

The Water Quality Cost-Share Program reduces water pollution caused by nutrient and sediment erosion, animal wastes, or agricultural chemicals. The program provides financial assistance to individuals and landowners installing agricultural best management practices.

The Agricultural Water Management Program protects water quality through oversight of the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of agricultural drainage projects by public drainage associations. Financial aid is made available to public drainage associations through drainage maintenance cost-share agreements.

STATE CHEMIST SECTION

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Formerly under the Office of Animal Health and Consumer Services, the State Chemist Section was transferred to the Office of Plant Industries and Resource Conservation in 1987. The State Chemist Section registers, examines the labels of, samples, and chemically tests and analyzes commercial fertilizers, feeds, pesticides, soil conditioners, and liming materials sold in the State. This is done to determine if they conform to standards established under Maryland laws governing quality, contents, and labeling. Appropriate measures are taken to protect the consumer and the dealer from unscrupulous or careless manufacturers.

The Section cooperates with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in the inspection of feed manufacturing facilities that produce medicated feeds. To implement the federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the Section also works with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Additionally, Section lab technicians analyze meat and toxicology samples for the Office of Animal Health; test fruits, vegetables, commercial feeds, and soils for chemical residues; and make other determinations as required by the Department (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 5-101 through 5-114; 6-101 through 6-117; 6-201 through 6-220; 6-301 through 6-310).

TURF AND SEED SECTION

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The Turf and Seed Section works to assure the availability of sufficient quantities of certified turf and seed. It directs and conducts certification programs by which turf and seed are produced to meet standards of purity, variety, germination, and other quality factors. Seed or sod not meeting certification standards is rejected as a result of field inspections or laboratory analysis.

The Section also provides regulatory controls to assure accurate and complete labeling of seed and sod at the time of marketing, thus enabling the consumer to determine what is being purchased. A State testing laboratory is operated for both service and regulatory testing to assure compliance with label claims. The regulatory phase involves inspection, testing, reporting results, and corrective actions for each turf and seed lot found to be in noncompliance with the provisions of the Seed Law (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 9-101 through 9-110, 9-201 through 9-213, 9-301 through 9-307).

WEED CONTROL SECTION

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The primary goal of the Weed Control Section is to control and prevent the spread in Maryland of the nuisance weeds Johnson grass, thistles, and multiflora rose. The Weed Control Program helps landowners bring nuisance weeds under control through their own efforts and through joint efforts of county and State as provided for in cooperative agreements with the various counties. The Department encourages landowners to file Nuisance Weeds Control Plans, outlining methods and procedures for controlling these weeds on their land. The Department is authorized to take regulatory actions against landowners who allow specific nuisance weeds to set seed on their property.

The Secretary of Agriculture has legislative authority to declare other weeds noxious and place them under a control program. The Section Chief serves as the State's authority on weed control matters (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 9-401 through 9-405, 9-701 through 9-705).