A nutrient management plan helps protect the environment and run efficient operations

Sources: Tammy Barnes, UK extension associate, and Amanda Gumbert, extension water quality specialist

As producers, it is important for us to not only produce the best possible product but to be good environmental stewards. Nutrient management plans help us do that.

These plans describe how you use fertilizer and/or generated manure in your operation while simultaneously meeting regulations, protecting local waterways and preventing soil erosion. The University of Kentucky recommends that all producers who use fertilizer or manure on their farms develop a nutrient management plan for their operation. These plans can help you reduce fertilizer costs, increase your soil’s organic matter and micronutrients, improve soil structure, increase water filtration and reduce runoff, in addition to protecting Kentucky’s waterways.

You are required to develop a nutrient management plan if you store or stack animal manure, if you plan to sell manure or litter produced on your farm, or if you apply manure, litter or fertilizer to your crops. This plan is in addition to the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Plan.

Two types of nutrient management plans exist. The Kentucky Division of Water requires producers who confine animals or use fertilizer to develop a Kentucky Nutrient Management Plan. These plans are also a requirement for the obtainment of a Kentucky No Discharge Permit, which is mandatory for any producer who stores and handles liquid manure or stacks uncovered manure or litter. You can write your own Kentucky Nutrient Management Plan using the UK Cooperative Extension Service publication, ID 211: KY Nutrient Management Planning Guidelines, <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ID/ID211/ID211.pdf>, or by using the calculator on the UK Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering’s website at http://[www.bae.uky.edu/awqp](http://www.bae.uky.edu/awqp).

You should develop a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan if you plan to apply for financial assistance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service for a manure handling practice. A NRCS technical service provider can write a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans for you for a fee.

To develop a nutrient management plan, you need to have the following information handy:

* the number of animals you have
* type of operation
* manure handling and storage procedure
* total number of farm acres
* soil sample analysis
* manure sample analysis
* crop rotation
* crop yields
* list of fields receiving manure and the acreage of each of those fields.

More information on nutrient management plans is available at the (COUNTY NAME) office of the UK Cooperative Extension Service, your local conservation district or by contacting Tammy Barnes, UK Nutrient Management Planner at 859-221-1940 or tammy.barnes@uky.edu.

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