



September 2009

# Dairy Nutrient Management Program

## Changes in nutrient management recordkeeping requirements effective July 26, 2009



Agronomic application of all nutrients on your dairy is important for good crop production and ensures ground and surface waters are protected from leaching or runoff. Keeping records of these applications is an important tool for documenting and evaluating application results and planning for future applications.

In 2009 the Legislature amended the Dairy Nutrient Management Act at RCW 90.64.010 to require producers to retain records showing that applications of nutrients to land were within agronomic rates. Three years of these records are required until July 2011. Five years of records will be required after July 2011.

### Required Records

The types of records adequate to show that dairy nutrients were applied within acceptable agronomic rates are identified under the **NRCS 590 Practice Standard for Nutrient Management**.<sup>\*</sup> Most dairy nutrient management plans (DNMP) have information on record keeping and include reference material with additional explanations. The new legislation did not make any changes to the types of records or testing requirements currently in use.

The primary information reviewed during routine inspections continues to be soil tests, manure tests, cropping history, manure exports, and all nutrient application records. If field conditions or these records raise questions, or a discharge occurs, additional records will need to be reviewed. Inspectors may look at field and weather records, maps of buffers and setback requirements, and for the presence of field drain tiles.

### Retaining Five Years of Records

Many operators already maintain records for more than the three years referenced in their DNMP. To allow all operators to comply, the five-year retention requirement will not take effect until July 1, 2011.

Keeping records for five years, particularly for crop yields, nutrient applications, and soil and manure tests, creates a longer, more useful history for evaluating cropping and application decisions. Both the Washington CAFO General NPDES Permit and the updated NRCS 590 Practice Standard for Nutrient Management require records be held for five years.

Soil and manure tests, along with nutrient application records and crop yields, document a history of nutrient management and decisions. Nutrient testing under the state dairy program focuses on nitrogen and phosphorus levels. Your operation may benefit from testing for other nutrients specific to your cropping system and soil.

<sup>\*</sup> Visit [http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/WA/590\\_stnd\\_040609.pdf](http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/WA/590_stnd_040609.pdf) to view a copy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Practice Standard.

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## Records

- Note and record anticipated weather conditions at the time of application to inform and document your decision making. Indicate the source of the weather forecast used to determine when, and how, applications are made. Describe field conditions and the capacity of the soil to receive an application.
  - This documentation will be important should you have a surface discharge following application.*
- Note what crop was grown on each field.
- Document the actual or estimated crop yields used in planning nutrient applications.
- Indicate the amount of nutrients applied to each field and the date applied.
- Explain how application volumes were determined: for example, by tallying loads, calibrating equipment, or recording changes in storage pond levels.
- Identify the source of all nutrients applied—including **commercial fertilizers, manure imports and digestate**.
- Include a nutrient analysis for each source.
- Include soil tests for each field as required by the farm's specific DNMP.
- Record the quantity, dates of transfer, and recipient when manure is transferred offsite.

## Nutrient Management Plans

- Clearly map and identify all fields or management units used for manure application and when they are managed under the control of the dairy,
- Identify factors that impact manure application areas such as soil types, ditches and streams, drainage and irrigation systems, or field-specific dates and conditions set by the plan.
- Ensure DNMP elements address **current** farm operations.

**If you have questions about the new requirements, contact your regional NMP inspector or Christine Masters in our Olympia office (360) 902-1982.**