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## **EPA Issues Report on Virginia Animal Agriculture Programs**

**(PHILADELPHIA – March 16, 2015)** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today it has completed an evaluation of Virginia’s animal agriculture programs. The assessment is one of six that the agency is conducting of state animal agriculture programs within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. EPA conducts periodic reviews of state programs as part of its oversight responsibilities under the Clean Water Act.

EPA’s assessment evaluated Virginia’s implementation of programs to ensure reductions in the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution going to waterways within the Bay Watershed, as called for under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load or TMDL. The assessment looked at Virginia’s implementation of federal and state regulatory programs, as well as voluntary incentive-based programs to meet the nutrient and sediment reduction commitments in its TMDL Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP).

The assessment found that Virginia has a robust and well-implemented Virginia Pollutant Abatement Program (VPA) that covers the majority of poultry and swine operations in the Commonwealth. Virginia issued its first two Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) permits to concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in February 2015. EPA will continue to work with Virginia to ensure that facilities needing VPDES CAFO permits obtain them.

The assessment also found that Virginia is relying heavily on voluntary programs to achieve the nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution reduction targets in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and the Virginia WIP. EPA is encouraged by the response of Virginia farmers to participate in programs such as the stream exclusion cost-share program and the Resource Management Plan program.

Continued support to farmers will be critical to ensure that these programs keep up with the pace of Virginia’s pollution reduction commitments, particularly for the smaller dairies that are not regulated through the state or federal permitting programs.

EPA will use this assessment along with other evaluations to assist Virginia in developing the necessary programs, policies and resources to ensure that the Commonwealth meets its commitments under the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

In addition to the Virginia report, EPA also released its evaluations today of animal agriculture programs in New York and Pennsylvania. The agency plans to issue similar reports on animal agriculture programs in Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia later this year.

The reports are available at: <http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/tmdl/ChesapeakeBay/EnsuringResults.html>  
(Click on the Agriculture tab)