Overview

In the agricultural setting, nutrients are the building blocks for plant growth and production. Common nutrients are the elements nitrogen and phosphorus which are available in several forms. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with farmers and ranchers to profitably manage nutrients.

Well managed manure storage and handling, in concert with the application of nutrients using the “4 Rs of nutrient management” (right source, right form, right method, and right time) increases utilization efficiency and soil health while reducing the risk of pollution of surface water and groundwater.

NRCS can help identify alternatives to improve manure storage and handling and the ability to apply nutrients to crops implementing the 4 Rs of nutrient management. This is accomplished through the development of an NRCS Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP). Once your plan is in place, you may be eligible for financial assistance to make the improvements you’ve decided upon.

Concerned with:
Maintaining crop yields while reducing fertilizer costs? Maximizing production under ever-increasing environmental pressures? Insufficient manure storage?
Nutrients discharging into surface or groundwater? Nutrients from liquid or solid manure accumulating in certain fields? Making manure marketable for export?

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service can help!

GETTING STARTED...

Go to the Office

We have 54 across the state. NRCS will work with you to develop a conservation plan tailored to help you improve nutrient management on your operation. This voluntary plan will be based on your priorities and solid science.

Financial Assistance

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that has been widely used by AFO owners and operators in California. EQIP shares with landowners the cost of conservation practices (see sidebar on back) to improve nutrient utilization and mitigate associated conservation concerns.

Apply

Any time during the year. Eligible projects will be evaluated, prioritized and selected for funding as budget allocations permit.
NRCS program applicants who don’t already have a CNMP are encouraged to apply for financial assistance to develop one.

Who can develop a CNMP?

When financial assistance is provided to develop a CNMP, producers must select Technical Service Providers (TSP) from http://techreg.usda.gov who are certified, by county, in Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) CNMP (102).

Technical assistance to prepare the CNMP without financial assistance may also be available directly from NRCS. However, the timing and scheduling of the assistance may not always meet the producers’ need.

About NRCS, FSA and RMA

In more than 80 years of assisting farmers, ranchers, and private forestland owners, NRCS has assembled a body of technical standards (such as those in the sidebar at right) to address natural resource concerns. The USDA’s Farm Services Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) provide other critical resources such as farm loans, crop insurance and disaster assistance.

For more information on NRCS Farm Bill conservation programs visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ca/programs/