Retaining records provides liability protection. Make sure to record the spread, how much, what rate, etc. This is information that you can use required records. Record all manure applications—when, where and implemented is the first step. Equally important is keeping the. Having a Nutrient Management or Manure Management Plan written or private consultant for more information or assistance.

**Spreader Calibration**

Planned manure application rates listed in nutrient or manure management plans should correlate with actual application rates. Calibrating the manure spreader:

- is the only way to know actual manure application rates.
- ensures manure application rates are realistic, practical and attainable.

Refer to the “Manure Sampling and Spreader Calibration In Pennsylvania” brochure for additional details.

Contact your local Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), or private consultant for more information or assistance.

**Record Keeping**

Having a Nutrient Management or Manure Management Plan written and implemented is the first step. Equally important is keeping the required records. Record all manure applications—when, where spread, how much, what rate, etc. This is information that you can use to improve your operation. It is also a reminder of what was applied. Retaining records provides liability protection. Make sure to record the details before you forget.

**Pennsylvania’s Agricultural Compliance Action Plan**

Pennsylvania has invested $4 billion toward local water quality improvements which support Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. The investment has resulted in improved local water quality as well as in the Bay, but there is much more that must be done in Pennsylvania to provide clean water locally and regionally.

Computer models show that Pennsylvania is doing well in addressing phosphorus loadings to the Bay; however, Pennsylvania needs to take additional steps to address local and regional nitrogen and sediment reduction goals.

Pennsylvania’s wastewater treatment plants have achieved their required pollutant reduction goals. Agriculture still has a considerable way to go in meeting pollution reduction goals. Agriculture is the main player for reducing nutrients and sediments to streams. Agriculture has contributed to the water improvement efforts, but many of these efforts have not been reported, to give credit towards meeting these agricultural reduction goals. Even with previously uncounted efforts recently being counted, there is still much more that needs to be done by all of agriculture as well as the residential/urban stormwater sector.

**Agricultural Sector**

Are you a farmer or do you own farmland in Pennsylvania? Do you own or manage livestock or poultry? Are you a certified Commercial Manure Hauler or Broker in Pennsylvania? If so, there are laws requiring written plans that all farmers must have and must implement. The plans protect water quality and farm productivity and sustainability using agronomically sound practices.

Many farmers have the required plans written AND implemented. Some farmers are currently contracting with a certified planner to get these plans written. Unfortunately, there are farmers who still have not taken any action to develop and implement the required plans. You have probably heard that the federal, state or local government is doing inspections at farms to check for plan compliance. That sounds scary, but it is necessary to ensure proper water quality protection is taking place and to credit the farming industry for the good work it is doing. What level of government performs your inspection(s) depends on what county you are in. Many will be performed by local County Conservation District employees. Others will be conducted by state or federal government employees. If you have the required plans, if the plans are implemented, and if you are keeping the proper manure application records, the inspections should be very easy and quick. Your good work will be credited towards the agricultural industry’s efforts to improve water quality. If you do not have the required items, the state or federal government will impose a short timeframe for getting the plans written. Plans will be reviewed upon completion to ensure they are administratively complete. The inspector will follow up at the end of that timeframe to see if your plan(s) are written.

**Topics discussed/observed during an inspection:**

- Do you have an up to date manure or nutrient management plan? The inspector will need to see it.
- Do you have an up to date conservation or erosion and sedimentation control plan? The inspector will need to see it.
- Review and verification of implementation status.
- Non-cost shared BMPs being implemented.
- Record any observed pollution incidents into waters of the Commonwealth.

If you do not have the required items, the state or federal government will impose a short timeframe for getting the plans written.”

*Background*

Water quality in Pennsylvania must be restored and protected. Our local streams, rivers and lakes provide drinking water to Pennsylvanians. They also provide recreation and wildlife and aquatic habitat. Since our local waters flow into larger water bodies, Pennsylvania is partnering with surrounding states to achieve significant, measurable water quality improvements in regional water resources such as the Chesapeake Bay. Since 1985, Pennsylvania has invested $4 billion toward local water quality improvements which support Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. The investment has resulted in improved local water quality as well as in the Bay, but there is much more that must be done in Pennsylvania to provide clean water locally and regionally.

Topics discussed/observed during an inspection:

- Do you have an up to date manure or nutrient management plan? The inspector will need to see it.
- Do you have an up to date conservation or erosion and sedimentation control plan? The inspector will need to see it.
- Review and verification of implementation status.
- Non-cost shared BMPs being implemented.
- Record any observed pollution incidents into waters of the Commonwealth.
Failure to buy the PA ag industry to meet established water quality improvement goals may trigger further “backstop” actions by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for Pennsylvania’s agricultural and urban runoff sector. EPA’s backstop measures could include, but are not limited to:

- requiring federal EPA permits on additional farms
- disapproval of future ag CAFO permit applications
- reduction of federal grant funds provided to farmers
- increased EPA enforcement

**Step 1:** Have an up-to-date written Conservation Plan or Ag Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan.

If you produce or use manure, have an up-to-date written Manure Management Plan or Nutrient Management Plan, depending on your animal density.

**Step 2:** Take action and make sure that what is written in your plans is on the ground, in place and in working order on your farm according to the schedule included in your plans.

**Step 3:** Keep accurate written records of all manure application, soil tests and manure test results.

*Required when planning/tilling land, including no-till. Also required for bare Animal Heavy Use Areas (AHUA) ≥ 5,000 sq. ft.*

**Backstop** definition:
- an emergency precaution or last resort (oxforddictionaries.com)

**Implemented** definition:
- to fulfill; perform; carry out (dictionary.com)

**Best Management Practices (BMPs)** definition:
- Activities, facilities, measures, planning or procedures used to minimize accelerated erosion and sedimentation and manage stormwater (Ch. 102 Pennsylvania Code)
- Structural or non-structural
- Conservation practices to protect water quality and provide for long term farm sustainability.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

- Do I have a Conservation Plan (or an Ag Erosion and Sedimentation (E&S) plan)? Is it up to date and available for review?
- If not, who can help me develop the plan?
- Do I have a Manure Management Plan? Is it up to date and available for review?
- If not, do I want to write this myself, or contact a professional?
- In my plans, are there any scheduled Best Management Practices (BMPs)? Have I implemented all of them?
- If the BMPs are not all implemented, how quickly am I planning to construct or install the BMPs?
- If I don’t have any plans, what should I do?

Custom manure brokers, haulers and applicators are hired by many farmers throughout the state. As their service providers, you are on the “front lines” with farmers, and you need to be providing them with the correct information about requirements and supporting their efforts to comply. Glossing over regulatory requirements does not help a farmer. Farmers need to trust that their service providers are telling them the whole story. Information relating to these requirements was provided in your Commercial Manure Hauler and Broker Certification training materials. For more information on what farmers need to know, contact your local County Conservation District or DEP regional office. Additional information can be found in the "PA’s Manure Haulers and Brokers are Key" brochure.