

which might be applied as fertilizers, and lectured and publicized his findings. During the guano boom of the 1840s and 1850s, a Guano Inspector also analyzed all guano imported through Baltimore to ensure that farmers got that for which they paid. Modern equivalents of such duties are carried out by the State Chemist Section.

Formerly under the Office of Animal Health and Consumer Services, the State Chemist Section in 1987 was transferred to the Office of Plant Industries and Resource Conservation, which became the Office of Plant Industries and Pest Management in 1990. The State Chemist Section samples and chemically tests and analyzes commercial fertilizers, feeds, pesticides, soil conditioners, and liming materials sold in the State. The Section registers and examines the labels of these products as well. Its purpose is to determine if the products conform to standards established under Maryland laws governing quality, contents, and labeling. Measures are taken to protect the consumer and the dealer from unscrupulous or careless manufacturers.

The Section cooperates with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in the inspection of feed manufacturing facilities that produce medicated feeds. To implement the federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the Section also works with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Additionally, Section chemists analyze meat and toxicology samples for the Office of Animal Health and Consumer Services; test fruits, vegetables, commercial feeds, and soils for chemical residues; and make other determinations as required by the Department (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 5-101 through 5-114, 6-101 through 6-117, 6-201 through 6-220, 6-301 through 6-310).

TURF & SEED SECTION

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As early as 1888, the General Assembly enacted legislation to protect farmers from unscrupulous seed salesmen making fraudulent claims. Today, the Turf and Seed Section works to assure the availability of sufficient quantities of certified turf and seed. It directs and conducts certification programs by which turf and seed are produced to meet standards of purity, variety, germination, and other quality factors. From the evidence of field inspections or laboratory analysis, the Section rejects seed or sod not meeting certification standards.

The Section also regulates the labeling of seed and sod at the time of marketing to help consumers determine what to purchase. A State testing laboratory is operated for both service and regulatory testing to assure compliance with label claims. The regulatory phase involves inspection, testing, reporting results, and corrective actions for each turf and seed lot found not to comply with provisions of the Turf Grass Law

or the Seed Law (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 9-101 through 9-110, 9-201 through 9-213).

WEED CONTROL SECTION

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The Weed Control Section administers the Maryland Noxious Weed Law. This law requires landowners or those who possess and manage land infested with Johnsongrass, shattercane, or thistles to eradicate or control these noxious weeds by practices prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The noxious weed control program helps individuals manage noxious weeds through their own efforts and through a cooperative agreement between the State and participating counties. The Department encourages individuals to file a Noxious Weed Control Agreement, outlining methods and procedures for controlling noxious weeds on their land. Regulatory action may be taken against those who fail to control noxious weeds. The Weed Control Section also investigates complaints of multiflora rose-infested land used for agricultural production.

The Secretary of Agriculture has authority to declare other weeds noxious and place them under a control program. The Section Supervisor serves as the State's authority on weed control matters (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 9-401 through 9-405, 9-701 through 9-705).

OFFICE OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION

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In November 1989, the Soil Conservation Administration was reorganized by the Department to form the Office of Resource Conservation. The Office works to control soil erosion and agricultural nonpoint source water pollution through agricultural soil conservation and water quality programs. The Office coordinates its efforts with other Department programs and with county, State and federal agencies. This includes managing interagency cooperative agreements. The Office consists of three sections: Program Planning and Development; Resource Management Services; and Resource Protection Incentives.

PROGRAM PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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Program Planning and Development supports the work of the State Soil Conservation Committee