

A New Day is Ahead! The Opportunity for Change

As we approach the upcoming challenges of the future, Nutrient **Management** will become a land of opportunity for those who do comprehensive work. We have changes that are forthcoming either in the near or not too distant future. The days when plans are done **only** so a farmer can get his cost share money may soon be gone. Remember, our goal is to help a farmer get the best returns possible on his farm without over applying nutrients, and second to meeting all the regulations that apply to his operation. The reasoning is that high quality production crops mean less nutrients left behind to leach or run off of the fields.

Our job as nutrient management planners is to make sure that excess nutrients do not enter the ground and surface water and become a pollutant.

There is much work to do. Because of the local and Bay TMDL's in Virginia and many other states, the time is coming when we will be required to verify plans are being implemented by performing inspections and audits to assure other agencies that Nutrient Management plans and other best management practices are being implemented. A big part of the Ches Bay TMDL is to be able to provide assurance that the Nutrient Management Plans and other BMP's are being implemented. It will probably be wise to consider the fact that nutrient management plans will be required on ALL (95%) farms in the future. Add to that, plans will probably be required on turf and landscaped areas of some minimum size.

In order for a specialist to make the best use of his time, as a plan writer, the farmer may have to do his part to provide the planner with the information needed to write and update plans. We are going to do plans that are in the best interest of the farmer from an environmental point of view and be confident that they will be implemented.

Virginia, between the staff, and private planners, currently tracks about 51 percent of the farm acreage in VA. By 2017 that number needs to be around 90 %. By 2017. We currently track about 22,000 acres of Urban Land under some form of nutrient management. By 2017 we will need to be able to account for 95 percent of all turf lands in the state.

As the need for more planned acres to meet the Bay goals increases, planners will need to manage their territories, not just work in them, they may take the role of a salesperson and promote nutrient management and principle conservation practices and **develop productive relationships with their clients** in their respective area... Virginia's DCR staff will become the plan writing consultant and reviewer of plans written by others. The DCR staff will also be conducting audits of farms to assure implementation... If buffers or other conservation practices are needed which may be a part of the P- Index calculation or permit requirements, they must be in a plan. If they are not in the plan, you know for sure that they will not be implemented.

It is TIME for DEQ to do their job too, and stop the "No action will be taken on this issue" attitude.

NRCS & EPA at EPA's request are re-evaluating the 590 Standard for nutrient management nation wide. Specifically, the amount of phosphorous levels where the application of P may be further restricted in the future.

EPA is currently revising the CAFO regulations nationally. Expect the threshold for a farm to be considered to be a federally defined CAFO to be lowered.

Expect the Mississippi Basin to become a TMDL in the future. There is currently a Mississippi Basin Reduction Initiative in effect to look at nutrient and sediment reductions. Expect the Southern Rivers of Virginia which flow in the North Carolina's Albemarle and Pamlico Sound to also become TMDL's
Will any part of the state be left?

NutMan will be undergoing revisions immediately, to include geo referenced shape files, automatic reporting, and controlled access for review to make it a more comprehensive program so Virginia will be able to better report progress.

Virginia's nutrient management program will bring in specialists from colleges and universities to discuss topics of interest and for cross training so they can feel more comfortable about promoting the BMP's in the TMDL. Continuing education classes, such as manure separation and methane generation, will promote innovative technologies.

Virginia will try to help the specialists keep up with the latest going on in the research areas and on technology. If nutrient management planners have a question, DCR will find an answer, no matter what university we must go to find the research or answer

Respectfully Submitted

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