

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry  
Division of Quality Assurance & Regulations

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# FERTILIZER PROGRAM SUMMARY REPORT



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This report outlines the major accomplishments and sampling results of Maine's 2015 Fertilizer Quality Control Program produced in accordance with MRS Title 7, Sections § 743, § 743-A, §765 and §766. Our mission statement for this program is to serve, promote and protect the Agricultural Producers, and Retail Consumers of the State of Maine by continuously working to improve the quality of fertilizer products sold in Maine.

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During the 2015 legislative session, several changes were made to Maine's fertilizer law, including:

- §743-A and §766 was amended to eliminate the \$1/ton fee for fertilizer products and liming materials. Companies are still required to report tonnage sold in this State.
- §743. Registration- The registration and sampling fees were combined to consolidate and simplify reporting. Combined total fees for each product are \$125 per product for fertilizer and \$75 for liming materials.
- §765. The \$25 fees for both fertilizer and lime must be deposited in a dedicated, nonlapsing account and used for the purpose of administering and enforcing the program.
- Overall, a fee reduction of approximately 10% will result.
- The submission of an annual report is required to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agricultural matters, which is authorized to report out a bill.

**Note:** No tonnage fees were collected for 2015.

Some of the major accomplishments for 2015:

- Increased overall sampling activity by 106%
- Increased Retail Sampling activity by 196%
- Decreased turnaround times for grower results by contracting out an additional lab during planting season. Results posted on web site the same day of receiving results.
- Conducted a training and discussion face to face meeting with fertilizer blenders outlining Legislative changes, Product Registration, Tonnage Reporting, Labeling and Restitution to comply with the Statutes.

Through legislative changes in the statute language this past year, the program can now implement warnings and penalties for non-compliances and deficiencies. We are developing a database to calculate and track these non-compliances and deficiencies. All calculations and issues relating to non-compliances were presented to the blenders.

Additional staff have been trained in sampling techniques and safety procedures through the development of an in house training program. A staff member attended a Basic Inspector Training seminar provided by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials to acquire up to date knowledge on sampling techniques of various commodities and preservation of an official sample to comply with regulations and uniformity with other States.

The program continued sampling materials at each Blend Plant, including Canadian plants. During 2014 we identified deficiencies in Available Phosphate and Soluble Potash which may



have contributed to the 2014 deficiency rate. This year we sampled materials from all Blend Plants and all samples passed. We have been invited by the Blend Plants to sample materials for this upcoming season.

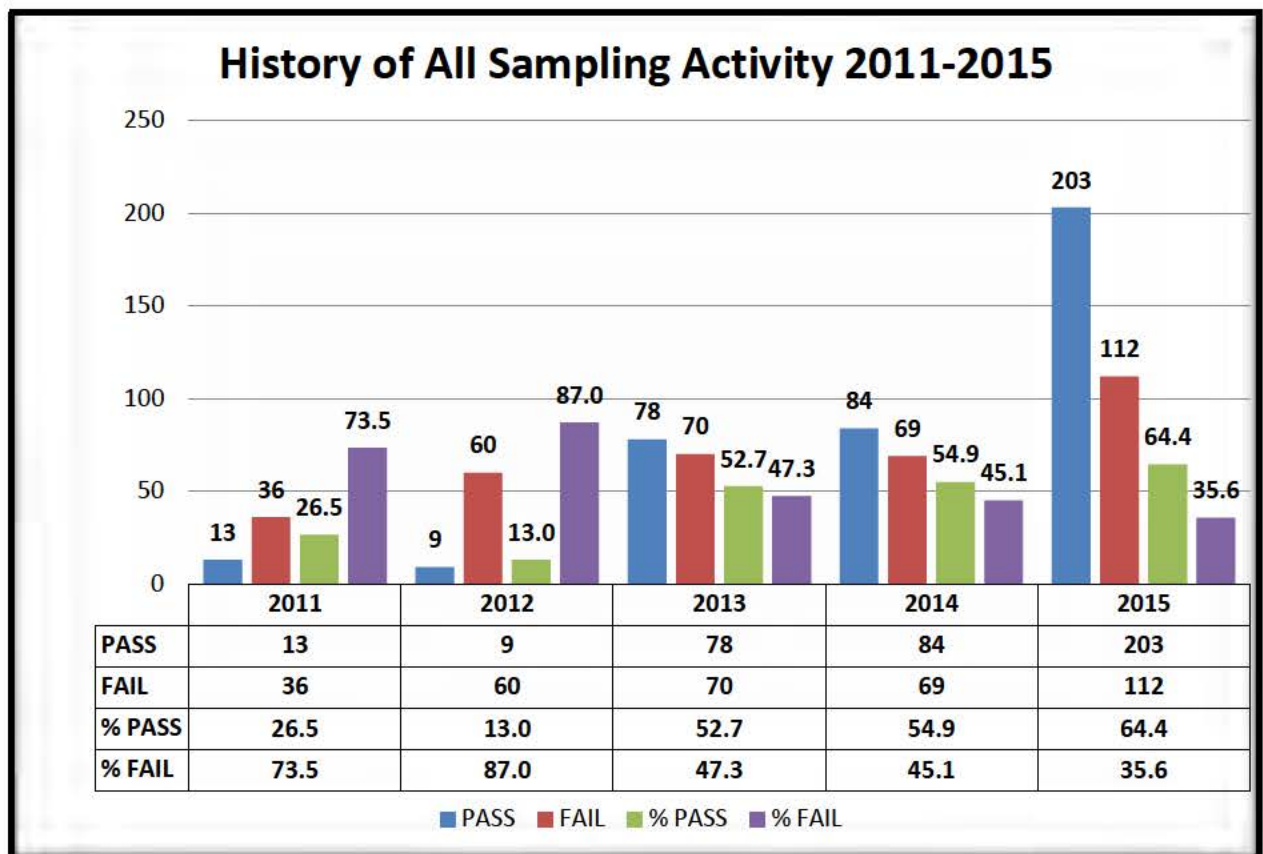
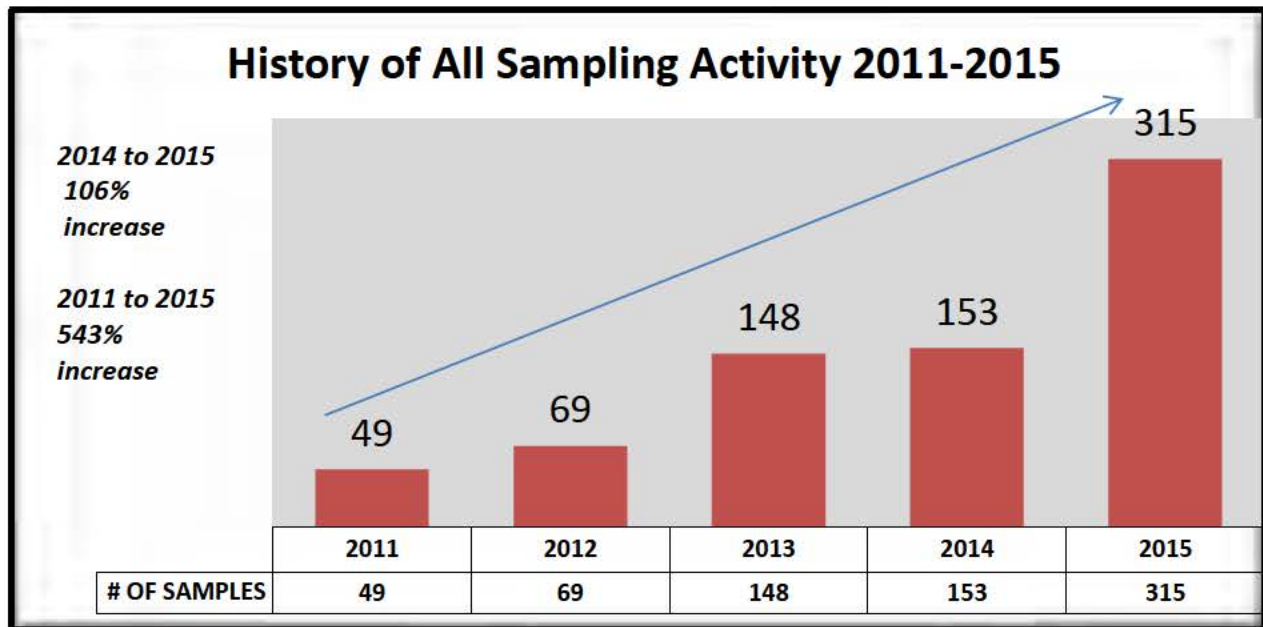
Over the last five (5) years our sampling efforts have increased to a record high of 315 in 2015. Our goal is to stabilize around 300 samples each year. The deficiency rates for most of the Blend Plants have declined over the years as the department increased the amount of samples. The deficiency rate for the retail products has remained relatively the same even with an increase in the amount of samples. These results will be better illustrated in the graphs later in this report.

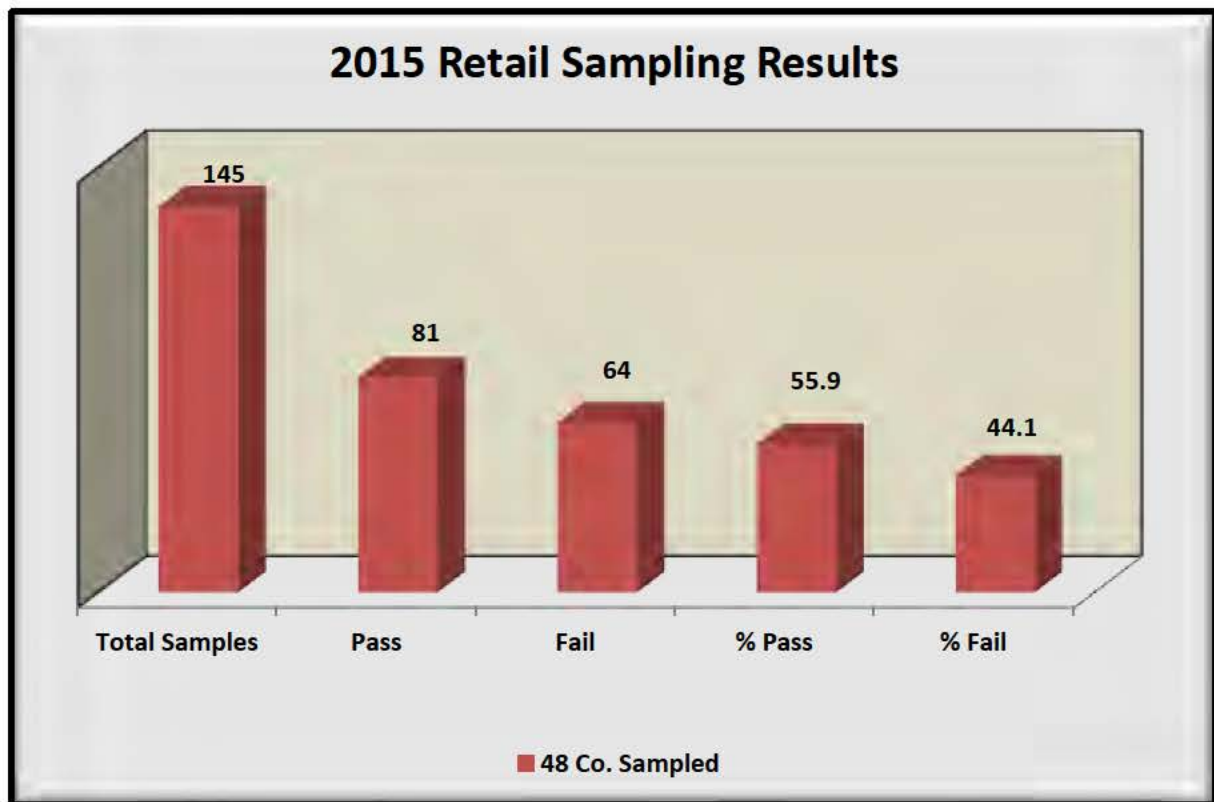
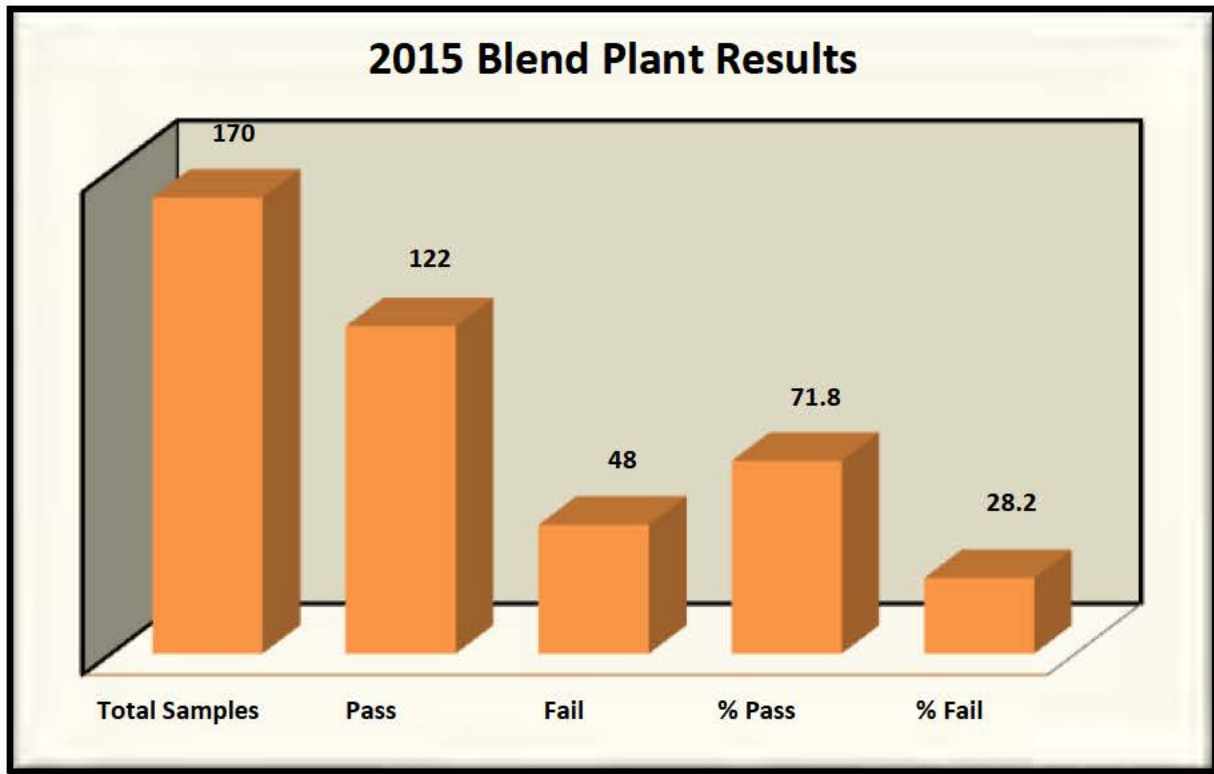
Labeling of fertilizer products has been of major concern for our program with many non-complying products entering the market. Through legislative changes in the statute language this year, we will be able to better address labeling requirements. To ensure both Agricultural Producers, and Retail Consumers are properly informed of the safe use of fertilizers and are purchasing product as stated on the label verified through sampling and laboratory analysis.

This year we added an additional lab to provide analysis of fertilizer samples to provide growers with quicker results to adjust their agronomic practices to achieve optimum yields. These samples were classified "high priority" to the labs. Letters were sent to the grower and supplier as soon as the results were received. The turnaround times for each lab have been recorded and will be illustrated in the graphs later in this report.

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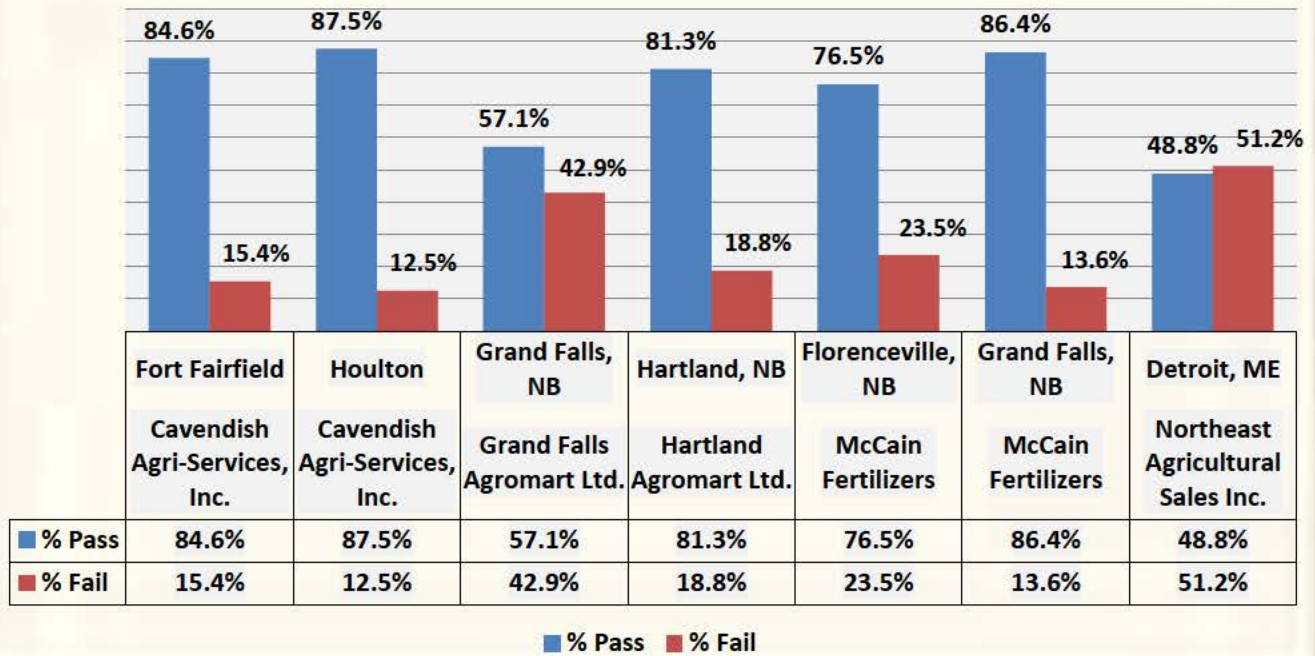
**SAMPLING DATA**



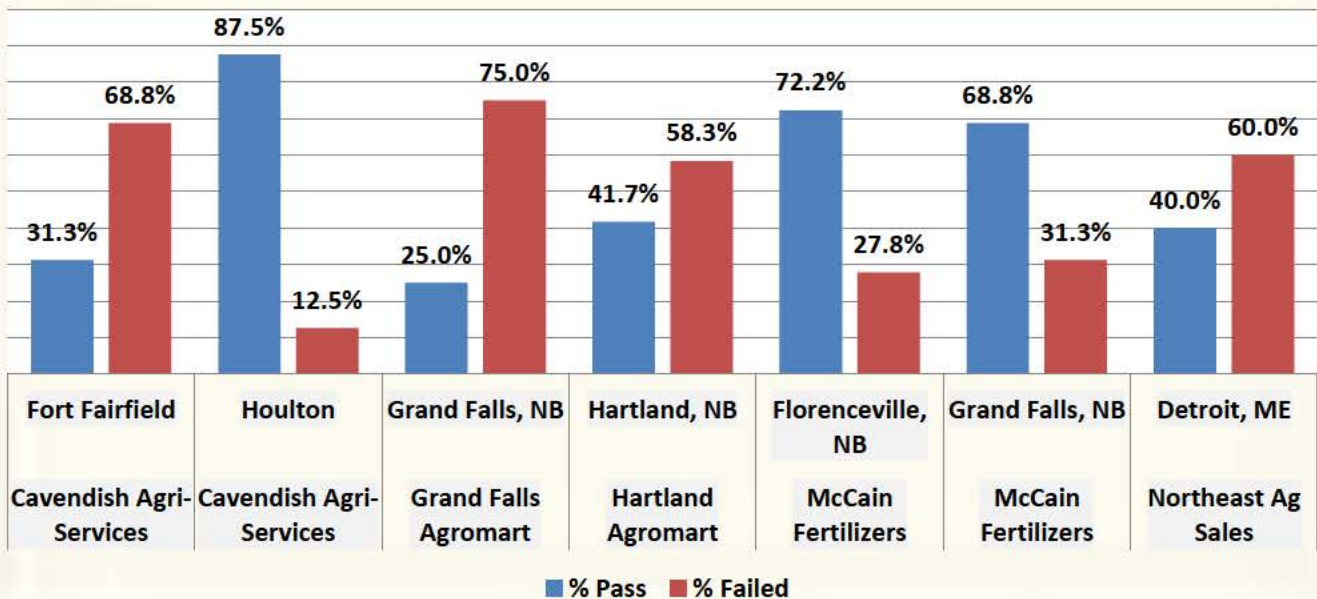




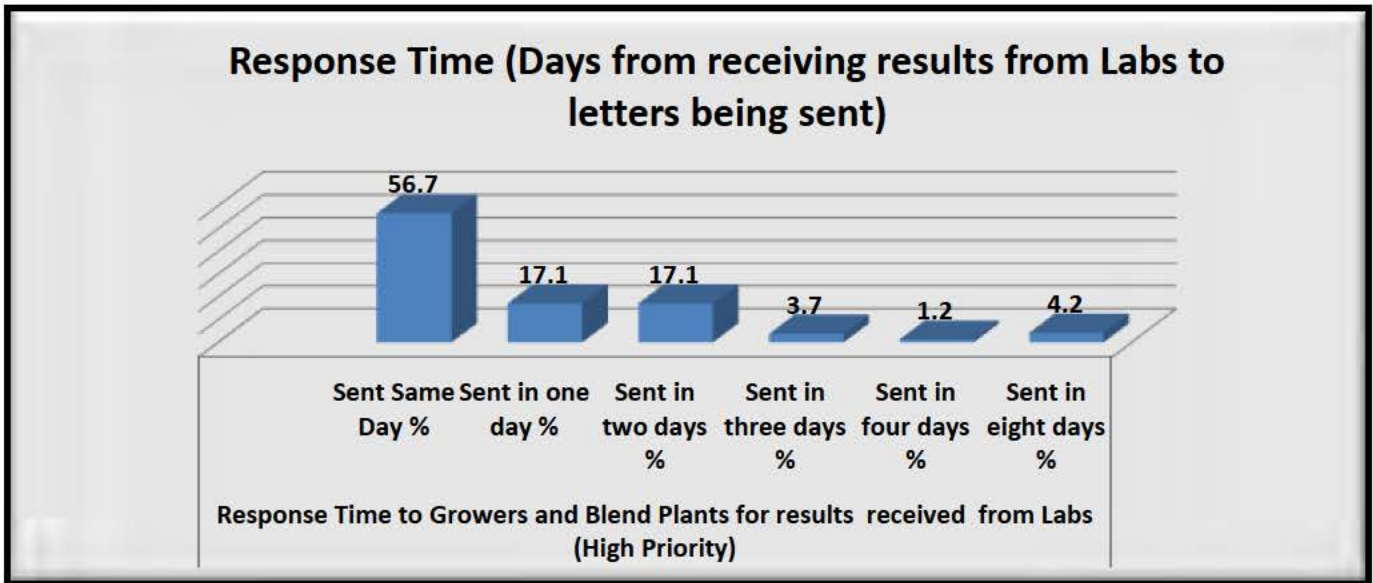
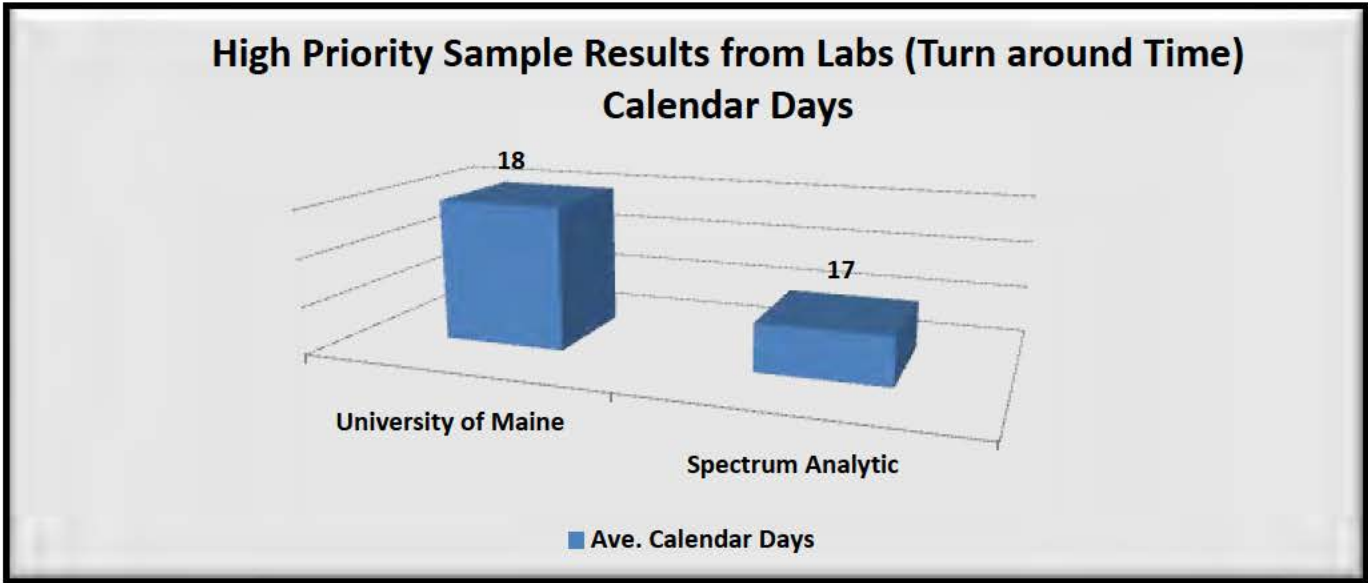
### 2015 Sample Results by Blend Plant



### 2014 Sample Results by Blend Plant



**LAB TURN AROUND TIMES & NOTIFICATION TIMES**

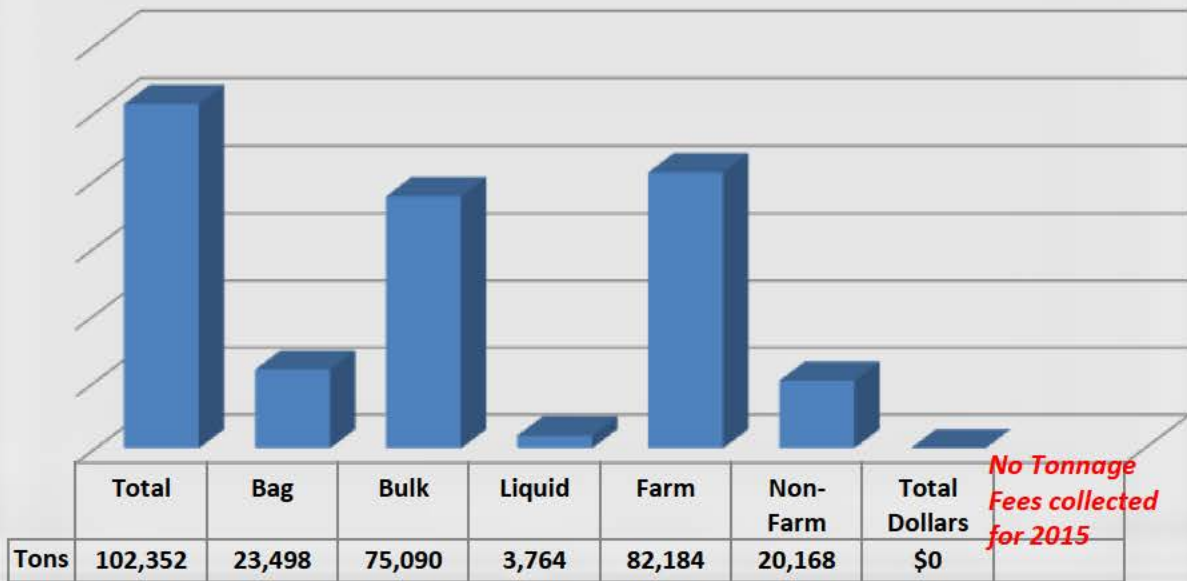


Note: Sample results were posted on the Department web page the same day received after calculations were completed to determine if the samples "Passed or Failed".



**FERTILIZER TONNAGE DATA**

**2015 Tonnage Reported**



**2014 Tonnage Reported**

