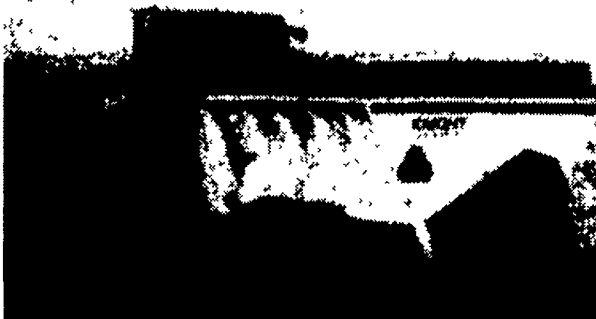


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Nutrient Management Plan

(Continued from Page 43)

tions, have developed nutrient management plans and must maintain the same records. Why develop a nutrient management plan when not required?

To become eligible for the low interest/cost share programs that are available for the implementations of Best Management Practices. If you plan to add a new manure storage facility, waterways, terraces, barnyard management practices, etc. and include these in the nutrient management plan, you can be eligible for either cost-share money or receive a low interest loan financing the implementation of the BMP.

To improve the nutrient efficiency on your farm. Manure and soil sampling, as well as manure application equipment calibration, are part of the planning and implementation of a nutrient management plan. By completing these items, you can improve your manure use and reduce your need for additional fertilizers.

Many animal operations still do not account for the nutrients they receive from manure that is applied on their farm. Without collecting a manure analysis or completing a calibration of your spreading equipment, the amount of N-P-K that is applied with your manure is not known. Knowing your N-P-K can easily improve profitability.

Within the last year it is required that animal operations with greater than 1000 AEUs develop a Confined Animal Feeding Operation NPDES Permit, issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Environment. This permit is dependent on the number of animals only, unlike the nutrient management regulations that are set on number of animals per acre.

If you are a CAO and have greater than 300 animal equivalent units, you need to develop a CAFO permit. Complete information on these permits is available from the regional DEP offices, the County Conservation District Office or from your nutrient management specialist.

Another nutrient management issue is the nitrogen -v- phosphorus based plans. Pennsylvania's nutrient management plans are currently based on the nitrogen needs of the planned crop. Other states require nutrient management plans be based on the most limiting factor - either nitrogen or phosphorus.

These states have developed an indexing system to determine those sites that have a high potential for phosphorus loss to surrounding surface water bodies. One aspect of these evaluations is how much soil is lost from a field in a given year due to erosion. This is the most time-consuming element of these systems to determine.

Pennsylvania does have current regulations requiring all farms that till ground to have a Conservation Plan developed and implemented for their farming operation. At no cost to the operator, your local NRCS office will develop these plans.