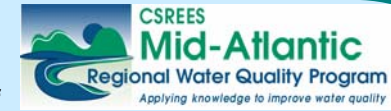




The Mid-Atlantic Regional Water Quality Coordination Program

Jennifer Aiosa, CSREES/University of Maryland, Thomas Simpson & Gary Felton, University of Maryland



Background

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Water Quality Coordination Program completed its first year of activity in 2003. As a new Regional Program, the Mid Atlantic Program has focused initial efforts on:

1. Program organization
2. Theme-specific activity development
3. Regional coordination

This poster will highlight the unique regional coordination efforts that have been undertaken and some of the emerging issues and activities that the Mid Atlantic Regional program will be tackling in 2004.

1. Program Organization Highlights

Organizational priorities accomplished in the 2003 include:

A Steering Committee of Principle Investigators from each participating university was created that plans and oversees the regional program.

The Mid Atlantic Regional Program hired a full-time Regional Liaison to continue program development, coordinate activities among participating university researchers and EPA Region 3, and develop relationships with other regional agencies and organizations.

Meetings of each of 6 thematic "Topic Teams" were facilitated to solidify membership and develop workplans for regionally led activities to be undertaken in 2004.

A website has been created and content development is underway.

The Program has been developing a strong working relationship with EPA Region 3.



Focusing Attention on Agricultural Ammonia

Losses from confined animal facilities can be an important component of total Nitrogen losses. Research in Europe and more recently in the US confirm that NH₃ emissions from confinement facilities can be significant.

The Mid Atlantic Regional Program has partnered with the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program and Region 3, NOAA Bay Program, the Maryland Estuarine Research Reserve Program and others to conduct educational workshops on agricultural ammonia issues, scheduled for March 2004. The workshops are intended to be the first component of an Ammonia Initiative aimed at highlighting emerging issues, linking stakeholders to available science and promoting the role of science in current and future decision making on assessing and controlling agricultural ammonia emissions.



2. Theme-Specific Activity Development

Six "Topic Teams" were created to focus initial efforts within the Mid Atlantic. The Teams and their current activities include:

Residential nutrient management:

- Developing educational materials for homeowners on proper lawn care.
- Hosting a conference to facilitate information exchange among urban nutrient management professionals.

Animal confinement facility impacts on water quality:

- Developing outreach materials on the emerging science and management of ammonia emissions from animal operations.

Small farms & underserved communities:

- Developing a drinking water assessment and education tools for underserved farming communities in Virginia, Delaware and Maryland.
- Assessing water quality impacts of small and specialty farms.

Watershed-based policy coordination:

- Developing education materials on policy issues such as TMDLs, the Federal CAFO rule, water quality pollutant trading, and the water quality impacts from small AFOs.

Nitrogen & Phosphorus based agricultural nutrient management:

- Refining regional P- Indices and coordination among State management tools.

Nutrient budgeting and options for nutrient balance:

- Developing State Phosphorus budgets over time, and creating educational materials for managers and decision-makers.

Residential Nutrient Management

Nutrient losses from suburban areas in much of Region 3 are substantial and continue to increase as population and development increases. More efficient nutrient use by homeowners is one key to helping reduce these losses. This Topic Team will build upon and expand existing urban nutrient management programs and work with other groups to develop information that appeals to and informs a broader audience. An initial activity includes widespread distribution of a useful magnet with links to web-based information for homeowners on proper lawn care. Such educational efforts will also focus on lawn care providers who work on residential and commercial nutrient management



3. Regional Coordination

A primary focus during the first year of the Mid Atlantic Regional Program has been coordination among universities and agencies and development of **truly regional programming**.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Program currently includes **five 1862** and **four 1890** institutions working collaboratively within the Region.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Program and EPA Region 3 are working collaboratively to:

- Reinvigorate Region 3's Internal Agricultural Team;
- Identify and work to overcome impediments to more widespread use of State Revolving Loan Funds for agricultural practice implementation; and
- Offer "Ag 101" education for EPA and State water quality staff (permit writers, compliance and enforcement personnel, and program managers)

The regional program is linking Extension resources from each state and University, as well as other regional resources through its developing website.

All Topic Teams are working to develop activities and products with multi-State applicability.

The Program is focusing on the development of resource directories and web-based programming.



Visit us at - <http://www.mawaterquality.org>



University of Maryland Eastern Shore

