

## Nutrient Management Team

# Nutrient Management Farmer Education

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### Situation

Farmers in Wisconsin increasingly are required to comply with regulations to control agricultural run-off. They need to develop farm nutrient management plans because they are required by government agricultural programs, zoning rules, livestock siting ordinances, and permitting process for animal feeding operations. In addition, improving nutrient management practices benefits farmers by increasing profitability and reducing the detrimental effects of nitrogen and phosphorus on water quality.

### Response

A working group of the UW-Extension Nutrient Management Self-directed Team developed and distributed the Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) curriculum. This curriculum was based on a successful model developed by Discovery Farms Co-director, Dennis Frame and Nutrient and Pest Management Program regional specialist Paul Kivlin. It combines classroom instruction, individual consultation and on-farm field trials to teach farmers how improving

nutrient management practices can help them achieve both economic and environmental goals. Then farmers work to develop their own plans.

In addition to writing the curriculum, UW-Extension staff provided technical information and taught the curriculum. Other partners included Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection, Land and Water Education Grant Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Environmental Quality Improvement Program, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Land Conservation Departments, technical colleges and crop consultants and agronomists.

### Outcomes

As a result of local delivery of the NMFE curriculum, between 2000-2008:

- 2,100 farmers in 46 Wisconsin counties have received in-depth education on nutrient management planning.
- 80% of these farmers developed or helped develop a nutrient management plan for their operation.
- About 651,000 acres of Wisconsin cropland were planned, with the major agricultural enterprise being dairy.

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January 2009