

The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and How it Affects Prince William County Horse Farm Owners



- **What is the purpose of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act?**

The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act was enacted to improve the water quality standard in the Chesapeake Bay by reducing the amount of nonpoint source (NPS) pollutants entering the Bay and its tributaries. Prevention of NPS pollution from agricultural lands is one of the main areas of focus of the Bay Act. The Act requires all users of agricultural lands to have and implement an Agricultural Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan.

- **Who are agricultural users?**

Horse owners are considered to be agricultural land users. In fact, in Prince William County horse farms are becoming the majority of agricultural land uses.

- **How do horse farms affect the Chesapeake Bay?**

Runoff from over-grazed pastures, dirt confinement paddocks, and manure storage piles can contain high levels of sediment, bacteria, and nutrients from manure and fertilizers. When these pollutants wash off the land during a rain or snowstorm, they may enter nearby creeks, ponds, or wet areas, ultimately entering the Chesapeake Bay as NPS pollution.

- **How does the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act affect farm owners in Prince William?**

As an agricultural land user, horse farm owners must be in compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. To be in compliance, a horse farm must have and implement a Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan.

- **What is a Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan?**

The Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan as required by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act provides relevant agricultural management techniques for the conservation of soil and protection of water quality. Techniques include:

1. Ways to protect sensitive areas referred to as Resource Protection Areas (RPA's)
 2. Pasture Management, and
 3. Collection, storage and disposal or use of animal waste.
- **How do I get a Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan?**

The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District (PWSWCD) prepares Conservation Plans for horse farms and provides technical guidance for the implementation of these plans. PWSWCD will also notify cooperators of financial incentives for the installation of conservation-oriented improvements such as fencing, water troughs, stream crossings, and manure storage.

- **How much will PWSWCD services cost?**

All PWSWCD assistance is free to Prince William County residents.

- **What is the deadline for having a Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plan?**

The deadline for compliance - having a conservation plan- was January 1, 1995. Many horse farm owners have obtained their plans and are now in compliance with the regulations.

IF YOU HAVE A HORSE OPERATION IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY AND DO NOT HAVE A SOIL AND WATER QUALITY CONSERVATION PLAN, PLEASE CALL THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT AT (703) 594-3621. OUR TECHNICAL STAFF WILL BE HAPPY TO WORK WITH YOU TO PREPARE A CONSERVATION PLAN.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PRINCE WILLIAM SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROGRAMS, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.pswcd.org or email pswcd@pswcd.org.