Save Money on Fertilizer and Increase Yields

Dan Holland and Brett Newman, Argyle

Dan Holland and Brett Newman

Dan and his son-in-law Brett farm 310 acres and milk 85 cows, raise young stock, and feed-out steers on their Green County farm. In 2009, they decided to write a nutrient management plan for their farm as Dan felt it would become mandatory but also viewed nutrient management as the right thing to do. They attended a nutrient management planning workshop in Monroe where they experienced a significant learning curve, but it proved to be time well spent.

They experienced an immediate savings in annual fertilizer expenses. **They discovered they were applying fertilizer on fields that didn't need it, and were applying at rates too low on the fields that did.** By adjusting their manure and fertilizer applications to meet the crop needs, they saw an increase in yield on low-fertility fields. In the past, Dan called their fertilizer dealer to find out what they needed each year. Now when they contact their fertilizer dealer, Dan and Brett know how much fertilizer they need based on their nutrient management plan. **The plan saved them money on their fertilizer.**

For more information on nutrient management:

Visit our website:
http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Nutrient_Management/index.aspx

Contact your local county extension office:
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/

Contact your land conservation department:
http://www.privacy.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/Land_and_Water_Conservation_Directory/

Download or request free nutrient management publications:
http://ipcm.wisc.edu/downloads/nutrient-managment/

Download SnapPlus nutrient management software:
To complete a certified nutrient management plan, you must attend a DATCP-approved course or have a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) approve your plan.
http://snapplus.wisc.edu

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Nutrient Management Plans Working on Wisconsin Farms

Real Farms, Real Results

Moving Forward, Always Changing

Wiegel Riverside Farms, South Wayne

Larry and his brother Jack farm 705 acres, milk 240 cows with robotic milkers, and raise their own youngstock in Lafayette County. Wiegel Riverside Farms has two manure pits that provide 6 months of storage, and they also have a solid separator system as they use the solids for bedding. Larry attended a nutrient management training workshop in Darlington **to stay ahead of the curve**. He admits that the initial plan he compiled in the class was far from perfect, but it has continually improved every year since.

Using his first plan as a starting point, each year he focused on making new improvements. First he identified soil loss issues he had on the farm and addressed them by adjusting rotations and incorporating cover crops. Next, he focused on manure applications including rates, timing, and becoming more aware of the spreading restrictions on his farm. Most recently, he has narrowed his focus on the fertilizer aspect of the plan. He is working with a new crop consultant who has an interest in nutrient management planning. Larry believes **involving all players in the fertility plan is key to implementation.**

Larry Wiegel

Steve Haak and Becky Olson

Another Piece of the Puzzle

Autumn Moon Farm, Inc., Belleville

Husband and wife Steve Haak and Becky Olson had spent a few years working with an agronomist on a nutrient management plan for their 248 acre cash grain and custom baling operation before they decided to take ownership of their plan. They attended a class in Dane County to learn about nutrient management concepts. Becky said, "**The cost benefit analysis is really helpful when it comes to knowing what to put where**. The soil test results are right there, and you use the computer to test out different options."

Their nutrient management plan prompted them to switch fertilizer blends and apply at different rates than they normally would have. They ended up **using half of the fertilizer they typically used** for wheat ground. Their plan also proved to be valuable during a recent farm transition in the family. They used the soils maps in their plan to identify which areas of the property were best suited to keep in farming and which less productive areas were suitable for other uses. According to Steve, "Nutrient management is another piece of the puzzle when it comes to farm management."

Become a Better Manager

Wedeberg Family Farm, Gays Mills

Brothers John and Jake Wedeberg run an organic dairy and cash grain operation in Crawford County. They have 50 milking cows, youngstock, and approximately 425 tillable acres, which are all strip-cropped. When Jake heard about a nutrient management workshop in Seneca, he decided to attend. "Knowing what nutrients you have and what nutrients you need is the number one benefit of nutrient management. There are so many variables to consider when farming, **a nutrient management plan helps you lock down one of those variables."**

Jake and John Wedeberg

When completing their plan, Jake found the soil tests results the most helpful. Once they found out the fertility levels they were working with on their farm, they could better plan their manure applications and were able to reduce the amount of lime they applied to their fields. As a certified organic farm, good record keeping is essential. They found the nutrient management plan helpful when completing their annual record reporting for their certification. According to Jake, "The planning process provides you with great information. **It helps you become a better manager."**