



## DATCP Reminds Farmers to Check Runoff Risk Prior to Spreading Manure

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding farmers and manure applicators to check the [runoff risk advisory forecast](#) before spreading manure on fields. This tool helps determine the potential for manure runoff from a field depending on weather conditions and soil temperature.

The runoff risk advisory forecast includes maps showing short-term runoff risk for manure application. The maps account for soil saturation, temperature, and precipitation on a scale of 1.5 square-mile grids. The National Weather Service updates the forecast four times daily.

“A nutrient management plan helps determine where to spread, and the proper application rate, while the runoff risk advisory forecast helps determine when to spread. Assessing current field conditions is just one step in the process farmers should use to make decisions,” said Andrea Topper, DATCP nutrient management outreach specialist. “Farmers who don't have a plan can talk to their crop consultant or county conservationist to develop one.”

To help reduce nitrogen loss during fall manure applications, it is recommended to:

- Wait until soil temperatures are less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit. When soil temperatures are above 50 degrees, soil microbes are very active and create a more leachable form of nitrogen.
- Apply manure to an actively growing crop, such as winter wheat or a cover crop, to help scavenge some of the nitrogen that otherwise might be lost.

For more information about nutrient management planning, visit [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/NutrientManagement.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NutrientManagement.aspx).

### Alternatives to High-Risk Manure Spreading

Farmers should contact their crop consultant, [county land conservation office](#), or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for help identifying alternatives to high-risk spreading. These professionals can help identify fields where the risk is lower and alternative practices, such as stacking manure in a safe location.

### Manure Spill Requirements

DATCP reminds manure haulers and drivers to put safety first when traveling on roadways in order to avoid spilling manure, prevent injuries, and protect the health of people and the environment.

“About one-third of preventable transportation-related manure spills are due to operator error,” said Kevin Erb, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension conservation professional training program manager. “Attentive driving and maintaining your equipment are two ways to reduce the risk of an accidental manure spill. An accidental spill is not illegal, but failing to properly report and clean it up is.”

All agriculture and livestock operations must report spills or runoff affecting water to the DNR's 24-hour emergency spills hotline at (800) 943-0003. More information about planning and prevention is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/agbusiness/manurespills.html>.

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