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described as an environmental operating plan for which it is written. An NMP also could be It is a document that describes how nutrients are stored, managed and utilized on the farm

What is a Nutrient Management Plan?

A key element for achieving these goals has been the development and implementation of over 750 certified nutrient management plans (NMPs) for Maine farms. An important aspect of these plans is to achieve a balance of nutrient inputs to farmland and outputs from the farm, such as meat, milk, eggs, or crops produced, in order to minimize nutrient losses to the environment, particularly nitrogen and phosphorous, and reduce impacts from potential pathogens.



The Nutrient Management Program was established by the Maine Legislature in 1998. This program was initiated by the Maine Department of Agriculture, local Soil & Water Conservation Districts and interested farmers who shared a proactive interest in the proper storage, management and utilization of farm nutrients. Their goals included management of nutrients that would not only provide protection for Maine's environment, but also have economic benefits for farming operations, yet be attainable and practical. Maine has been a leading state in the nation in the protection of its farmland and natural resources.

Origins

The
Maine
Nutrient
Management
Program

Nutrient Management Plans

*"...attainable
and practical."*



Maine Department
of Agriculture, Conservation
& Forestry

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- Results of soil and manure tests and an analysis of any off-farm nutrients planned for growing crops. These tests must be updated at least every 5 years;
 - Calculations of nutrient requirements for crops to be grown and identification of the limiting nutrient for determining application rates that are environmentally sound;
 - A statement of yield goals for land receiving nutrients;
 - A whole-farm nutrient balance plan;
 - Minimum setbacks between manure storage, stacking or spreading areas and property lines and water bodies, based on site-specific factors;
 - Provision for at least 180 days of storage for manure, since winter spreading of manure is

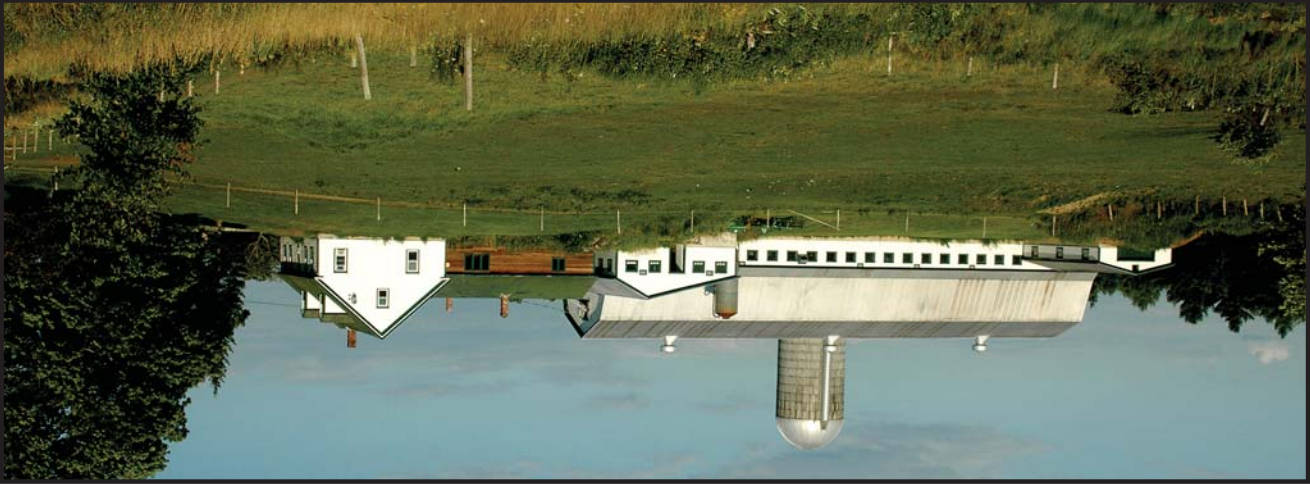
What are some components of an NMP?

for the farm and provides guidance for minimizing off-site impacts from the farm. The plan addresses the storage and utilization of nutrients for the entire farm, including leased or borrowed land.

The success of the Nutrient Management Program has been the result of an effective working relationship among many agencies and farmers, particularly the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S.D.A. Farm Service Agency, county Soil & Water Conservation Districts and others.

For more information: Contact the Nutrient Management Coordinator at 207-287-7608 or mark.hedrich@maine.gov.

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- Records that address the amount of manure applied to each field, the amount of other nutrient sources applied to each field and yields at the end of each harvest season.
 - Provision for effective odor and insect control associated with manure storage, management and utilization at the farm and at land spreading sites.
 - A soil erosion control plan;
 - A recommendation of site-specific dates for the spreading of manure and for the spraying or irrigation of liquid manure;
 - A recommendation of site-specific dates for the spreading of manure and for the spraying or irrigation of liquid manure; exist and a variance is granted by the Commissioner;



U.S.D.A. NRCS also has funds available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or from other programs for qualifying projects. The U.S.D.A. Farm Service Agency offers farm operating loans for



constructing certain projects. A Nutrient Management Loan Program, available through the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), offers low-interest loans for certain nutrient management projects.

Where can a farmer obtain more information about nutrient management planning and projects?

There are many sources of information for nutrient management planning, farm management, or environmental protection. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, the U.S.D.A. NRCS, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, local Soil & Water Conservation Districts and others have expertise and publications available in specific specialty areas. For example, the Department of Agriculture recently published a “Manual of Best Management Practices for Maine Agriculture” that provides information for implementing many farm-related and environmental projects.



Which farms are required to develop and implement an NMP?

These farms include those that:

- Confine and feed 50 or more animal units (1 animal unit = 1000 pounds of animal) at any one time;
- Store or utilize more than 100 tons of manure or compost annually not generated on that farm;



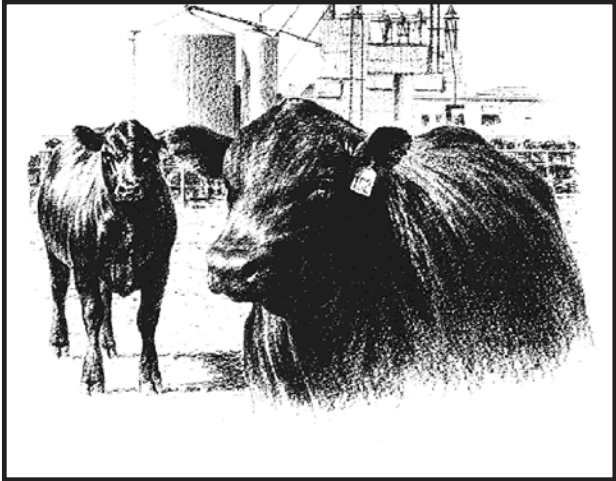
- Are the subject of a verified complaint of improper manure handling; or
- Store or utilize regulated residuals.*

A farm that is required to have an NMP must have its Plan developed and implemented at the time the farm becomes operational.

How does a farm owner obtain an NMP?

There are approximately 60 nutrient management planners certified to write and approve Plans in Maine. A list of these planners may be obtained from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Alternatively, the Plan may be

** A residual is any material generated as a byproduct of a nonagricultural production or treatment process that has value as a source of crop nutrients or soil amendment. A regulated residual is a residual that is used primarily for its nitrogen or phosphorous value as determined by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and is regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection.*



written by the farmer and then approved by a certified planner.

How does an individual become a certified nutrient management planner?

Categories for certification:

A person may be certified either as a commercial/public NMP specialist or as a private NMP specialist. A commercial/public specialist may prepare and approve an NMP for another person or may approve an NMP prepared by another person. Private specialists may develop and approve an NMP only for his or her own operation.

Education and training requirements:

Persons seeking certification must provide proof of certification by a national certifying



program for nutrient management planning, or may become certified through a Maine state training and certification program approved by the Commissioner. This involves successfully completing an approved pre-certification training workshop, or demonstrating a good understanding of agricultural subjects including soil fertility, crop and manure management, from past education, training or experience, and passing a test.

Do small livestock farms with sheep, goats, horses or other livestock, or crop farms, require an NMP?

Yes, if they meet any of the criteria outlined above.

Should a farm that does not meet the criteria outlined above develop and implement an NMP?

An NMP contains valuable information about a

farm operation, and the development of a plan for these farms could be beneficial to the owner not only for the important information it contains, but also for Right-to-Farm protection from nuisance complaints

How long is a certified NMP valid?

A Maine NMP must be updated annually and be approved by a certified NMP specialist at least every 5 years. The NMP must be updated and approved sooner if:

- There is an increase of 50 animal units or more over the number shown in the original plan;
- There is a change greater than 15% in the acreage upon which nutrients are to be spread; or
- There is any other significant change in the operation that renders the existing NMP no longer relevant.



What is the procedure if a Plan is not fully developed and implemented, yet the farm must begin operating?

The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry may grant a variance to the farm owner or operator that will allow the farm to operate prior to full implementation of its Plan. Certain criteria must be met and a time frame for compliance will be specified. A variance request form is available from the Department.

Are there other types of nutrient management plans available to a farm?



Yes. A Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) may be prepared for a farm. These plans are written by certain U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) personnel or by private contractors, and are required for obtaining funding from certain federal programs, primarily for farm environmental project development. These projects may involve enhancement of the natural resources on the farm and the reduction of potential off-site impacts by addressing: the production, storage and handling of manure and fertilizers; the amount, source, placement and timing of land application of materials; water and wind erosion; and the long-term viability of the farm. Some financial assistance may be available for the development of a CNMP.

Is financial assistance available for implementing nutrient management projects?

The Department occasionally has grant money available for nutrient management/environmental projects. The