



Agricultural Land Preservation Program Howard County, Maryland



SOIL CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY PLANS

The purpose of this policy is to provide Howard County Soil Conservation District (SCD) staff with guidelines when consulting with property owners regarding the creation or updating of their Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans. The best management practices (BMPs) listed below will maintain and/or enhance the quality of on-farm natural resources and foster a sustainable, productive agricultural entity. The BMPs are a practical and acceptable method of meeting the SCD goals for all farms in Howard County, including those that participate in the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP). This policy was approved by the SCD Board on February 24, 2011 and endorsed by the Agricultural Land Preservation Board on March 21, 2011.

Cropland:

- 1) Sheet and rill erosion less than the USDA soil loss tolerance level (T).
- 2) Stream buffer widths of 24 feet for up to a 6% grade, plus 4 more feet of buffer width for each 1% above 6% grade.

Pastureland:

- 1) Livestock stocking rates of 1 animal unit (1,000 lbs) per acre for beef, dairy, sheep, and goats.
- 2) Stocking rate of 0.7 animal units per acre for horses.
- 3) Livestock exclusion from rivers, streams, and woodlands.
- 4) Seasonal livestock exclusion from wetlands, as practical.

All Land Uses:

- 1) Gully and rill erosion control.
- 2) Nutrient Management Plan as required by state law.
- 3) Noxious weed control according to state law.
- 4) Agricultural waste management according to USDA/NRCS guidelines.

POLICY APPLICATION:

This Policy applies to all County (ALPP) and State (MALPF) agricultural easement properties. All ALPP and MALPF properties are required to have a current (less than 10 years old) Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan. The BMPs contained in this policy are designed to be the basis for discussion between the landowner and SCD staff regarding applicable site specific conservation measures. Ideally, the listed BMPs provide a starting point, with the potential for additional protections as deemed beneficial by SCD staff in conjunction with the property owner.

For More Information

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