

# Livestock Fencing in the Shenandoah Valley: April 4th Environmental Integrity Project Report



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The Environmental Integrity Project (“EIP”) issued an April 4th report titled:

*Livestock Fencing in the Shenandoah Valley (“Report”)*

The *Report* states that in regards to the efforts to address nitrogen and phosphorus in the Chesapeake Bay two of the questions that have been asked include:

1. To what extent are farmers implementing pollution control practices, such as fencing cattle out of streams?
2. How often are farmers maintaining strips of grasses and trees as green filters along waterways?

The *Report* states that such measures are cost-effective ways to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus in waterbodies.

EIP states that in an effort to address this question it undertook research utilizing what it describes as an objective source of information. The *Report* notes:

Using highly detailed Google Earth satellite images, combined with county tax maps and EPA’s computerized mapping of streams, EIP’s team of data analysts calculated what percentage of farms in one of Virginia’s biggest agricultural counties – Augusta County, in the Shenandoah Valley – fenced their cattle out of streams on their property. Augusta County has about 95,000 beef cattle, the second most of any county in Virginia and fourth most in the bay watershed.

EIP examined Google Earth aerial photographs taken in 2017 of 835 farms in Augusta County with streams and livestock on them and found that 81 percent of the farms (680) had not fenced their cattle out of all waterways on their properties. That means only 19 percent had followed this best management practice for the health of the rivers and Chesapeake Bay.

Sections of the *Report* include:

- Recommendations for Meeting Fencing Goals
- The Value of Livestock Fencing
- Virginia’s Program to encourage Livestock Fencing
- Animal Agriculture in the Shenandoah Valley
- Analysis of Farm Fencing
- Unhealthy Bacteria Levels in Augusta County Waterways
- Farm Bureau and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Reactions to the Report

- Example of Livestock Fencing on a Family Farm
- Methodology Utilized

A copy of the Report can be found [here](#).