



VIRGINIA GRAINS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Virginia's grain producers are diligent stewards of the land. Producers have the responsibility of providing the world's safest and most affordable food supply, feed, fiber and energy solutions. Conservation plays an important role. In addition to growing more on less, Virginia's grain producers are also helping to restore the area's rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

Conservation

- **Virginia needs working farms to achieve its environmental goals including Chesapeake Bay restoration.**
- In order for farmers to continue farming, they must be **profitable**.
- Conservation programs need to be **streamlined** and allow for adaptability of an operating farm.
- **Many conservation practices are going unnoticed.** Farmers only receive "credit" inside the Chesapeake Bay Model if they are being paid to implement that practice. Many of Virginia's farmers are continuously implementing practices such as "no-till" but either chose not to enter a too cumbersome program or was denied participation in that program.
- In 2004, **75,600 grain acres** in Virginia's Coastal Plain were in the continuous no-till conservation practice. Only **5,630** of those acres were enrolled through an incentive-based program.
- With technology like "pre side-dress nitrogen testing" (PSNT), corn stalk nitrate tests, precision application of seed and fertilizer, conservation tillage, winter cover crops, GPS, on-board computers and regular soil testing, **today's grain farmers are an important part of the solution** to better water quality and less erosion.

In General

- **VGPA supports environmental policy based on sound science and voluntary, feasible on-farm implementation.**
- Mandatory programs can lead to unfunded mandates, overregulation and impede efficiency in farm operations.
- VGPA works to **educate** producers about conservation efforts and programs and safe data sharing.
- Virginia's grain producers use innovative and technologically advanced tools to help build **sustainable agriculture**.
- Producers must be included in legislative and regulatory decisions that impact their operations.
- VGPA has joined with Environmental Defense Fund to start a voluntary, proactive, "participatory learning" program called **On Farm Network**. This program will help farmers learn more about their individual operations to **improve efficiency** in applications and on-farm profitability. This program is supported through self-imposed, farmer fees and private grants.
- Mid-Atlantic agriculture is the only non-point source sector **DECREASING** its loads to area waters.

"Striving to promote and protect Virginia Grain Producers and Production Agriculture."

DID YOU KNOW?

- Over 85% of VGPA producer members are currently implementing conservation practices on their farms. This includes nutrient management plans, winter cover-crops, continuous no-till, strip-till, buffers or others.
- Approximately 600,000 Virginia grain acres are currently in "continuous no-till" practice. This practice cut soil erosion 44% since 1990s.
- Virginia's grain producers are turned away from state conservation programs because of lack of funding.
- Thanks to innovative technology, Virginia's grain producers have improved their yields by over 100 bushels per acre (feed corn) since 1930 on over 20% less land.
- Since the 1980s Virginia grain producers decreased fertilizer needed to grow a bushel of corn by 36%.

For More Information Visit:
www.VirginiaGrains.com