
INFOSheet

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Nutrient Management Considerations When Planning to Build a Horse Barn or Manure Storage Facility

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Spring is here and some horse farm owners may be thinking about construction projects. Before obtaining a building permit, you may be required to develop or obtain a Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) and a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). These requirements are part of the *Nutrient Management Act* (2002) and the associated regulation. Funding for horse farms may be available under the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan and the Canada-Ontario Farm Stewardship Programs to complete some of these projects, as well as hire consultants for completing the NMS and NMP.

Nutrient Management Strategies and Nutrient Management Plans

The Nutrient Management Strategy sets out the environmentally acceptable methods for managing all prescribed materials generated at an agricultural or non-agricultural operation. It is a document that describes generation, storage and destination of manure and other prescribed materials. It provides information such as: number of animals, barns, manure storages, livestock yards and runoff management. The total capacity of the barns may be considered when applying for a building permit.

The Nutrient Management Plan details how manure, fertilizer and other nutrients are applied to a given land base. It is a five-year plan that details the characteristics of the land, crop rotation, as well as cropping and nutrient application practices. It optimizes the utilization of the nutrients by crops in the field and minimizes environmental impacts.

What Projects Require an Approved NMS?

On any farm, where the barn(s) will have a capacity for greater than five (5) nutrient units (NU) upon completion of construction, the following projects require an approved NMS:

1. Expansion or construction of any building or structures used to house farm animals that requires a building permit under the Building Code Act*.
2. Construction of any manure storage facility that requires a building permit under the Building Code Act*.
3. Construction or excavation of any earthen manure storage (e.g., lagoon), including expansions of existing earthen storages.

* An approved NMS is also required in these situations in unorganized townships.

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Nutrient Units

Nutrient units are calculated based on the number of livestock housed on a farm unit. A nutrient unit is defined as the number of animals that will give the fertilizer replacement value of the lower of; 43 kilograms of nitrogen or 55 kilograms of phosphate per year as nutrients.

The numbers of horses of various sizes that generate nutrients equivalent to or greater than five (5) NU are:

- 4 large framed horses (mature at >1500 lbs, includes weaned foal)
- 5 medium framed horses (mature at 500-1500 lbs, includes weaned foal)
- 10 small framed horses (mature at <500 lbs; includes weaned foal)

For farms with other livestock species and/or mixed livestock operations, call the toll-free Nutrient Management Information Line at 1-866-242-4460 or consult on-line at: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/nutrient/nutrient.html

Does this Mean I Must Document the 5-Year Crop Plan for my Farm?

Not necessarily. The five-year crop plan would be part of a nutrient management plan. Although a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) is recommended to all farm operations that apply manure and fertilizer, only some farms that have a Nutrient Management Strategy will need to have a Nutrient Management Plan. If any of the following conditions apply, the farm must also have a NMP:

1. Livestock numbers \geq 300 NU in the farm unit (The NMP is kept on file on the farm.);
2. Any part of the land in the farm unit is within 100 metres of a municipal well (NMS approved by OMAFRA and NMP is kept on file on farm.);
3. Apply non-agricultural source material (NASM), such as biosolids, on land in the farm unit. (NMP approved by OMAFRA).

How do I get my NMS approved?

First of all, NM strategies and NM plans must be prepared by someone certified under the *Nutrient Management Act* (2002). There are two options for certification: 1) a farmer can take the necessary courses to be certified or 2) you can hire a certified consultant to prepare your NMS. Once your NM strategy has been prepared, it is sent to OMAFRA in Guelph for approval.

For more information on consultants, nutrient management courses, or who to contact in your area for more information on nutrient management, call the toll-free Nutrient Management Information Line at 1-866-242-4460 or refer to the Ministry web site at www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/agops/index.html

For more information on the Environmental Farm Plan Program and related cost share program, call the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association toll free at 1-800-265-9751, (519) 826-4214, or visit the web site at www.ontariosoilcrop.org

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