

Frequently Asked Questions

New Nutrient Management Rule

When is a nutrient management plan required?

Under DNR and DATCP rules, all farmers who mechanically apply manure or commercial fertilizer to cropland (not just livestock operators) must have a nutrient management plan. The proposed rule change includes all application, mechanical or deposited by grazing animals. Nutrients include nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium from manure, legumes, organic byproducts, and commercial fertilizer. Nutrient applications follow soil test recommendations minus credits from nutrient sources. A nutrient management plan is required when:

- A producer voluntarily accepts, or is offered, government cost-share dollars for nutrient management. State law makes enforcement contingent on an offer of cost sharing for this item only.
- A producer voluntarily accepts, or is offered, government cost-share dollars for the installation of manure storage.
- A producer voluntarily continues participation in the farmland preservation program (FPP).
- A producer is regulated under a county manure storage or livestock siting ordinance.
- A producer is regulated under a DNR Wisconsin pollution discharge elimination system permit (WPDES).

Nutrient management planning enforcement can take effect everywhere in Wisconsin after January 1, 2008. However, nutrient management planning enforcement is limited by the availability of cost-share funds and governmental regulation at the state and local levels. The cost-share offer must cover at least 70% of the farmer's annual cost to implement nutrient management (90% if there is an economic hardship). The farmer may accept an alternative flat payment of \$7 per acre per year for a four year period (\$28/acre total). Additional cost sharing beyond these levels will not be provided by a local government for farmers to continue this practice.

Who can approve a nutrient management plan?

A qualified nutrient management planner must prepare or approve each nutrient management plan. Persons holding one of the following are presumptively qualified nutrient management planners:

1. Certified as crop consultant by the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC)
2. Certified as crop adviser (CCA) and Certified as a professional agronomist (CCA-CPAg) by the American Society of Agronomy, Wisconsin Certified Crop Adviser Board
3. Certified as a soil scientist by the Soil Science Society of America
4. A farmer is presumptively qualified to prepare their own nutrient management plan if the farmer completes a DATCP-approved training course and the instructor approves the first annual plan within the preceding 4 years. Except in the case of local livestock siting ordinances, where this qualification does not apply.

Will maintaining a nutrient management plan provide liability protection?

Maintaining a nutrient management plan will provide more protection than not having a plan. The nutrient management plan is designed to reduce runoff and ensure adequate annual crop nutrients for each field. In addition, ATCP 50 Wis. Admin. Code presumes a farmer complies with the nutrient management code requirements if the nutrient management plan is prepared or approved by a qualified planner other than the farmer and the farmer follows the plan (effective June 1, 2007).

What technical standards and soil test recommendations does Wis. law require for nutrient management planning?

ATCP 50 Wis. Admin. Code requires nutrient management plans to be based on UW Pub. A2809 (1998) or most current version of *Nutrient application guidelines for Field, Vegetable and Fruit Crops*, if preferred by the landowner. The latest edition of A2809 is available from the UWEX website at: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/>. ATCP 50 will also require nutrient management plans to be based on NRCS 590 nutrient management standard (2005). Copies of these documents are available at: http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/Soil_and_Water_Resource_Management/ATCP50/index.aspx

How can nutrient management plans comply with either UWEX Publication A2809 (1998) or (2012), when the DATCP certified soil testing laboratories will be following A2809 (2012)?

- The soil test recommendations provided by DATCP certified laboratories are based on the UW Publication A2809 (2012). The major change in these recommendations allows farmers a choice to minimize corn and wheat inputs based fertilizer N and corn price ratios appropriate for the operation. Nutrient management planners can still choose the high end of this N range for corn, which is equal to A2809 (1998) levels.
- Nutrient applications based on the field's soil tests can be calculated manually or by using *Snap Plus* nutrient management software from <http://www.snapplus.net/> developed by the UW Madison, Soil Science Department and available free of charge. *Snap Plus* will use the most current UWEX publication A2809 for application rate guidelines. *Snap Plus* will allow the maximum amount of N to be approximately equal to the rate needed to maximize yield. However, users will also be able to adjust their application rate for current economics and select other fertilizer N and corn price ratios to maximize economic return in any specific year.

What are the manure application restrictions in the 590 standard (2005)?

- No nutrient applications within waterways, non-harvested areas, sinkholes, or nonmetallic mines.
- No nutrient applications within 200 feet upslope of groundwater conduits such as sinkholes, fractured bedrock, tile inlets, non-metallic mines or wells unless incorporated into the soil within 72 hours (except for manure deposited by grazing animals).
- No mechanical manure applications within 50 feet of drinking water wells.
- On frozen or snow covered soils do not apply manure on slopes greater than 9% (12% for contour farming).
- No mechanical manure applications on frozen or snow covered soils within 1000’ of lakes & 300’ of perennial streams.
- On frozen or snow covered soils do not apply manure in excess of 7,000 gallons per acre or the P removal of the next crop, whichever is less.
- Manure applications must comply with supplementary local winter spreading restrictions, if any, spelled out in an individual farm conservation plan agreed upon between the farmer and the county land conservation committee.
- No nutrient applications on fields eroding at rates that exceed tolerable soil loss (T).
- On frozen or snow covered soils do not apply commercial fertilizer except on grass pastures and winter grains.
- On soils likely to leach nitrate nitrogen listed in the *WI Conservation Planning Technical Note WI-1*, and areas within 1000’ of a municipal well, apply most of the N in the spring. See <http://www.snapplus.net/> for soils on the farm, if any, that are susceptible to leaching N.

Is soil erosion control required as part of a nutrient management plan; and can Snap Plus software be used to develop this part of a conservation plan?

Yes. The nutrient management plan must control sheet and rill soil erosion to tolerable levels (T) and provide treatment of ephemeral and gully soil erosion. Sheet and rill soil erosion control can be calculated using Snap Plus software, while ephemeral and gully soil erosion control may require leaving more plant residue or establishing grassed water ways in addition to the Snap Plus calculations. A conservation plan should also try to reduce runoff from winter applied manure by identifying high risk fields and not applying. High risk fields have area where runoff concentrates covering 1/3 or more of the field and could flow to surface water or groundwater conduits.

In what situations can the nutrient management plan deviate from A2809 soil test recommendations?

- When soil or tissue test reveals a specific deficiency or when the 590 standard exempts soil testing as in established fruit crops.
- When excess nutrients are the result of an unforeseen change in the type of crop planted.
- When excess nutrients are the result of manure applications made in the last year prior to implementing the plan.
- When other special agronomic conditions are documented by the planner. A planner who wishes to justify higher applications shall include credible information to show that the higher applications will not materially increase environmental damage.
- When organic N is applied to the removal rate or less of the upcoming year’s legume crop and the P application follows the criteria in the next bullet.
- When manure or an organic byproduct is applied during a crop rotation to meet N soil test recommendations, and P is managed on every field in a tract using either the *Soil test P management strategy* OR the *WI P-Index* model found in Snap Plus. The proposed rule change would require the *WI P-Index* be used on every field and pasture regardless of nutrient type. An alternative that is equivalent to the *WI P-Index* is allowed in NR 151; but has yet to be developed or approved by DNR.
 - *Soil test P management strategy* – requires fields with 50-100 PPM soil test P to balance P applications with P crop removal over the crop rotation (up to 8 years); and fields with soil tests over 100 PPM P need to apply 25% less than crop removal rates over the crop rotation (up to 8 years).
 - *WI P-Index* – requires fields with a *WI P Index* value of greater than 6 over the crop rotation (up to 8 years) to stop P applications or switch all fields in the tract to the *Soil Test P management strategy*.

How do I determine the manure nutrient values for a nutrient management plan?

These values must be based on either:

1. Standard “book values” contained in *WI Conservation Planning Tech Note WI-1* and in the Snap Plus software from <http://www.snapplus.net/>.
2. Manure analysis conducted at a laboratory that participates in the manure analysis proficiency (MAP) program. Some of these labs are listed below.

Which soil testing laboratories are DATCP certified?

UW Soil & Plant Analysis Lab–Verona (608)262-4364
UW Soil & Forage Lab–Marshfield (715)387-2523 (MAP)
Rock River Laboratory–Watertown (920)261-0446 (MAP)
Dairyland Laboratories–Arcadia (608)323-2123 (MAP)
Agsources Soil & Forage Lab–Bonduel (715)758-2178 (MAP)
A&L Great Lakes Laboratories–Fort Wayne, IN (219)483-4759 (MAP)