

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**PREPARED BY THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (DATCP)**



Program Overview

In 2025, the DATCP Nutrient Management Program, along with county land conservation departments, continued working with farmers, agronomists, and conservation partners to advance nutrient management planning across Wisconsin. These plans guide the use of manure and fertilizer to meet crop nutrient needs while protecting water quality by minimizing runoff to surface and groundwater resources. Planning is based on soil and manure testing and must follow the NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Standard.

Statewide support for nutrient management continues to grow through programs like Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program, the Farmland Preservation Program, and the development of a new conservation agronomy curriculum to help prepare more people to support nutrient management planning at the local level.

Counties play a central role in reviewing plans and reporting annual progress to DATCP. In 2025, they reported 3.88 million acres of cropland covered by nutrient management (NM) plans, representing approximately 44% of Wisconsin’s harvestable cropland. This growth reflects a strong, ongoing commitment by farmers, planners, and conservation staff to support nutrient management and protect Wisconsin’s natural resources.

Figures 1 and 2 provide a quick overview of year-to-year nutrient management planning activity. Together, they show that plan numbers, total acres, statewide coverage, and farmer-written plans can each tell a slightly different part of the story. Because individual plans vary in size and purpose, changes in the number of plans do not always move in the same direction as changes in reported acres. The following pages provide more context for where these acres are reported; how county-level reporting varies; and how farmers, plan writers, and conservation partners support nutrient management planning across Wisconsin.

NM Plan Numbers	2024	2025
NM Plans Reported by Wisconsin Counties	7,917	7,472
Statewide Acres	3.82 mil	3.88 mil
Percent of Wisconsin Cropland Covered by a NM Plan	44%	44%
Farmer Written Plans	1,539	1,648

Figure 1: Summary of NM plan metrics reported by counties to DATCP for 2024 and 2025.

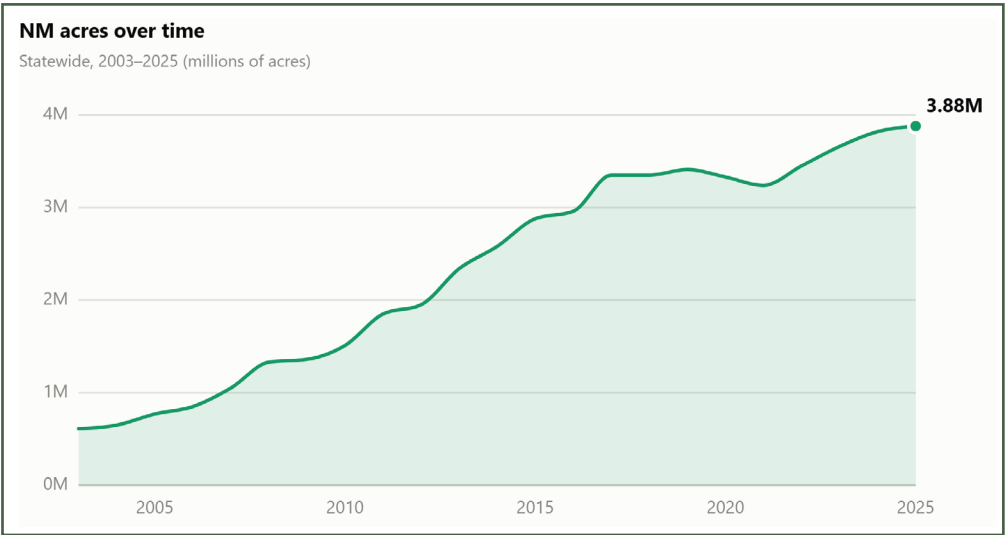


Figure 2: Trends in NM plans acres from 2003-2025.

Wisconsin's Nutrient Management Numbers

The map on this page shows the total number of acres covered by NM plans in each county for 2025. NM plans may include cropland such as row crops and cranberries, as well as pastures and other agricultural lands that receive manure, fertilizer, or other nutrient inputs. Displaying the data by county helps show where nutrient management planning is occurring across the state and reflects the local work involved in reviewing, tracking, and supporting these plans.

These numbers are submitted to DATCP annually by county land conservation departments. County staff compile acres from NM plans they review throughout the year. Because plans may be developed for several different reasons, county reporting helps bring local, state, and federal planning activity together into one statewide dataset.

The accompanying chart shows how reported plans are distributed by agency or program. DATCP-related plans are largely driven by farmland preservation and Soil and Water Resource Management cost-share. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) related plans may be associated with Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits or other DNR grants. County-reported plans may come from local cost-share programs, county ordinances, livestock siting, or other locally tracked conservation efforts. And lastly, the Environmental Qualities Incentive and Conservation Stewardship Programs drive Natural Resources Conservation Service related nutrient management efforts.

County totals provide one way to understand nutrient management planning, but total acres alone do not tell the full story. The next page shows the data from two additional perspectives: the percentage of each county's cropland covered by NM plans and the year-to-year change in reported acres. Together, these maps help convey both the scale of nutrient management planning and how coverage is changing across Wisconsin.

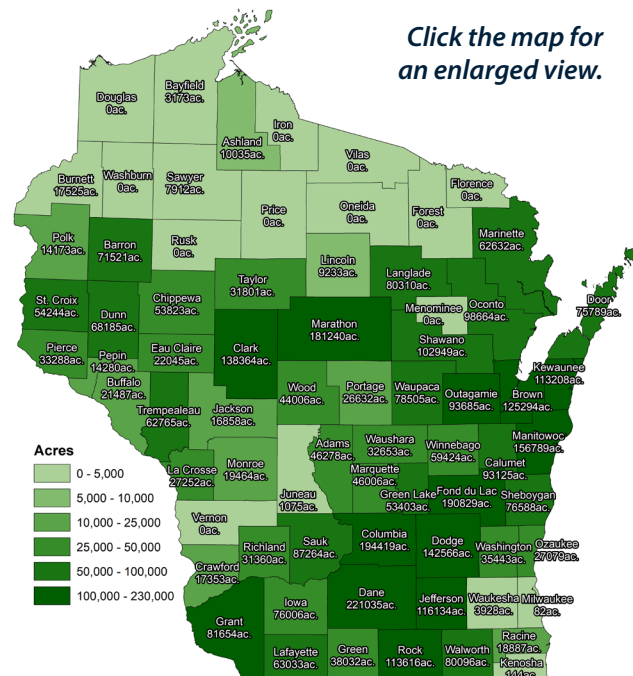


Figure 3: NM plan acres per county for 2025.

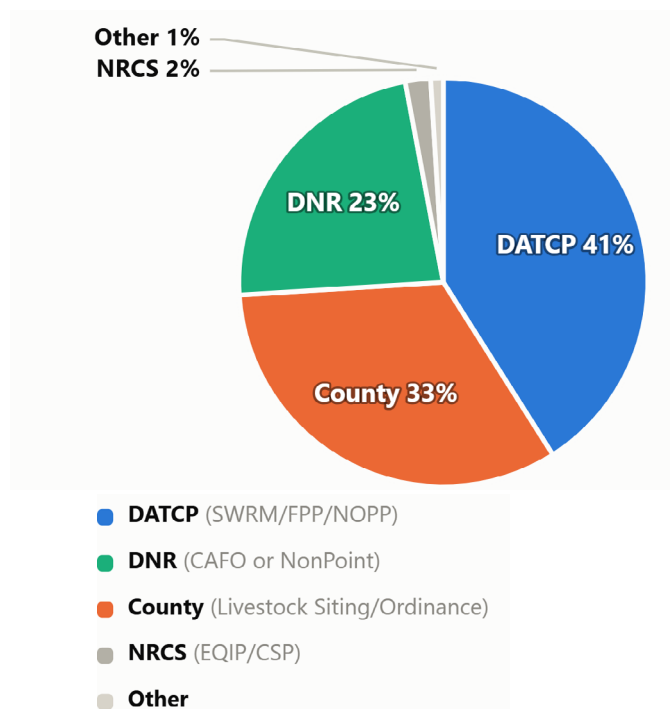


Figure 4: 2025 NM plan distribution by agency or program.

Understanding Year-to-Year Change

The total acres map is useful because it shows the overall scale of nutrient management activity in each county. However, total acres are only one way to understand the data. Wisconsin counties vary widely in how much cropland they have, so larger agricultural counties may naturally report more acres while counties with a smaller cropland base may appear lower on the map even when a significant share of their land is planned.

The percent coverage map helps account for that difference. By comparing planned acres to each county's cropland base, this map shows how widely nutrient management is being used relative to the land available for planning. This helps highlight local progress that may not be obvious from total acres alone, especially in counties where the overall amount of cropland is smaller.

The year-to-year change map adds a third perspective by showing how county totals shifted from the previous reporting year. This map is helpful for seeing where acres increased, decreased, or remained relatively stable. A decrease in acres does not necessarily mean less conservation work is happening or that a county is moving backward.

Annual changes can happen for several reasons. Acres may shift because of land use changes, plan updates, new or ended program participation, acres moving between plans, staffing capacity, or reporting timelines. In some cases, plans submitted late in the year may not be included until the next reporting cycle, particularly when county workload or other program reporting timelines affect when plans are reviewed and entered.

Together, these maps provide context for how nutrient management planning is reported across Wisconsin. Total acres, percent coverage, and annual change each tell a different part of the story. However, the work behind those numbers depends on farmers, plan writers, county staff, and other partners working together to develop, review, and implement NM plans.

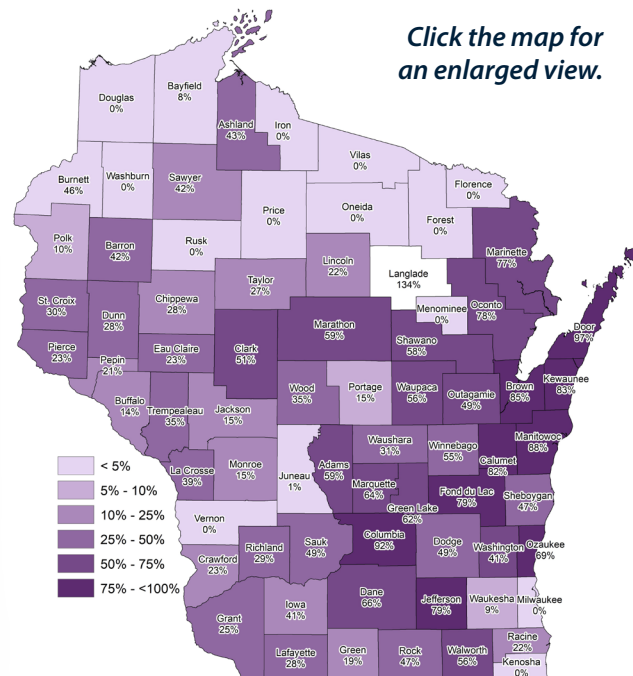


Figure 5: Percent of county cropland covered by NM plans.

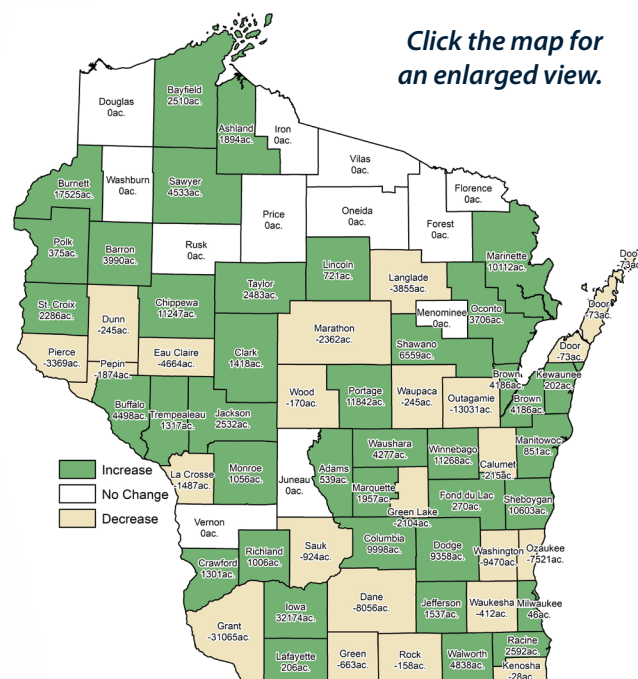


Figure 6: Change in acres of active and recorded NM plans from 2024 to 2025.

Supporting Farmers and Plan Writers

Nutrient management planning depends on both farmer-written plans and the work of professional plan writers. Farmers bring firsthand knowledge of their fields, cropping systems, manure sources, and day-to-day management decisions. Professional planners including agronomists, crop consultants, certified crop advisers, county staff, technical colleges, and other qualified planners provide technical support to help ensure plans are practical, accurate, and consistent with the NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Standard.

In 2025, the Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) Program continued to support farmers to write and better understand their own NM plans. NMFE awarded \$416,266 to 28 applicants, supporting farmers who operate 141,927 acres. These efforts help build local knowledge and give producers the tools to make informed nutrient management decisions on their own farms.

DATCP also supported nutrient management through broader training and outreach efforts beyond NMFE. In 2025, DATCP assisted with or held 28 total trainings, reaching 843 individuals. These trainings included NMFE classes, county staff trainings on operating local nutrient management programs, SnapPlus trainings for agronomists and plan writers, and other technical assistance opportunities.

The 2025 Nutrient Management Regional Meetings provided another opportunity to connect directly with county staff, private plan writers, agency partners, and students preparing to work in conservation and agronomy. Meetings were held across the state and brought together 202 attendees, including land and water conservation department staff, certified crop advisers, agronomists, DNR and NRCS partners, and others involved in nutrient management planning. Topics included updates to the NRCS 590, A2809, SnapPlus V3 demonstrations, and other updates. These meetings help keep planners and partners informed, provide space for questions and discussion, and support more consistent nutrient management planning across Wisconsin.

Resources for Wisconsin's Qualified Nutrient Management Planners

Access the [Nutrient Management Planner Resources](#) homepage to view a series of prerecorded webinars that guide users through Wisconsin's nutrient management rules.

Nutrient Management Trainings Page

Visit the [Nutrient Management Trainings](#) page to view all future and prior trainings and outreach events.

Funding Resources

To find out more about nutrient management-related financial assistance opportunities, and programs for other resources, access the webpages listed below:

[SWRM Cost-Share Grants](#) [NMFE Grants](#) [Farmland Preservation](#) [Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program](#)

SNAP+ V3 Resources

[SnapPlus V3 User Group Names](#) [YouTube Video Playlist](#) [SnapPlus V3 Magazine](#)
[SnapPlus Wiki Page Change Log](#)

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