

# Fact Sheet

## Nutrient Management Program

**G**ood management, in today's farming, will improve any bottom line. Nutrients are an area of management that has potential to improve both the bottom line and water quality. The Scott SWCD nutrient management program offers incentives to producers to take a new, careful look at their nutrient-management practices. A nutrient management plan is prepared based on individual producer needs, combined with University of Minnesota guidelines.

The nutrients managed are nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (N, P and K), the principal plant growth nutrients. Management of these is similar to balancing a checkbook. The annual crop uptake (based on estimated yield) of these nutrients is balanced against available nutrients in the soil, nutrients supplied from prior crops, manure (or other on farm sources) and commercial fertilizer applications.

A nutrient management plan may be phased in over time.

### Steps to good nutrient management

1. Data is gathered the first year: soil tests are brought up to date, manure testing is done (if applicable) to determine its N, P and K content, and yield goals for crops are set. Areas where rainwater may wash away applied nutrients and areas that could receive water-carried sediments and nutrients are identified. Strategies to avoid water-quality problems are developed.
2. The second step is to begin using the University of Minnesota nutrient application rates. The rates may be approached over a two- or three-year period. These rates are primarily based on results of field research conducted in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

### Incentive payments

The Federal EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) offers an annual payment of \$2 per acre each year (on up to 250 acres) for three years -- for development and implementation of a nutrient-management plan. If manure is on the farm, it must be included in the management plan and an additional incentive of \$4 per acre is offered.

### Requirements to receive payments

- The plan must be applied for five years; this includes the one year of inventory and two years of phase-in.
- All gully and sheet erosion on the farm must be controlled to acceptable levels.
- If an ag consultant develops the plan, the consultant must be a Crop Adviser who is certified by the American Society of Agronomy.
- Feedlot runoff must meet MPCA standards.



### For more information, contact:

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