United States Department of Agriculture

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Conservation Practice Overview

Nutrient Management (Code 590)

Manage rate, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments while reducing environmental impacts.

Practice Information

Nutrient management may be used on any area of land where plant nutrients and soil amendments are applied. Nutrient management may be used to improve crop productivity and improve soil organic matter while reducing environmental impacts. Sources of nutrients include, but are not limited to, commercial fertilizers (including starter and in-furrow starter/pop-up fertilizer), animal manures, legume fixation credits, green manures, plant or crop residues, compost, organic by-products, municipal and industrial biosolids, wastewater, organic materials, estimated plant available soil nutrients, and irrigation water.

Nutrients are managed based on the 4Rs of nutrient stewardship—apply the right nutrient source at the right rate at the right time in the right place—to improve nutrient use efficiency by the crop and to reduce nutrient losses to surface water and groundwater and to the atmosphere.

Operation and maintenance provide that nutrient management plans must be reviewed and revised, as needed, with each soil test cycle; changes in manure management, volume or analysis, plants and crops; or plant and crop management. Records must be maintained for at least 5 years to document plan implementation.

All nutrient management activities must adhere to national, State and local water quality regulations.

Common Associated Practices

NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Nutrient Management (Code 590) is commonly applied with CPSs such as Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329), Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345), Conservation Crop Rotation (Code 328), Filter Strip (Code 393), Cover Crop (Code 340), Contour Farming (Code 330), and Contour Buffer Strips (Code 332).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.

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