

Soil Conservation Districts

Allegany	(301) 777-1747, ext. 4
Anne Arundel	(410) 222-7822
Baltimore County	(410) 666-1188, ext. 3
Calvert	(410) 535-1521, ext. 3
Caroline	(410) 479-1202, ext. 3
Carroll	(410) 848-8200, ext. 3
Catoctin	(301) 695-2803, ext. 3
Cecil	(410) 398-4411, ext. 3
Charles	(301) 934-9588, ext. 3
Dorchester	(410) 228-5640, ext. 3
Frederick	(301) 695-2803, ext. 3
Garrett	(301) 334-6951
Harford	(410) 838-6181, ext. 3
Howard	(410) 489-7987
Kent	(410) 778-5150, ext. 3
Montgomery	(301) 590-2855
Prince George's	(301) 574-5162, ext. 3
Queen Anne's	(410) 758-3136, ext. 3
St. Mary's	(301) 475-8402, ext. 3
Somerset	(410) 651-1575, ext. 3
Talbot	(410) 822-1577, ext. 3
Washington	(301) 797-6821, ext. 3
Wicomico	(410) 546-4777, ext. 3
Worcester	(410) 632-5439, ext. 3

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Michael S. Steele, *Lt. Governor*
Lewis R. Riley, *Secretary of Agriculture*
John R. Brooks, *D.V.M., Deputy Secretary*



Maryland Department
of Agriculture
Office of Resource
Conservation

Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program:

PROVIDING GRANTS

TO HELP FARMERS

PROTECT NATURAL

RESOURCES



MACS Works for Farmers

Since 1984 the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program (MACS) has been helping farmers protect natural resources on their farms, maintain farm productivity, and comply with a growing number of federal and state environmental requirements. MACS provides farmers with grants to cover up to 87.5 percent of the cost to install best management practices (BMPs) on their farms to control soil erosion, manage nutrients, and safeguard water quality in streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. Cover crops planted after the fall harvest to soak up unused fertilizers, streamside buffers of grasses and trees planted to protect waterways from sedimentation and agricultural runoff, and animal waste systems designed to help farmers collect and use manure resources are among 30 BMPs currently eligible for funding.



The MACS Solution

Soil erosion poses the biggest threat to farm productivity and water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Many of the BMPs that MACS supports are designed to reduce soil losses from farm fields, pastures, and sensitive areas. These include structural BMPs such as terrace systems, grade stabilization structures, and diversions, as well as vegetative BMPs such as grassed waterways, critical area plantings, and contour farming.

Environmental laws, including the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law and the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998, require farmers to use certain BMPs as part of a larger, more comprehensive natural resources protection program.

In response, several new BMPs designed to curb nutrient runoff and reduce the potential environmental impacts of animal operations have been added to the list of eligible practices. MACS now provides grants for heavy use protection areas, livestock crossings, nutrient management services, and roof runoff systems. Farmers can also receive cost-share assistance to transport excess manure to other operations or alternative use facilities who can use the manure safely.



Maximum Levels of MACS Funding

The cost of installing a best management practice varies from project to project and site to site. Factors to be considered include the scope of the problem, site characteristics, and cost effectiveness of the proposed project. Following are the maximum levels of financial assistance that MACS can provide to farmers.

Animal Waste Treatment & Containment Projects

■ Up to \$75,000 per farm, with a maximum of \$100,000 per farm, when combined with other BMPs.

■ Up to \$75,000 per project under a pooling agreement to solve a pollution problem on two or more farms.

All Other BMPs

■ Up to \$20,000 per project, with a maximum of \$50,000 per farm

■ Up to \$40,000 per project under a pooling agreement to solve a pollution problem on two or more farms.

A flat rate ceiling applies to all BMP components. Average allowable rates for materials and services necessary to install a BMP are established annually for each county. Eligible costs are determined by applying the standard flat rates to the components approved for each project.

BMPs Eligible for MACS Funding

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ✓ Conservation Cover | ✓ Nutrient Management Services |
| ✓ Contour Farming | ✓ Riparian Forest Buffer |
| ✓ Contour Orchard | ✓ Roof Runoff Structure |
| ✓ Cover Crops | ✓ Sediment Basin |
| ✓ Critical Area Planting | ✓ Sediment Control Pond |
| ✓ Dead Bird Composting Facility | ✓ Spring Development |
| ✓ Diversion | ✓ Stream Crossing |
| ✓ Fencing | ✓ Strip Cropping, Contour |
| ✓ Field Border | ✓ Strip Cropping, Field |
| ✓ Filter Strip | ✓ Terrace System |
| ✓ Grade Stabilization Structure | ✓ Waste Storage Structure |
| ✓ Grassed Waterway | ✓ Waste Treatment Lagoon |
| ✓ Heavy Use Area Protection | ✓ Wastewater Treatment Strip |
| ✓ Lined Waterway or Outlet | ✓ Water Well |
| ✓ Manure Transport | ✓ Watering Facility |



Eligibility Requirements

You may be eligible to receive a MACS grant if:

■ You are an individual, partnership, corporation, trust, or other business operating a Maryland farm, and

■ Your proposed project meets MACS eligibility criteria and cost-effectiveness requirements.

You may only qualify for MACS if:

■ You have an existing or potentially critical condition on agricultural land which causes soil, nutrients, or other pollutants to move off the land and enter state waters, or

■ Your proposed project will improve water quality.

Help Where You Need It

Every year soil conservation districts help Maryland farmers secure millions of dollars in financial assistance from MACS and other state and federal programs to install protective best management practices on their farms. Located in every Maryland county, soil conservation districts—with technical guidance from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service—work with farmers to design BMPs, supervise their installation and construction, and develop operation and maintenance plans to keep them

in good working order. Agricultural planners working in the soil conservation district office also help farmers calculate costs to install BMPs and apply for state and federal cost-share and low interest loan programs.

A wide range of BMPs is available to address both existing and potential sources of pollution on farms. SCD staff will identify BMPs suited to the operation and site that minimize pollution from farmland while maintaining production goals.

In addition, soil conservation district staff will help determine costs for installing individual BMPs and eligibility levels for MACS funding. Assistance with MACS applications and payment procedures is also available.

Take Action—Get MACS

Contact your local soil conservation district to begin planning your conservation practices. Keep in mind that MACS applications must be submitted to the Maryland Department of Agriculture through your local soil conservation district office before you plan to begin a project.

You may also consider applying for cost-share funds through the USDA. In many instances, USDA and MACS funds can be combined. Ask your soil conservation district for more details.

