



Title: Nutrient Management Science in policy in Maryland

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Organization: University of Maryland

State: MD **Region:** Mid-Atlantic

Year of Funding:

Theme: Nutrient and Pesticide Management

Situation: The Maryland water Quality Improvement Act of 1998 required nutrient management on nearly all farms in the state. Implementation of the law has proven difficult. A "Nutrient Management Summit" was proposed by a newly elected governor to review the law. It was deemed critical that the best and most current science be considered during the policy debate.

Objectives: The objective of this activity was to assure that objective scientific information was available to the policy makers, interest groups, farmers and citizens participating in the review.

Methods: The College of Agriculture and Natural resources at the University of Maryland conducted a day-long scientific briefing for the Secretary of Agriculture and his senior staff about two months prior to the summit. The College organized and conducted, in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, a public forum on nutrient management science about three weeks prior to the summit. The daylong forum presented the most recent science on all aspects of nutrient management to about 175 participants. While the forum was open to the public, its focus was to provide a good science base to participants at the upcoming forum. The summit was primarily a facilitated breakout of the 260 participants to hear their views on needed change. However, during the one hour plenary, the Associate dean for research in the College presented an overview of the scientific findings from the forum. In addition, compact disks containing copies of the presentations from the forum were provided to all forum participants.

Partnerships: This activity strengthened an existing relationship with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and created or expanded partnerships with the Governor's Office and other executive branch agencies.

Research: The Associate Dean for Research and the State Water Quality/Chesapeake Bay Program Extension Coordinator jointly planned and led the briefing and public forum.

Resources: The Maryland Department of Agriculture and the College jointly supported the science forum. The Department provided support for making 500 copies of the compact disks from the forum for use at the summit and elsewhere.

Results: The most significant result was that science was successfully, and objectively, interjected into what remains a very contentious policy debate. The science forum clearly influenced the tone of the summit. Participant comments during the facilitated sessions reflected an interest in letting the science direct the technical components of the policy. Proposed statutory and regulatory changes that are being drafted continue to rely on the science provided by the College throughout the regulatory discussion.



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