

# A Guide to Nutrient Management Implementation Reviews

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer  
Protection



## What are Implementation Reviews?

Nutrient management is critical to sustainable and profitable agriculture. Ensuring that nutrient management plans are effectively implemented can be a challenge. To address this challenge, county land conservation staff can hold implementation reviews with farmers and nutrient management planners. These reviews provide an opportunity to discuss the nutrient management plan, identify areas for improvement, and explore other conservation practices. By building connections and sharing knowledge in a face-to-face setting, implementation reviews help farmers better understand their nutrient management plan and foster collaboration between county staff, nutrient management planners, and farmers.

## Choosing Where to Start with Reviews:

- Do you have a geographic area of concern (surface or groundwater contamination)?
- Do you have communication challenges with a planner or farmer?
- Do you have an AEA that you want to focus on?
- Do you have a Producer-Led group you want to focus on?
- Do you have a farmer that is a good candidate for experimenting with a new practice?
- Is there a farmer and planner that have a poor relationship?
- Is there a farmer that would benefit from additional insight and guidance from a conservation professional on their nutrient management plan?

## Items to Discuss with Farmer:

- Does the farmer have questions about aspects within the plan?
- Does the farmer understand the components of the plan enough to fully and successfully implement?
- Are there soil loss issues? Over applications? Issues meeting P Index requirements?
- Are there new initiatives or programs the farmer should know about?
- Are there any practices the farmer is interested in trying, and are cost-share opportunities available?

## Items to Discuss with Planner:

- Does the planner have a good understanding of what you look for in a NMP?
- Does the planner have questions regarding NM requirements?
- Do you have a set due date for turning in NMPs?
- Opportunity to connect with the planner and let them know you can be a resource to them.
- Build relationships with planner; they can be a voice out on the landscape to encourage nutrient management planning.



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## Step 1: Prepare for the Review

- Review the farmer's nutrient management plan and identify any questions or areas that need clarification.
  - Does the narrative give you a good understanding of their operation?
  - Does the farm spread manure and, if so, are there spreading and winter spreading maps?
  - Are all fields drawn, and wells and concentrated flow channels documented on the maps?
  - If the farm has manure, are they demonstrating that they have enough land to apply it?
    - For the checklist to document that they have enough land to apply manure, they must plan manure applications for the previous, current, and future years and leave less than 10% of the manure unplanned.
  - Is the NMP utilizing full rotations? i.e.- They have their actual rotation built into the plan, not just planning year-to-year and having one-year rotations.
  - Are future years included in the rotation and, if so, are manure applications planned throughout the rotation?
    - If not, it can negatively affect their P Index and the planner could run into compliance issues in the future.
  - Are fields meeting T (soil loss) and the P Index requirements?
  - Are the soil samples recent enough? (samples have been pulled within the last four years) (SnapPlus report FM6 will tell you the years that samples need to be pulled for each field)
  - Do they have enough soil samples? (one soil sample for every five acres)
    - [Soil Sampling Guidance Document](#)
  - Are there fields where contour planting could be beneficial?
  - Are there fields where reduced tillage or cover crops could be beneficial?
  - If there is a current compliance issue within the plan, is there documentation on how they are handling the situation? Is there feedback and or cost-share you can offer to assist with the situation?
- Identify any additional conservation practices or cost-share opportunities that the farmer may be interested in.
- Schedule a meeting with the farmer and nutrient management planner.

## Step 2: Conduct the Review Meeting

- Begin the meeting by introducing all participants and the purpose of the review.
- Review the nutrient management plan with the farmer and nutrient management planner and identify any areas for improvement or clarification.
- Discuss other conservation practices or cost-share opportunities that may be of interest to the farmer.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration between the farmer, nutrient management planner, and county staff.
- Discuss any challenges or concerns that the farmer may have regarding the nutrient management plan.
- Identify any follow-up actions that need to be taken and assign responsibilities for those actions.

## Step 3: Follow-Up

- If further action is required, contact the farmer and or nutrient management planner to ensure that any necessary steps are taken.



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## Frequently Asked Questions:

- *Can a planner participate in more than one implementation review?* Yes, currently there are no limits to how many implementation reviews a planner can participate in.
- *Can both the plan writer and sales agronomist be a part of the implementation review?* Yes, if the planner is not the direct sales agronomist, both can be involved in the review and receive stipends.
- *Does the plan writer have to be a part of the implementation review?* No, the review can be conducted with a county land conservation staff member and the farmer. It is not required that the planner be present for the review, but it is highly encouraged.
- *Can one entity apply for both a Tier 1 and a Tier 2 NMFE Grant?* Yes, but two separate applications are required if applying for both Tier 1 and Tier 2.
- *How do I make sure that the CCA (plan writer) receives their CEU credits?* Document the planner's names, CCA number, and the amount of time spent attending the review. Then, email [andrea.topper@wisconsin.gov](mailto:andrea.topper@wisconsin.gov) the planner's name, CCA number, and the amount of time attending the review. Andrea will report the CEUs accordingly.
- *Is there a specific length of time a review needs to last?* No, each review will vary in time. It is important to keep track of the length of time the review lasts due to CEU reporting for CCAs.
- *How should we choose which farmers we want to meet with?* Is there a geographical region of concern, an Agricultural Enterprise Area, or a Producer-Led Group that you would like to focus on? Do you have some new farmers that you have been trying to engage with more? Implementation reviews are the perfect opportunity for that!
- *Are implementation reviews meant to be an avenue for enforcement?* No, implementation reviews are meant to make sure that the farmer knows and understands their nutrient management plan and that they can implement it the way it is currently written. It allows for discussion around implementing and/or changing farming practices such as tillage, crop rotations, cover crops, contour, and strip cropping. Implementation reviews are meant to be educational so that farmers have all the tools needed to be able to implement their nutrient management plan. The intent is not for these reviews to be a means of enforcement.
- *Are there any additional nutrient management-related resources available that we can share with the farmer and/or planner?* Yes, the Nutrient and Pest Management Team has a wonderful online library of resources that can be found here: [UW-Madison NPM](#). Additionally, the SnapPlus Team has some great tutorial videos on YouTube that can be found here: [YouTube-SnapPlus](#). One last resource is the DATCP Nutrient Management Training Webpage found here: [DATCP NM Trainings](#)
- *If we have implementation review-related questions, or could benefit from training on how to review a NMP, who should we reach out to?* Andrea Topper, [andrea.topper@wisconsin.gov](mailto:andrea.topper@wisconsin.gov) or (608) 405-0235.

