



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Vermont Nutrient Management Planner](#)

The Vermont Medium Farm Operation (MFO) general permit program is designed to establish a process to reduce point and non-point source pollution to waters of the state from agricultural sources. The MFO general permit will establish standards for the management of farm wastes generated from the farmstead production area and nutrient applications on the associated farmland. These standards will include operation and maintenance, record keeping, annual reporting requirements, and other site-specific conditions required to protect water quality. One of the critical pieces of the general MFO permit is the nutrient management plan requirement that will be used to help manage the land application of manure to minimize offsite nutrient losses to ground and surface water.

The purpose of the nutrient management plan (NMP) is to certify that nutrients are properly managed to minimize adverse impacts to water quality. It will assess resource concerns which exist on the property, and budgets nutrient sources (especially manure) to optimize crop nutrient needs while minimizing potential losses.

In order to help create all of these new NMPs as required, the NRCS is adapting software currently used in Idaho to meet Vermont's nutrient management requirements. This software makes use of the latest technology to assist in the development of plans. The general layout of each form throughout the program has been purposefully designed to be as intuitive as possible. The process is a step-by-step approach. Plans are developed using a digital aerial photograph and other geographic information that is downloaded using an Internet mapping site. Several GIS data layers important to planning are included in the download, such as soil, climactic, watershed information, and hydrography. Using this software, producers or planners assisting producers can identify vulnerable resource areas; plan and schedule appropriate nutrient application rates, and evaluate risk to ground and surface water.

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