



Stonecrest Engineering Newsletter

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Why Do a Nutrient Management Plan If I Don't Have To?

There are several key components to a nutrient management plan (NMP). These components help to determine when, where, why, how and how many nutrients may be applied to agricultural lands. They also tell you a lot about how your farm operates today and could operate in the future. In today's age of "knowledge is power", preparing a NMP provides very useful information, including:

- **Minimum Distance II Calculations.** Based on the type and size of your operation, the minimum distances to the nearest lot, roadway, neighbour and non-agricultural land must be calculated. This information helps you to locate new manure storages or building additions.
- **Soil Samples.** Test samples are taken from each field to determine existing nutrient values, including phosphorus (P), Potassium (K), pH and organic matter. These sample results are used to determine suitable nutrient application for the future crops and can provide savings on the cost of commercial fertilizer.
- **A Site Plan.** A site plan must be included in the NMP to indicate existing structures, road access, distances to unique features as well as expansion plans. Preparing a site plan encourages long-term planning on the farmstead.
- **Contracts and Manure Agreements.** A NMP must contain signed documents that indicate all land lease agreements as well as manure agreements. All land identified in a NMP that is to receive nutrients will be registered by the local municipality at the time that the NMP is submitted. Securing manure agreements can provide long-term security for farm operations with smaller land bases.
- **Floor Plans.** Under the new regulations, the number of nutrient units may be determined using the square footage of new and existing facilities. A floor plan of your new facility would allow an OMAF staff member performing a review to confirm that your nutrient units have been calculated correctly.
- **A Contingency Plan.** A contingency plan should be included in each NMP to prepare for the possibility of a nutrient spill. Contact information for neighbours, bulldozer/backhoe operators, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, the Spills Action Centre and the local municipality should be included. This information is important to have on hand in case of a manure spill - whether you're required to by regulation or not.
- **Manure Application Records.** A NMP will contain manure logs to record when, where and how much manure has been applied. This information could prove useful should local surface water or groundwater become contaminated.
- **Manure Storage Calculations.** To have a NMP approved, a minimum of 240 days storage must be provided. Do you have enough storage? How do you know? Preparing a NMP can help determine your existing storage and your future requirements.

For more information on nutrient management planning, contact Stonecrest Engineering today!