Policy Focus - Phosphorus in Water WA
Presenter: Dr Melanie Strawbridge

Outline

• What's all the fuss about?
  • Nutrient inflow
  • Environmental impacts

• Background
  • How did we get here?

• Policy response
  • Whole of Government working with Industry
    • eg. Fertiliser Partnership
    • eg. Vasse Taskforce
    • eg. Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping

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Nutrient Inflow

- Fertiliser is 25% of farm input cost
- $450-750M per annum on P in WA
- Getting the balance wrong results in financial loss and environmental degradation

Impacts
Dawesville Cut

- Largely deals with symptoms rather than causes
- Successful in overcoming nodularia blooms since 1994, but this is largely a result of a change in salinity
- Nutrient exports continue at the same or increased levels since the opening
- Increased algal blooms in inflowing rivers and increased mosquito problems
Industry/Community/Government Engagement

Fertiliser Partnership

• 2012 – 2016. Partnership between Government, the fertiliser industry, users and non-government organisations
• Foster cooperative working relationship to reduce nutrient loss to aquatic environments
• Water Quality Improvement Plans

Vasse Taskforce

• Combination of local government, catchment council, water service providers, government agencies chaired by Minister for Water
• Partners will work together on a number of strategies to improve Vasse estuary water quality
Industry/Community/Government Engagement

Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping

• Innovative approach to providing nutrient information to landholders at a paddock level.

• Funded by NRM grant to work in the Peel Harvey, Ellenbrook, Geographe, Scott and Wilson catchments

• 13,000 paddocks (500 properties) sampled over 5 years

• Increases effectiveness of fertiliser application and decreases costs by reducing unnecessary fertiliser applications.

• Reduced run off and ground water leaching that will reduce long-term nutrient inflows into coastal waterways and the estuary.

Soil Testing Results

• Clear as Mud?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High / OK</td>
<td>Where nutrient levels are in luxury supply or soil characteristic is OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium / Maintenance</td>
<td>Nutrient or soil characteristic just below ideal range. Attention required in the short term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low / Limiting</td>
<td>Where nutrient level or soil characteristic is limiting production. Take immediate action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Soil P Status for 90% Maximum Production**

*To be used in conjunction with P2O5 to determine P status for 90% of maximum production.*
In to the future……

• Focus on reducing inputs into the catchment rather than engineering solutions

• Continued partnerships between Government, land holders, industry groups, catchment groups and the general community

• Promotion of greater understanding of fertiliser requirements and application gives a win win

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