



ATCP 50

Farm Conservation Standards

ARM Pub 242, 03/14

ATCP 50 was revised to implement new and modified soil and water conservation standards adopted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 2011. This document presents a summary of the ATCP 50 farm conservation practice requirements, including updates to the soil erosion standard, modifications to the nutrient management (NM) standard to implement the phosphorous index, and provisions to address the tillage setback and process wastewater requirements. The location of the actual rule language associated with each of the below conservation standards is included in brackets.

SOIL EROSION

- All cropland and pastures must meet tolerable soil loss (“T”) levels. [ATCP 50.04(2)]
- Soil erosion rates should be estimated using the latest prediction models: RUSLE 2 and Wind Erosion Prediction System. [ATCP 50.04(2)Note]

PHOSPHORUS INDEX (PI)

- All cropland and pastures must comply with the Phosphorus Index (PI) standard [NR 151.04] including where the PI applies, the methods for calculating the PI, and acceptable PI runoff levels (an average of 6 or less over the accounting period, and 12 or less in any one year of the rotation). [ATCP 50.04(1)]
- A NM plan meeting the standard in ATCP 50.04(3) may be used to demonstrate compliance with DNR’s PI standard. [ATCP 50.04(3) Note]

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

- A NM plan that meets the NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Standard is required on all fields receiving mechanical and all other applications of nutrients, including pastures. See Nutrient Management on Pastures, DATCP ARM Pub.244 for more details. [ATCP 50.04(3)(a)]
- Pastures are exempt from NM plan requirements if the pasture is really a feedlot, or when the pasture’s average stocking rate is 1 AU/acre or less during grazing season and no nutrients are mechanically applied. [ATCP 50.04(3)(b)]
- Soil testing is required when nutrients are mechanically applied. When the pasture’s average stocking rate is more than 1 AU/acre over the grazing season, a planner may assume soil test values of 150 ppm P and 6% organic matter content. [ATCP 50.04(3)(d) and (de)]
- NM plans are required to be updated only when cropping systems change. [ATCP 50.04(3)(gm)]
- DATCP may set minimum requirements for a DATCP certified training course for farmers who write their own nutrient management plans. [ATCP 50.48(2)4. Note]

TILLAGE SETBACK

- Cropland must be managed to include a minimum setback of 5 feet from the top of the channel of surface waters. No tillage can occur and adequate vegetation (70% coverage) must be maintained in that tillage setback zone to ensure bank integrity. [ATCP 50.04(4)(a); NR 151.03]
- When establishing the setback width, start with 5 feet. If it is determined that 5 feet may not be adequate to maintain bank stability, county land conservation staff should: [ATCP 50.04(4)(b)]
 - Use best professional judgment to increase setback width based on factors including bank materials, height, slope, cause of bank erosion, and soil type.
 - Increase the tillage setback width by smallest increment necessary to maintain bank stability.
 - Follow a consistent approach when making setback width determinations by consulting with NRCS or DATCP engineers or technicians.
- Enrolling riparian areas in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) can achieve compliance with the tillage setback standard. [ATCP 50.04(4)(b) Note]
- Cost-sharing is not required to implement this practice.

PROCESS WASTEWATER

- Livestock operators must prevent a “significant” discharge of feed storage runoff, milkhouse wastewater, or other process wastewater. As defined by NR 151.055, a “significant” discharge is based on factors such as volume, frequency, receiving waters, and slope. DATCP grant funds may now be used to provide cost-sharing for a feed storage runoff control system as long as the system meets applicable standards including NRCS technical guide waste treatment standard 629. [ATCP 50.705]
- Livestock operators may pursue less costly approaches to reduce feed storage discharges to a non-significant level. [ATCP 50.705]

ADDITIONAL STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION STANDARDS FOR WI FARMS

ATCP 50 now includes all performance standards and prohibitions in NR 151. Farmers must comply with DNR standards added in 2011, as well as the 2002 standards and prohibitions listed below. Cost-share funding may be available to assist with compliance. Some state and local programs may require compliance whether or not cost-share funds are available, but changes to the Farmland Preservation Program will allow a farmer to comply with the 2011 standards over time.

2002 Performance Standards and Prohibitions

- Prevent direct runoff from feedlots or stored manure to waters of the state
- Limit livestock access along waters to maintain vegetative cover
- Maintain manure storage structures to prevent leaking and overflow
- Follow manure storage technical standards for construction and abandonment
- For areas near surface water or susceptible to groundwater contamination:
 - Do not stack manure in an unconfined pile
 - Divert clean water away from feedlots, manure storage, and barnyards