

FSCAP at a Glance

Core Partners

- Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD)
- Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB)
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)
- Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)
- USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Certification Requirements

- Nutrient management plans must be in compliance with state requirements.
- All soil conservation and water quality resource concerns on land that is owned or leased by the farmer must have been addressed.
- All streams in active pasture must be fenced.

Financial Support

FSCAP is made possible with generous grants from:

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- Maryland Soybean Board (MSB)
- Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board (MGPUB)
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)
- Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT)

For More Information

Interested in learning more about FSCAP and seeing the farmers who are already certified? Go to our website or contact Gerald Talbert at 410-247-1973 or geraldtalbert@verizon.net.

MASCD

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FSCAP Certification Process

FSCAP works with local soil conservation districts to evaluate farms. As part of this comprehensive review, the farm's nutrient management plan, soil conservation and water quality plan and/or comprehensive nutrient management plan are reviewed.

- ✓ A site assessment and evaluation is conducted on all owned and leased property to ensure that no unaddressed environmental concerns exist.
- ✓ A typical FSCAP evaluation is completed within two to three hours.

Certified Steward Benefits

- ✓ Certified stewards receive the recognition they deserve for protecting the environment.
- ✓ Certified stewards receive a three-year waiver from MDA nutrient management inspections.
- ✓ Certified stewards receive a handsome 30" x 24" metal sign and signpost that is installed for them on their property.
- ✓ Certified stewards receive recognition on their own page on the FSCAP website and those selling directly to the public can add product and contact information.
- ✓ Certified stewards receive the **Stewardship Notebook**, which contains information about new conservation programs and advanced nutrient management techniques.

Your Farm Name Here

Certified Agricultural Conservation Steward

Sponsored by the Washington County Soil Conservation District



Authorized by The Farm Stewardship Certification and Assessment Program in 2010

Conservation Poultry Growers: Get the Recognition You Deserve

Farm Stewardship Certification and Assessment Program (FSCAP)



Maryland Association of
Soil Conservation Districts

Farm Stewardship Certification and Assessment Program

Who We Are

Poultry growers who go the extra mile to protect farmland and natural resources by implementing best management practices (BMPs) on their farms, complying with Maryland's nutrient management regulations, and using soil conservation and water quality plans or comprehensive nutrient management plans to manage their operations don't always get the recognition they deserve for a job well done.

That's where the Farm Stewardship Certification and Assessment Program (FSCAP) steps in. Established in 2010 by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD), this unique program recognizes and certifies farmers who have demonstrated that they are good stewards of their farmland and related natural resources, provides qualifying farmers with three-year waivers from state nutrient management inspections and provides information about new resources and conservation programs.

By recognizing poultry growers with a strong conservation history, FSCAP aims to encourage even more Maryland growers to achieve certification and participate in new conservation programs, thus strengthening land conservation practices in the state and improving water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

Our Partners

With more than 75 years of experience in agricultural conservation work, Maryland's 24 soil conservation districts have helped hundreds of exceptional farmers install BMPs on their farms to protect natural resources. In establishing FSCAP, MASCD wanted to develop a recognition program that would be respected and valued by farmers and environmentalists alike.

With this overarching goal in mind, MASCD brought together a team of agricultural and environmental experts to develop the FSCAP recognition program. Joining MASCD as core partners are the Maryland Farm Bureau, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Maryland Department of Agriculture and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The local soil conservation district provides key information in every FSCAP review.

The FSCAP Certification

A major component of FSCAP is the Agricultural Conservation Stewardship Certification Standard (ACSCS), which measures the level of compliance of a farm's nutrient management plan against state requirements. This certification standard also

requires a high level of BMP implementation to address all soil conservation and water quality resource management concerns on the farm. A poultry grower who has fully implemented the comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) is likely to meet these criteria.

Using the certification standard as a measure of good conservation stewardship, FSCAP

celebrates individual farmers' accomplishments in the sustainable management of natural resources and serves as a source of pride for the entire agricultural community. Certified stewards have also found that certification is good for business.

The two-part certification standard requires the successful implementation of a nutrient management plan that meets state standards and proof that all soil conservation and water quality resource management concerns have been met. A site assessment and evaluation is conducted to verify implementation of a soil conservation and water quality plan. As a measure of confidence in the program, the Maryland Department of Agriculture has agreed to waive routine state nutrient management inspections on certified farms for three years, as long as no formal complaints are received and timely annual reports are submitted.



"My sons and I run a sustainable poultry farm that protects our natural resources. We participated in FSCAP to show our community, and anyone riding by our farm gate that sees our sign, that poultry farmers are doing their part to protect the Chesapeake Bay" Jennifer Lynn Rhodes, poultry grower and Queen Anne's Extension Educator.

How it Works

There is no risk or obligation that results from a FSCAP evaluation. Once a poultry grower volunteers to be evaluated for certification, FSCAP staff works in partnership with the local soil conservation district (SCD) to visit the farm to review the existing nutrient management plan and soil conservation and water quality plan or comprehensive nutrient management plan and other relevant documents and determine the resource concerns that need to be addressed. During the visit, the FSCAP assessor and the district's conservation planner walk the farm to verify that all soil conservation and water quality resource concerns have been met. If additional BMPs are recommended, the grower may elect to receive free technical assistance from the SCD to install additional conservation measures to address the outstanding resource management concerns, after which the FSCAP evaluation could be resumed. Any additional work to achieve certification is a completely voluntary choice of the grower.

Throughout the visit, the FSCAP assessor and the grower may discuss other new conservation opportunities not required for certification, such as participation in nutrient trading. More information on nutrient trading and other innovative conservation programs is available in the *Stewardship Notebook*, which is provided to certified conservation stewards. Certified stewards receive an attractive metal sign that is posted on their property and a farm description with several pictures on the FSCAP webpage.

