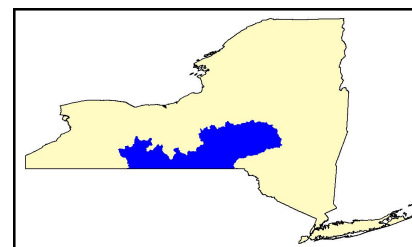


# Farming for Clean Water

New report highlights opportunities to get farther faster and more cost-effectively in cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay

## FOCUS ON NEW YORK

Why does a **healthy Chesapeake Bay** matter to New York? The answer is simple: doing what we need to do for the Bay brings us local benefits, in the form of clean streams and rivers. These streams and rivers are being choked by nutrients and soil coming from wastewater plants, industry, housing subdivisions and farms. From a farmer's perspective losing nutrients and soil is a problem; keeping them on the farm is good for business as well as for the Bay. Farmers are already doing a lot to help the Bay, but we need to find ways to help them deliver even greater benefits. New York has developed a set of cleanup plans, called Tributary Strategies, that spell out what needs to be done to keep nutrients and soil on the farm where it belongs.

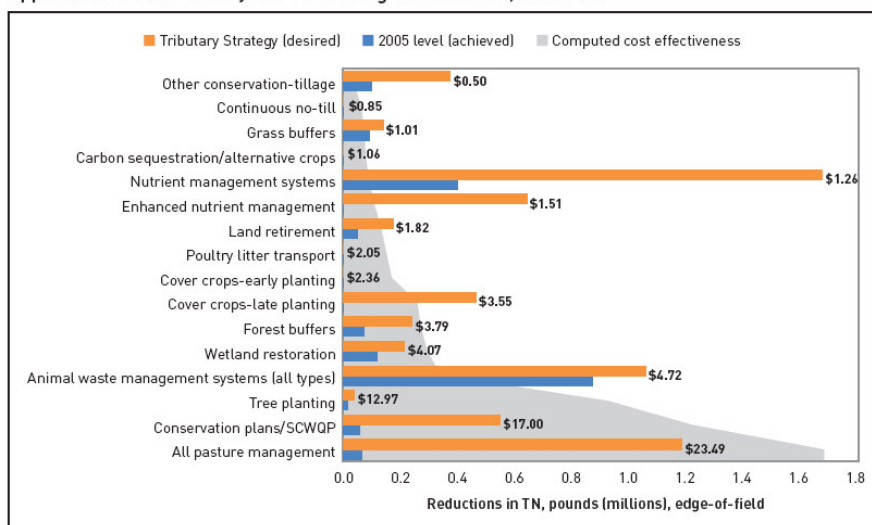


New York's Chesapeake Bay drainage

**How is New York doing?** The chart below shows the Tributary Strategy goals for various farm conservation practices (in orange) and levels of goal accomplishment in 2005 (in blue). Practices are arranged from most cost-effective at the top to least cost-effective at the bottom. Looking at the chart we see that:

- New York is looking to a wide range of practices to meet its overall water quality goals, but, as of 2005, had not prioritized its efforts to the most cost-effective practices.
- New York has made great progress in animal waste management.
- New York is relying heavily on pasture management, which can deliver benefits for both local streams and the Bay, but is a relatively expensive practice.
- There are significant opportunities to achieve large nutrient reductions at relatively low cost.

Opportunities for relatively low-cost nitrogen reductions, New York



## Where do we go from here?

Our new report, *Farming for Clean Water*, offers recommendations for restoring the Bay by substantially changing the ways we fund, deliver, credit and verify agricultural conservation.

A good place to start is by *targeting funds and attention* to conservation practices that have proven most cost-effective in reducing farm runoff. The chart shows us that New York has real opportunities to advance its cleanup goals by focusing its money and effort on:

- Expanding its efforts in nutrient management and leveraging some existing gains through enhanced nutrient management practices such as precision agriculture.
- Planting early cover crops. These are good for the Bay and also benefit farm productivity— a win-win situation.

In addition, New York can build on work done by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition to promote widespread adoption of dairy feed management and rotational grazing.



Photo: NRCS

In addition, we can:

- Make traditional conservation practices – such as nutrient management, conservation tillage, and cover crops -- more effective by shifting emphasis to performance and outcomes.
- *Embrace innovation* in farm management systems and practices, such as dairy feed management and alternative cropping systems, that will help both the Bay and farmers' bottom lines.
- *Increase research and education* to promote widespread adoption of today's innovations and develop the innovations of tomorrow.
- *Increase resources for technical assistance* for farmers, and *create financial rewards* for farmers who produce clean water and other environmental benefits.
- Improve our ability to track conservation funding, verify what practices are actually implemented, and determine the nutrient and sediment load reductions they generate.

Learn more visit: [www.environmentaldefense.org/chesapeakebay](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/chesapeakebay)