



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

What is a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)?

A Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan is a conservation system that is unique to animal feeding operations. It includes a set of conservation practices and management activities that address natural resource concerns dealing with manure and organic by-products and their potential impacts on water quality. A CNMP addresses six main elements, which are explained below. All livestock operations are encouraged to develop and implement a CNMP. NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) participants receiving financial assistance for animal waste storage or treatment facilities are required to develop and implement an entire CNMP. Feed management and other utilization activities on page 2 are encouraged, but not required.



Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage

This element addresses activities associated with the production facility, feedlot, manure and wastewater storage and treatment structures and animal heavy-use areas, and any areas used to facilitate transfer of manure and wastewater. Generally, a combination of conservation practices and management activities are needed, such as manure storage, clean and contaminated water management diversions, manure collection and transfer, composting and livestock mortality management.



Land Treatment Practices

This element addresses activities associated with fields where manure and organic by-products are applied. Generally, this element deals first with land management practices such as residue management, reduced tillage, crop rotations, cover crops and contour or strip crop farming. It also includes the establishment of erosion control practices such as grassed waterways, filter strips and vegetative buffers.



Nutrient Management

This element addresses activities associated with land application of all nutrients and organic by-products to meet crop needs and minimize potential adverse impacts to the environment and public health. Generally, this includes planning and applying nutrients with consideration of form (e.g., manure, wastewater, commercial fertilizer, crop residue, legumes and irrigation water), time of application, application rate and application method.



Record Keeping

This element addresses the documentation of management and implementation activities associated with a CNMP. Typically, this includes recording soil tests, manure tests, manure and wastewater field application dates and rates, acres applied, manure transfers and operations and maintenance activities.

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Feed Management (Optional)

This element addresses activities that manipulate or control the quantity and quality of available nutrients, animal feed or additives fed to livestock and poultry to reduce the nutrient content of manure. Feed management is a planning consideration applicable to farms which have a whole farm nutrient imbalance or that have significant abundance of nutrient accumulation in the soil.



Other Utilization Activities (Optional)

This element addresses alternatives to land application of manure, such as energy production (e.g., burning, methane generation and conversion to other fuels), nutrient stabilization and extraction for commercial fertilizers or other products, composting or pelletizing, and mixing or co-composting with other by-products to produce specialized use materials. Alternatives to land application are planning considerations and are not based on specific criteria.

How do I get a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) started?

The first step in the conservation planning process is to visit a local USDA Service Center to speak with the NRCS. A Soil Conservationist or Conservation Planner will assist producers in helping to identify potential concerns and problems related to the use of natural resources, and will offer opportunities to correct them. NRCS staff is available to help landowners make sound natural resource management decisions. USDA Offices are located in nearly each county of the State. Please find the closest office from the list below.

Vermont USDA Service Centers & NRCS Offices

Berlin: 802-828-4493

Brattleboro: 802-254-9766

Middlebury: 802-388-6748

Morrisville: 802-888-4935

Newport: 802-334-6090

Rutland: 802-775-8034

St. Albans: 802-524-6505

St. Johnsbury: 802-748-2641

White River Junction: 802-295-7942

Williston: 802-288-8155

