

# 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 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 (MGPIB)
- ✓ 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](mailto:geraldtalbert@verizon.net).

## MASCD

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## FSCAP Certification Process

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

## Farmer Benefits

- ✓ FSCAP farmers receive the recognition they deserve for protecting the environment.
- ✓ FSCAP farms receive a three-year waiver from MDA nutrient management inspections.
- ✓ FSCAP farmers receive a handsome 30" x 24" metal sign to post on their property.
- ✓ FSCAP farmers receive recognition on the MASCD website and those selling directly to the public can add product and contact information.
- ✓ FSCAP farmers receive the **Stewardship Notebook**, which contains information about promising new conservation opportunities such as nutrient trading.
- ✓ FSCAP farmers may be eligible to earn income from nutrient trading by installing additional BMPs.

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 Farmers: 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

Farmers who go the extra mile to protect farmland and natural resources by voluntarily implementing best management practices (BMPs) on their farms, complying with Maryland's nutrient management regulations, and using comprehensive soil conservation and water quality 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 links farmers with new resources and conservation programs.

By recognizing farmers with a strong conservation history, FSCAP aims to encourage even more Maryland farmers 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 farmer-conservationists 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 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 resource management concerns on the farm.



Using the certification standard as a measure of good conservation stewardship, FSCAP celebrates farmers' accomplishments in the sustainable management of natural resources and serves as a source of pride for the entire agricultural community.

The two-part certification program requires the successful implementation of a nutrient management plan that meets state standards and proof that all farm 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 state nutrient management inspections for three years, as long as no formal complaints are received and timely annual reports are submitted.

*"The FSCAP program is an excellent way for us to demonstrate to the environmental community that we are doing a great job; I encourage farmers to participate," Steve Ernst, Clear Spring, MD, and first certified farmer.*

## How it Works

Once a farmer 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, soil conservation and water quality plan, and other relevant documents and determine whether the farm complies with the ACSCS. During the visit, the FSCAP assessor and the district's technical staff walk the farm to verify that all resource concerns have been met. If additional BMPs are recommended, the farmer may elect to receive free technical assistance from the SCD to install additional conservation measures to address the outstanding resource management concern, after which the FSCAP evaluation could be resumed. Any additional work to achieve certification is a completely voluntary choice of the farmer.

Throughout the visit, the FSCAP assessor and the farmer 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 farmers following certification. Certified farmers receive an attractive metal sign to post on their property.

