

Nutrient Management Webinar  
April 6, 2015  
Question and Answer Session Summary

**Q1 – The ‘watermelon chart’ shows the impact on phosphorus in 2025 if all Nutrient Management Plans have been implemented as projected. Please describe the importance of Nutrient Management today in terms of the states’ Watershed Implementation Plans.**

A1 – Nutrient Application Management is a significant part of jurisdictions’ Watershed Implementation Plans to meet the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, along with the other elements of Nutrient Management Plans (slide 12), which are tracked as separate BMPs.

**Q2 - What were the pre-Tier 1 Nutrient Management N and P reduction percentages?**

A2 –The pre – Tier 1 Nutrient Management N and P reductions were a land use change, and the actual reductions varied across the watershed based on the amount of manure in each country. Average reductions were approximately 5% for nitrogen and 8% for phosphorus.

**Q3 - With the new definitions under the tiered approach, where would each tier fall on the watermelon chart, given that Enhanced Nutrient Management and Decision Agriculture would no longer apply?**

A3 – The Enhanced Nutrient Management and Decision Agriculture BMPs have not yet been replaced with new panel recommendations. If the Expert Panel and ultimately the Partnership approves new tiers in place of these BMPs, the “watermelon chart” could be updated to reflect the new practices.

**Q4 - Since Tier 1 does not have built in P risk assessment - can a farmer 'remain' in Tier 1 even as soil P increases and still receive the 8% P reduction efficiency?**

A4 – Yes, they would still receive credit for Tier 1 if their plan is consistent with the Land Grant University recommendations. The use of the P risk assessment tool would be indicative of a Tier 2 level of effort, although it would be only one of several contributing components.

**Q5 – Please explain the differences between practices associated with the three tiers.**

A5 – The panel has not yet finalized all components of the three tiers. The P Index is expected to be part of Tier 2 Phosphorus. The final report will contain all the details of tier components.

**Q6 - How much consideration has been given to quantitative (i.e. MD Nutrient Tool) rather than qualitative (practice based) approaches to assigning tiers?**

A6 – The PSNT, ISNT, CSNT, and FSNT are quantitative measures involved adjustments to application rates and are being considered as tier components. P risk assessment tools are a qualitative measure of environmental risk based on quantitative measures to the same effect.

**Q7 - In addition to the shift from farm to field scale, the addition of split N applications, setbacks, and manure/soil P management; were there also changes to the LGU recommended application rates that represent the modern era of nutrient management?**

A7 – Land Grant University corn and soybean application rates have not changed since the late 1990s. The panel is instead relying heavily on the components of Tier 2 and Tier 3 that are built into modern era plans.

**Q8 - Where were solicitations for the Phase 6 Nutrient Management Expert Panel membership posted?**

A8 – The Agriculture Workgroup (in accordance with the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team’s BMP Protocol) has issued a call for nominations for the Phase 6 panel. The call is public and posted on the Agriculture Workgroup website. Once the Agriculture Workgroup proposes a list of panel members, the next step is for the Watershed Technical Workgroup, Water Quality Goal Implementation Team, and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to review and provide comments on the membership. We will extend the opportunity for review and comment to the Citizen’s Advisory Committee as well.

**Q9 - Clarify the level of on-the-farm verification required beyond farm-by-farm record review.**

A9 –The Partnership asked each of the six sector workgroups to develop BMP verification guidance (not requirements) to match the five BMP verification principles agreed to by the Partnership back in December 2012. The Partnership’s Agriculture Workgroup developed a comprehensive set of BMP verification guidance, organized by categories of agricultural BMPs as well as the implementation mechanisms. Then the Agriculture Workgroup offered five different approaches to carrying out verification, including: farm inventory, office/farm records, transect survey, Agency sponsored surveys, and remote sensing. A comprehensive series of matrices provides cross walks between these verification approaches, the categories of BMPs and the implementation mechanisms. It is up to each jurisdiction to further develop and enhance their existing BMP verification programs to be consistent the Agriculture Workgroup guidance and the recommendations from the Expert Panel or provide documentation that explain how they can still achieve the five principles, but through other approaches. Jurisdictions’ programs will be reviewed by the Partnership’s independent BMP Verification Review Panel of regional and national experts for consistency with the Agriculture Workgroup guidance, the five verification principles, and forthcoming guidance from the Phase 5 and Phase 6 Nutrient Management Expert Panels.

**Q10 - Will all meetings of the Phase 6 Expert Panels be open to the public? And can the partners speak to how the expert panel meetings are not treated the same as other Chesapeake Bay Program meetings that require them to be open to the public?**

A10 –All Expert Panels are required to hold a public forum at the beginning of their process. The Phase 6 Nutrient Management panel will have a public meeting, which will be advertised through the Agriculture Workgroup’s email distribution list. All BMP expert panels serve as independent peer review processes, similar to the National Academy of Sciences. This allows each panel to develop recommendations independent of political or other non-scientific input, and to preserve the integrity of the science. The open forum is where we need public and Partnership members to weigh in on concerns and direction for the panel. This is different from Chesapeake Bay Program sector workgroup and Goal Implementation Team meetings, because of the need for expert panels to provide independent and thorough scientific recommendations.

**Q11 - Is it reasonable to characterize Tier 1 as representing Nutrient Management for the period before 2006, Tier 2 as modern Nutrient Management since 2006 and Tier 3 as advanced nutrient management?**

A11 – Yes. Before 2006, Nutrient Management Plans were consistent with Land Grant University recommendations. Around 2006, state nutrient management regulations, including P Site Indices as a core component, were included in written plans. Tier 3 is less tied to a timeline, because elements of Tier 3 including CSNT and PSNT were adopted at the same time as Tier 2 plans. The Phase 5 Panel is considering whether to credit Tier 3 after Tier 1 without Tier 2 required as an intermediate step. We have since deferred quantifying the case where an acre without a Tier 2 plan adopts Tier 3 management.

**Q12 - What is the conflict of interest statement that will be associated with the Expert Panel Process -- will it be like the National Academy of Sciences process?**

A12 –The Phase 6 Nutrient Management Expert Panel charge describes the requirement for panel members to not have conflicts of interest, and is consistent with the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team’s BMP Protocol.

**Q13 – Suggest that we diverge from the practice of closed meetings. Every other meeting under the auspices of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership is open and this challenges our claim of being transparent and open in our deliberations. At least try that and if problems arise (not sure what they would be) consider closing them.**

A13 –The Partnership is currently reviewing and revising its *Protocol for the Development, Review, and Approval of Loading and Effectiveness Estimates for Nutrient and Sediment Controls in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model* (BMP protocol). The Partnership’s Water Quality Goal Implementation Team has the lead for revisions to the BMP Protocol. The Water Quality Goal Implementation Team is working closely with the Partnership’s Scientific and Technical, Citizens, and Local Governments advisory committees in discussing and working through the transparency and conflict of interest issues. We encourage those with an interest to be engaged in the BMP Protocol revision discussions. All meetings and conference calls of the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team posted on-line on the Partnership’s web site at [www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net) along with the respective agendas and advance briefing materials and all the meetings and call are open to the public.