


Comment Period Allows Farmers A Voice In Nutrient Management Law

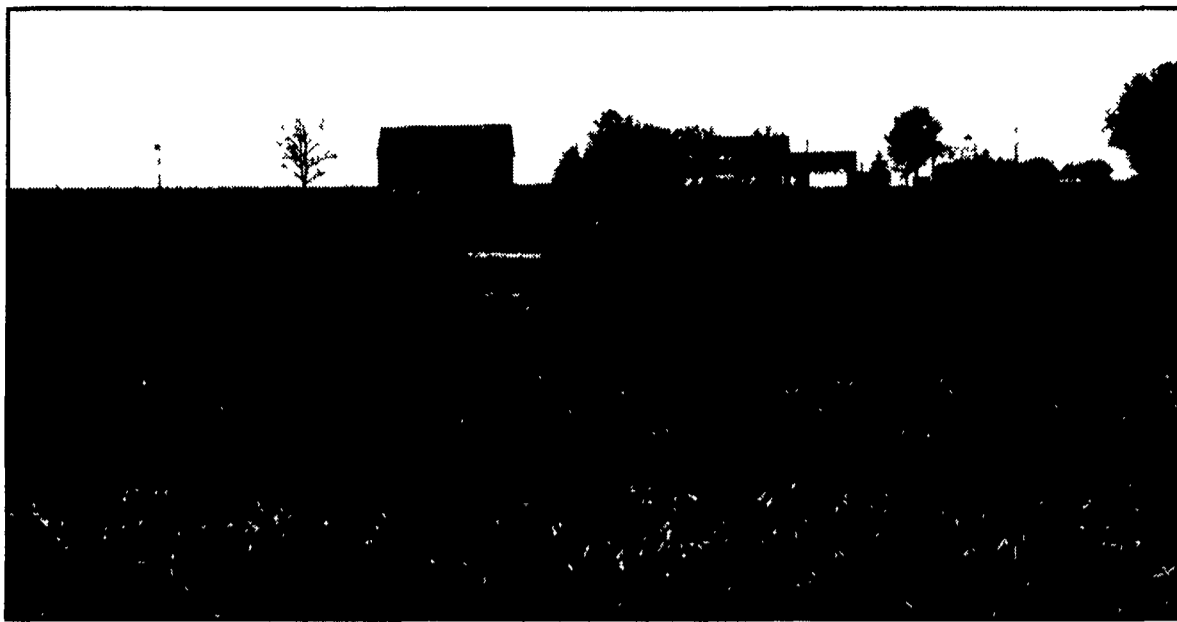
PENNSYLVANIA
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT ACT PROGRAM

TECHNICAL MANUAL

(May 2003)



Provided by:
The Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission
with the assistance of the PA Department of Agriculture



This farmer along Rt. 283 in Lancaster County applies manure to his fields.

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2004, according to Goodlander.

For farmers, this public review process will give them the opportunity to review the proposed changes and share their thoughts on how the regulations will work on the farm.

To help farmers understand the changes, the SCC and Penn

State Cooperative Extension will be on hand to assist farmers.

"The commission staff is available to any group who wants us to come out and talk about the changes," said Goodlander. "We will be anywhere, any time, if somebody wants us there to talk about what we are proposing. At this proposal stage, we would be glad to talk to any group, so they

could constructively comment on it."

The SCC is also planning to conduct several public hearings and meetings. The times for these meetings has not been established.

Alyssa Dodd of Penn State Cooperative Extension said cooperative extension is preparing to help farmers.

Cover of the updated nutrient management technical manual. This is used by nutrient management planners and reviewers to write Act 6 plans.

Penn State plans to have an easy-to-understand publication about the major changes under the Act 6 and how to submit comments for review.

Dodd stresses that farmers need to take the time to submit their comments on the changes.

"The regulations do not change very often. So, there is quite a long period between when people can comment and really shape environmental policies that are affecting agriculture," said Dodd. "It's an opportunity for people to voice their opinion of their knowledge about the subject that has not been heard by policy makers. Ultimately, they can have an impact on regulations in final form."

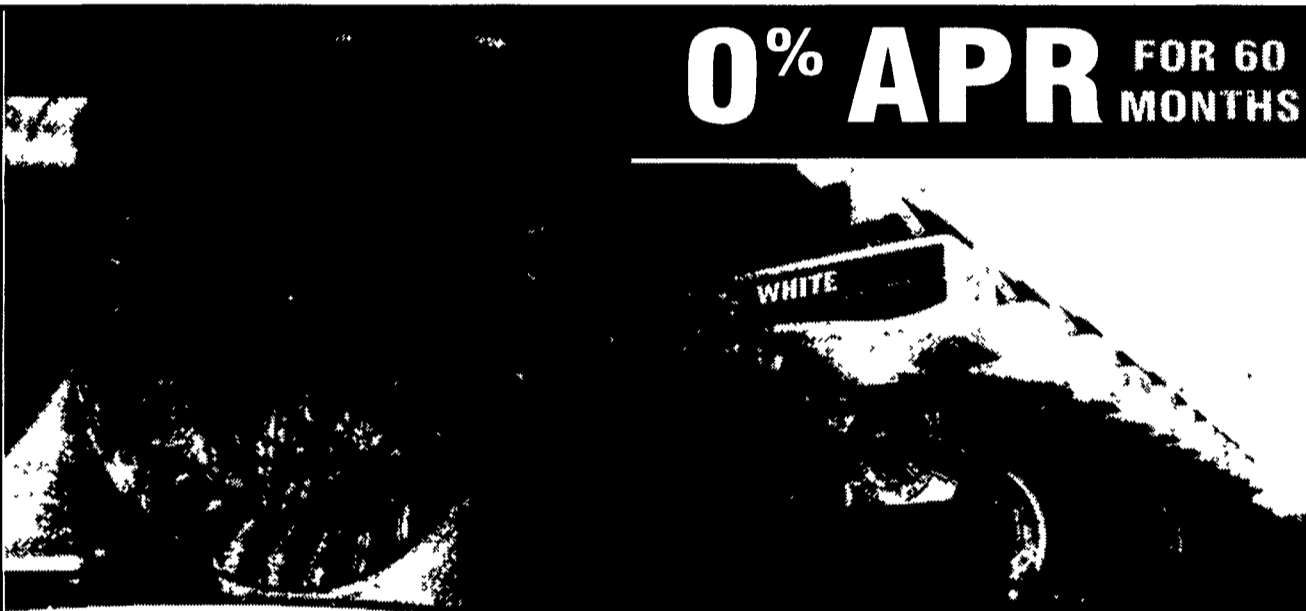
"This is their industry," said Goodlander on why farmers need to comment. "It's (Act 6) the core base of what Pennsylvania will use for years in whether or not farmers are properly managing nutrients, not just from the nutrient management act program. DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) uses the same nutrient management plan as a base for number of their permits, such as CAFO permits."

Goodlander also said Act 6, when revised, will serve as a reference in USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) programs.

Goodlander said farmer input is needed to help the commission see if the proposed regulations are "realistic and reasonable" for agriculture. Non-agriculture citizens groups also will be looking at the regulations.

"I would say to the industry, even if they would support what we are doing in these areas — that even if they think

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