



CBF Assistance to Farmers and Landowners

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), the largest nonprofit conservation organization dedicated exclusively to “Saving the Bay,” is vigorously defending the Bay and the new Clean Water Blueprint for the Chesapeake against those who are attacking it. That notwithstanding, CBF continues to work with agriculture groups and individual farmers across the watershed to find solutions to water-quality problems. In parallel, we work in Congress and with state legislatures to create cost-effective programs that provide technical and financial assistance for agriculture.

In **Virginia**, CBF has:

- Spearheaded a coalition of farm and conservation organizations that over the past several years has successfully obtained more than \$100 million in state funding for farm cost-share programs and technical assistance.
- Secured dedication of annual recordation tax fees for farm assistance and mandated better state planning for long-term agricultural funding needs.
- For more than a decade, CBF restoration staff have worked one-on-one with scores of Virginia farmers and other partners to provide technical assistance and help secure cost-share funding for conservation practices that benefit farmers and clean water.
- Hosted annual farmer and watermen exchange trips to CBF’s Port Isobel Island Education Center, connecting farmers with the Bay and waterman’s communities, establishing a constructive dialogue on agriculture’s role in improving water quality.
- With agriculture partners, backed successful legislation that significantly improves the availability of state tax credits for farmers who implement conservation practices.
- Led an ongoing, multi-partner effort of approximately \$2 million to develop innovative approaches to managing farm manure, litter, and fertilizer, including new manure-to-energy technologies. One such technology converts poultry waste to bio-oil and is now being commercialized and re-engineered for mass production.

- Partnered to obtain millions in grant funding to develop and demonstrate watershed-specific and “whole-community” pollution-reduction projects that include use of agricultural buffers, precision feeding, and farm nutrient credit trading.

In **Maryland**, CBF has:

- Successfully obtained \$23.5 million this year, in spite of state budget shortfalls, for the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund. Many of these dollars target cost-share funding, including dollars for agricultural conservation practices. Previous years’ funding ranged from \$15 million to \$20 million.
- Spearheaded the passage of the Bay Restoration Fund which targets approximately \$12 million annually for cover crops for farmers. The cover crop program is a keystone program for reducing nutrients from agricultural fields.
- In partnership with various agricultural interests, helped pilot a third-party certification program for farmers to demonstrate compliance with nutrient-management plans. The certification program provides a safe harbor for these farmers from state enforcement.
- Developed “Grazer’s Network,” a mentoring program to assist transitioning farmers from feedlot production to grazing cattle. Grazing saves farms money and poses fewer water-quality problems.
- Over the last 10 years, implemented the Maryland Farm Stewardship Program. This program provides on-the-ground restoration assistance to farmers using grants and volunteers. Successful restoration has occurred in the Monocacy and Antietam river basins.

In **Pennsylvania**, CBF has:

- Successfully obtained \$11 million in private, state, and federal funding for farm-conservation programs that has enrolled 4,600 farmers and landowners and created 2,175 miles of streamside buffers.

- Launched the Plain Farmer Initiative, a program designed to engage Amish and Old Order Mennonite farmers to use conservation practices.
- Received a \$14 million dollar stimulus grant for delivery of on-the-ground conservation practices.
- Secured \$1.3 million to demonstrate large-scale, poultry-litter composting that provides an alternative use for excess manure.
- Managed \$746 thousand for the implementation of a precision dairy feeding project that reduced nutrients in manure and catalyzed a federal program to help farmers improve feed efficiency.
- Worked with agribusiness and academic experts to revise Pennsylvania's Manure Management Manual to guide farmers in managing manure and minimizing water pollution.
- Partnered with farms and agribusiness to demonstrate large-scale manure composting as a cost-effective tool to reduce the excess manure and associated water-quality impacts.
- Advocated for an effective nutrient credit trading program that provides financial benefits to farms that reduce nutrient pollution.

- Developed and supported successful legislation creating REAP, an agricultural tax credit program for Pennsylvania farmers who use conservation practices. REAP is currently funded at \$10 million per year.

In the **District of Columbia**, CBF has:

- Led the effort to create the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, a four-year, \$188 million program of technical and financial assistance for Chesapeake Bay watershed farmers in the 2008 Farm Bill. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative is the first mandatory regional program authorized in Farm Bill history.
- Led the effort to optimize and protect discretionary agricultural technical assistance programs for the Chesapeake Bay in the annual appropriations process since 2005.
- Worked to pass several additional programs of assistance to farmers in legislative bills in the 111th Congress.
- Initiated discussions with Congressmen and Senators about extending and improving the efficiency of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative in the upcoming (2012) Farm Bill. 🐦

