



Nutrient Management Plan Writing Program FAQs

- **Q. Why are these changes taking place in the current nutrient management plan program?**

A: Driven by input from industry, the department will privatize the nutrient plan writing program by expanding Maryland farmers' access to nutrient management plan writers and plan writing services. This shift will help farmers meet their environmental stewardship needs, and to grow compliance with statewide regulations.

- **Q: What will be the University of Maryland's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) and the University of Maryland Extension's future role in the statewide nutrient management process?**

A: The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) will continue to fund Specialists at the University of Maryland (UMD) as well as maintain the Nutrient Management plan writing program. AGNR will supervise the Specialists and will continue to provide learning opportunities through crop meetings, field days, and webinars. Specialists will advise planners and farmers on the plan writing process, and assist in writing nutrient management plans in some cases.

- **Q: What is your plan for assisting nutrient management planners that will transition out of their University roles?**

A. MDA will conduct workshops to assist UMD Nutrient Management Advisors to become aware of opportunities to write nutrient management plans for farmers through the private sector and provide assistance in obtaining the business license for farmers to write plans privately if desired.

- **Q. How will UMD work with MDA to continue to subsidize farmers who do not have funds available to pay for nutrient management plans?**

A. MDA is developing a cost-share program that will provide partial funding to all eligible farmers in Maryland. UMD Specialists funded by MDA may also provide some assistance in writing nutrient management plans.

UMD Specialists funded by MDA will focus on helping farmers obtain farmer certification to write their own nutrient management plan by assisting them in writing it.



- **Q. Explain the details of the cost-share assistance?**

A. The Nutrient Management Summer newsletter will be available in June and will outline full details of the plan. Additionally, the MDA will host a forum for farmers to come together and discuss this new program

- **Q. What about farmers that cannot afford to hire a private consultant?**

A. There will be three (3) options available for farms under 50 acres including use of MDA cost-share funding, Farmer Training Certification to allow farmers to write their own plans, as well as the above mentioned UMD Specialists who will be available to assist in plan writing for farms under 50 acres.

If individual farm operations have questions and believe they will not be served by the mentioned options, they should contact Dwight Dotterer 410-841-5877 or Bryan Harris 410-841-5951 at MDA for assistance.

- **Q. Is there an updated list of certified and licensed consultants readily available?**

A. Yes, the list was just updated in March of 2023 and we anticipate the list will be updated again when this announcement is made public.

Q. When is the best time to look for a nutrient management planner?

A. Depending on the operation, the busiest time for plan writers is traditionally in the fall, winter, and spring months before nutrients are applied. The critical issue is getting soil samples when the ground is in good condition and there are no crops growing. Additionally with current soil samples a Plan can be written in the summer when planners are not as busy.

Q. What support is available if I have questions about the revised program for nutrient management planning?

A. If individual farm operations have questions and believe they will not be served by the mentioned options, they should contact Dwight Dotterer 410-841-5877 or Bryan Harris 410-841-5951 at MDA for assistance.