



## **USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference**

### **Reducing Nutrient Losses from Lawns Through a Public-Private Stewardship Partnership**

Urban nonpoint sources account for approximately one-fourth of the phosphorus and one-eighth of the nitrogen reaching the Chesapeake Bay. And with greater development of urban areas, these loads are increasing. Since improper applications of fertilizer on lawns, curbs, drives and sidewalks greatly contribute to these urban loads, the Mid Atlantic Water Quality Program (MAWQP) worked with the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program, Businesses for the Bay and Scotts Corporation to reduce nutrient loss from do-it-yourself (DIY) lawn fertilizer applications. On September 22, 2006, the Chesapeake Executive Council, Headwater State Jurisdictions and members of the lawn care product manufacturing industry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will achieve a 50% reduction in the pounds of phosphorus in DIY lawn care products by 2009 (as compared to a 2006 base year). The signatories to the MOU include the Scotts Corporation, the Lebanon Seaboard Company, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, the District of Columbia, and the United State of America via the Environmental Protection Agency. This landmark initiative bridging science, policy, and industry was a culmination of trust, compromise, and dedication to develop a high-quality product that achieves the goals of consumers and environmental protection, alike. This MOU further commits the signatories to reduce nitrogen nutrient losses by recommending possible changes in product content, form, or application method. The MAWQP, Scotts Corporation, and other Bay partners will also work with retailers to develop consumer education programs for delivery at the point of sale. While these actions will be initiated in the Bay jurisdictions, they will also be expanded nationally. The endorsement of this MOU and the commitment to continue working on nitrogen reductions showcases a rare example where organizations with such diverse missions can collaborate to achieve a shared goal.

Author: Daphne Pee

University Affiliation: University of Maryland

Co-Author(s): Tom Simpson and Jake Vandevort