

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture Responds to New CAFO Rules with Increased Staffing February 2011

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has staffed personnel to guide our producers through the CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operations) application and record keeping requirements set forth by the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

The CAFO permitting program outlines a best management plan to meet sediment and nutrient loss goals while increasing soil fertility and ultimately reducing emissions to the waters of West Virginia. States within the Bay watershed are responsible for permitting facilities which meet the regulatory definition of Large and Medium CAFOs that discharge or propose to discharge.

West Virginia agricultural producers need to determine whether or not to seek permit coverage based on an objective assessment of their operation. Determining whether or not a facility discharges will sometimes be a judgment call on the part of the operator or regulatory agency. NPDES CAFO permit coverage can provide a framework for operations to manage discharges or possible discharges and ultimately protect facilities from possible fines or lawsuits.

The first and one of the most important things a farmer can do to promote stewardship and maximize nutrient application efficiency is work with the WVDA in developing a site specific nutrient management plan (NMP). The certified nutrient management planners with the WVDA are ramping up efforts to account for nutrients produced and applied within the watershed drainage area. Implementing these NMPs will work towards nutrient and sediment reductions for the state's watershed implementation plan mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program.

It is also important that West Virginia accounts for all of the non-cost share best management practices that producers have implemented on their farms as this will further our attempts to meet the Chesapeake Bay TMDL goals and reduce the implementation of more restrictive regulations from being placed on WV producers by EPA.

If you would like to schedule an appointment to address these new requirements, please feel free to contact **Adam Colasessano** CAFO Specialist at 304-538-2397 or acolasessano@ag.state.wv.us. You may also contact the following Certified Nutrient Management Planners **Mark Hedrick** at 304-538-2397 or mhedrick@ag.state.wv.us as well as **Jason Dalrymple** at 304-538-2397 or jdalrymple@ag.state.wv.us or **Christine Barnes** at the Inwood office at 304-229-5828 or cbarnes@ag.state.wv.us with any questions concerning nutrient management planning or to schedule a time to get a new or updated plan. **Sarah Taylor** at the Inwood office has also been staffed to track and report non-cost share Best Management Practices to account for all reduction efforts that have been made by the agriculture community. Sarah can be reached at 304-229-5828 or staylor@ag.state.wv.us