manage.
Professional Fertilizer Applicator Continuing Education Classes	
Dates	New two and six credit offerings are being planned and will be posted on the website as soon as they are finalized.
Locations	Statewide
Who Should Attend	Certified professional fertilizer applicators seeking to renew their certifications.
How to Register	Visit mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer . Check back often for new offerings.
Free Online Continuing Education Webinar	
Ongoing	A two-credit continuing education webinar is now available online, anytime. Participants are required to download and complete a quiz at the end of the webinar to receive credits.
Get Started	Visit mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer



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Larry Hogan, *Governor*
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Maryland Department of Agriculture Nutrient Management Offices

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Contact: Keith Potter, 301-777-1747, ext. 3507 or
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What's Inside:

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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.

